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LABORPRESS

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The Future of HealthCare



Labor Unions & Workers' Compensation

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WHAT IS A LABOR UNION? Labor unions have a long and proud history. A union can protect you from an abusive employer; can win you job benefits that non-union workers don't get; can help you improve your education and skills; can train you for better job safety; and can become like a second family, offering friendship, support, solace in hard times, and the confidence in knowing you do not have to go it alone, that you have a team behind you.

STRENGTH IN NUMBERS If you do not belong to a union, you must accept whatever legal pay and working conditions are offered to you. Your boss might make you work overtime, but only at the minimum legal overtime rate. Your boss might make you do a job you are not trained for. But when you join a union, you and many other workers give the union the power to deal with your boss for you. The union representative has the power behind him of dozens, or hundreds, or even thousands of workers. Remember, your boss cannot do business without workers. That means that when you deal with your boss as a union, you have power over him.

IS IT LEGAL TO JOIN A UNION? It is absolutely legal to join a union. America, and New York, recognizes the great importance unions have to the working man and woman—the law protects your right to organize a union, and to belong to a union.

HOW DOES A LABOR UNION WORK? Your union negotiates a labor contract for you. That means that unlike other workers, you actually have a legal contract with your boss. Labor contracts often tell the boss how much he must pay per hour; it often determines overtime rights, and often contains work rules that the boss must follow. After that, your union will make sure that the boss lives up to his obligations. Your union will stand up for you if the boss tries to unfairly punish you, will try to resolve differences between you and your boss, and will answer your questions about the contract.

HOW ARE UNIONS INVOLVED IN JOB ACCIDENTS AND WORKERS' COMPENSATION? If you are injured on the job, even if you are undocumented, you are entitled to file for lost wages and medical treatment. Through the years, we have worked with many union representatives to make sure our clients are well-protected. Some of the most passionate and involved unions we have worked with include the unions for Mason Tenders, asbestos workers, construction laborers, private waste carting, and bakery and dairy products drivers. For our injured clients, these representatives have fought to keep jobs open while the worker heals, have coordinated different benefits, have counseled our clients about their contract rights, and have helped locate important evidence and witnesses. It has been a great help, and an honor and privilege, for us to work with our clients' union representatives. For you, the injured worker, there is the comfort of knowing that you have a team behind you, working together to fight for your rightful benefits both under your contract and under the law. —LP