



PRESS RELEASE

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Study: NM's low-wage workers benefit most from unionization

Union wages almost 20% higher than non-union wages at lowest earning level

ALBUQUERQUE—A report from the Center for Economic and Policy Research (CEPR) shows that, on average, wages are 11 percent higher for New Mexicans who work in unions than for non-union workers. The report, "The Union Wage Advantage for Low-Wage Workers," shows the biggest benefit going to those who earn the lowest wages. Those in the bottom 10 percent of the salary range earn 19.7 percent more, while those in the top 10 percent earn 11 percent more.

"This report shows that one very effective way to raise workers out of poverty is by creating an environment where worker organization is supported," said Gerry Bradley, Research Director for New Mexico Voices for Children. "Governor Richardson has a very pro-labor record, which has no doubt been beneficial to working families and the economy."

The report shows a similar trend across the country. Nationally, unionized workers in the bottom 10 percent of the salary range earn 20.6 percent more while workers in the top 10 percent earn 6.1 percent more.

"Unions give the biggest boost to low-wage workers because these are the workers that have the least bargaining power in the labor market," said John Schmitt, the CEPR's senior economist who authored the report.

On average, 13.8 percent of American workers are either members of a union or are covered by a union contract at their workplace. The union rate in New Mexico is 10.6 percent. Of those, approximately 60 percent work in the public sector and 40 percent work in the private sector.

The report analyzed five years of data on 16- to 64-year-old workers from the Census Bureau's Current Population Survey for the years 2003 through 2007, the most recent years available. The CEPR is a Washington, D.C.-based think tank.

The report is attached as a pdf and is available online at <http://www.cepr.net/>

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