

## Why Romney and Ryan Want to Eliminate Labor Unions

Written by By Bill Fletcher, Jr.  
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Let's be clear: The Republican ticket for the presidency – Mitt Romney and Paul Ryan – have their eyes set on eliminating labor unions from the U.S. scene. No, they will not pass a law eliminating unions; they don't need to. The existing labor laws are so weak that they make it difficult for workers to join and form unions. Additionally, Romney and Ryan would make sure to appoint individuals to the National Labor Relations Board and the Federal Labor Relations Authority who are eager to undermine unions. Further, they could just turn a blind eye to employer attacks on unions.

Why? The answer is quite simple. As opposed to the Republican Party of the early 1970s that contained notables who accepted the right of workers to join and form unions, the situation has changed dramatically. The Republican Party has become deeply hostile to workers having any organizations. They like to portray unions as being contrary to productivity and growth. Actually, the facts are a bit more complicated. If you look at the construction industry, for instance, unionized construction is both more productive and of higher quality than non-union construction. Repeated studies have demonstrated this. Nevertheless, people such as Romney and Ryan do not wish to let the facts stand in the way of their opinions.

Fundamentally, Romney and Ryan see in unions an obstacle to their objectives of increasing wealth for those at the top. Unions demand that workers receive fair compensation for the work that they provide. Unions demand that working conditions be safe in order to protect the lives of the workforce, even if such protections cost the employer a little bit. Unions demand that workers have retirement income so that the latter years of workers' lives are not ones found in poverty, malnutrition and poor health. Most of the world recognizes that these demands are basic human rights. Unfortunately, the Romney/Ryan ticket looks at them as obstacles to profits.

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So, when you hear attacks on unions by Romney and Ryan, and suggestions that unions somehow get in the way of growth, it is fair to ask: "Whose growth?" When you hear attacks on unions for being greedy, it is fair to ask: "Are unions responsible for all of the wealth going to the upper 1 percent of the population?"

Blaming unions, as popular as this is in many Republican circles these days, has a very simple objective: to keep your eyes off of the prize, i.e., to keep you from focusing on who has the wealth and power.

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***"They're Bankrupting Us" – And Twenty other myths about unions.***

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