Asian Pacific American Workers Among the Fastest Growing Groups in the Union Workforce

Benefits and wage gains from unionization large by any measure.

Washington, DC (Vocus) November 13, 2009 -- A new report by the Center for Economic and Policy Research (CEPR) documents a large wage and benefit advantage for Asian Pacific American (APA) workers in unions, relative to their non-union counterparts.

The report, "Unions and Upward Mobility for APA Workers," analyzes data from the Census Bureau's Current Population Survey (CPS) from the period 2003-2007 to reveal a number of advantages of unionization for APA workers.

"As a share of the union workforce, only Latinos are growing at a rate faster than Asian Pacific Americans," said Nicole Woo, Director of Domestic Policy at CEPR and an author of the report. “While this is reflective of workforce trends in general, the data show that joining a union makes a big difference in the wages and benefits of APA workers."

The report finds that unionization raises the pay of APA workers by about $2.00 per hour. APA workers are 19 percentage points more likely to have employer-provided health insurance and 25 percentage points more likely to have an employer-provided pension plan than their non-union counterparts.

Among the other findings in the study:

• about 12.5 percent of Asian Pacific American workers were in a union or represented by a union at their workplace
• almost half (48.5 percent) of APA workers in unions were women
• in 2003-2007, on average, two-thirds (66.1 percent) of unionized APA workers were immigrants
• Nearly half (49.7 percent) of unionized APA workers had a four year college degree or more
• more than four-in-ten (43.2 percent) unionized APA workers were in the public sector
• unionized APA workers are heavily concentrated in several states, with about six-of-ten (60.0 percent) in the Pacific states and about four-in-ten (40.5 percent) in California alone

The full analysis can be found here.

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