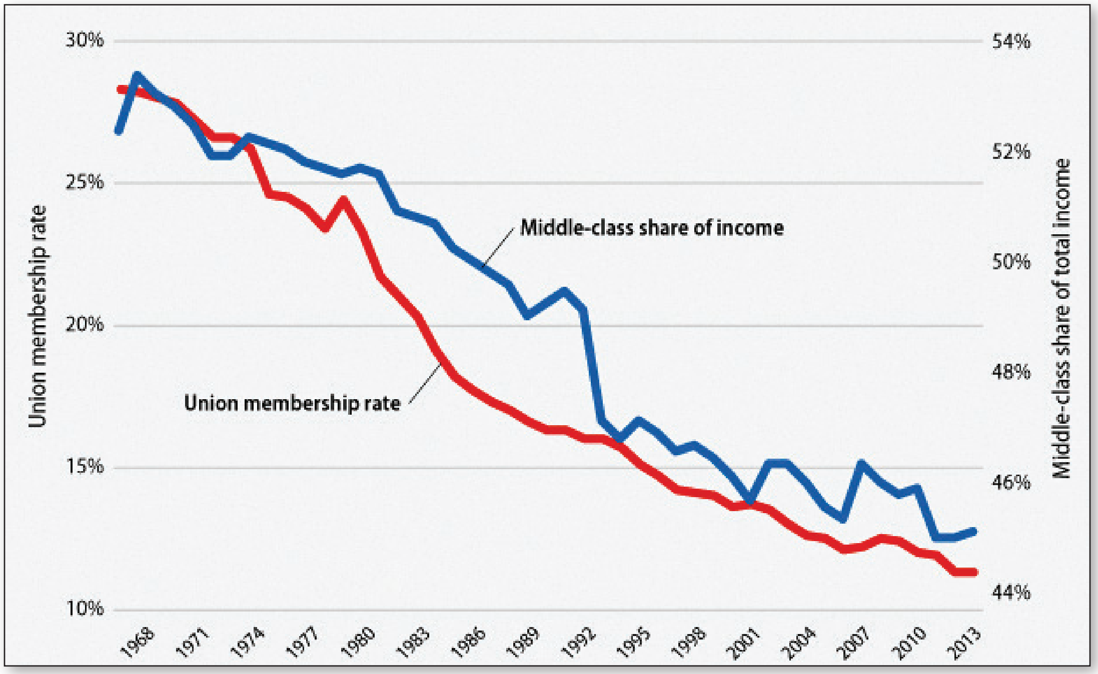
The Disappearing Middle Class

Middle-Class Income Shrinks as Union Membership Declines



Source: Center for American Progress Action Fund.

- From 1991 to 2010, the portion of U.S. adults living in middle-class families fell from 62 percent to 52 percent, according to a study by the Pew Research Center.
- The middle class has been squeezed since the 1970s as the power and membership of unions have diminished. This is partly caused by the decline of unions' impact on the economy—driving up the wages of *all* workers.
- The incomes of working families have fallen or remained stagnant as the wealthy and corporations benefit the most from productivity growth. The income share of middle-class adults dropped from 61 percent in 1971 to 50 percent in 2014.
- The union decline accounts for as much as a third of the lost wages of middle-class workers. Other causes include globalization, techological change, a drop in educational attainment, and public policy (such as the decrease in the real value of the minimum wage and tax cuts for the rich).
- Declining unionization means the union movement is less able to act as a barrier to rising inequality:

  In 1965, CEOS earned 20 times more than frontline workers. In 2016, they earned 273 times more, according to an Economic Policy Institute study.

  From 1979 to 2012, the 1 percent's income grew by 181 percent. The income everyone else rose 2.6 percent.

  Today, the top 0.1 percent—160,000 families—own as much wealth as the bottom 90 percent—145 million families, according to economist Emmanuel Saez
- For the 40.2 million nonunionized men in the private sector, the drop in the power of unious to raise the wages of all workers since 1979 has led to a $5 loss in the weekly income. That's an annual wage loss of $2,704.

We must resist.
Join the union fight for a shared prosperity!

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