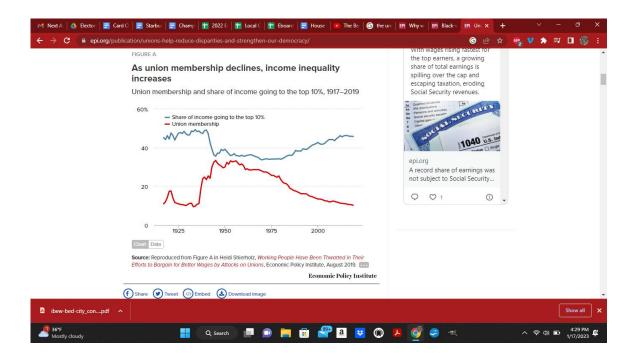


## **Outline:**

- Who We Are
  - Liz Medina, Executive Director, VT AFL-CIO
  - A growing labor federation, representing over 12,500 members
  - o Workers from a variety of industries that are essential to our community
    - We are federal workers, mental health workers, municipal workers, higher education workers, postal workers, communications workers, theatrical stage workers, electrical workers, machinists, operating engineers, ironworkers, laborers, carpenters, healthcare workers, nurses, office workers, aviation workers, roofers, television and radio workers, service workers, sheet metal workers, plumbers, grocery store workers, factory workers.
    - December 23rd & the heroic efforts IBEW Local 300 (Green Mountain Power, Washington Electric Cooperative line workers)

## Our Vision

- What is a union? Why do workers form unions?
- Experiences of workers trying to win better wages and benefits on their own.
- Union Difference (Good wages, Benefits, Healthcare & Pensions)
  - Lifting workers out of poverty
    - \$20/hr min wage, UVM Staff United (AFT)
    - \$20/hr min wage, TA Community Health Center of Burlington, AFT
    - \$191 per week than their nonunion counterparts.
  - Closing the Racial Wealth Gap
    - A Center for American Progress analysis shows that unions boost wealth the most for those who are nonwhite
    - Unions decrease racial resentment, according to a 2020 study by the University of Washington.
  - Paid Family Leave
    - Up to 8 weeks paid parental leave, AFSCME 1343 City Workers
    - Up to 8 weeks paid parental leave, UVM Staff United
  - Workplace Democracy
    - Rabble-Rouser, AFSCME 1343 (Unionized Worker-Owned Cooperative)
- Our Struggle
  - Chart: Union Density and Inequality



- Increasing Inequality (at its worse point since the Great Depression)
  - Non-union low-wage workers struggle just to live each day, making it harder for them to organize and win better wages
- 100 years of progress in labor reform being undone
  - Employers break the law, disrespect workers' rights, as a matter
    of doing business: "In fact, employers are charged with violating
    the law by firing activists, making illegal threats, and engaging in
    other unlawful conduct in 41.5% of all organizing campaigns."
  - One-sides communications: "Nine in 10 employers require employees to attend mandatory captive-audience meetings meetings delivering anti-union messages that employees must attend or else be disciplined or fired."
    - Confessions of a Union Buster by Martin J. Levitt
- Legislative Priorities
  - Strengthen Workers' Rights our Democracy
    - VT Protect the Right to Organize (PRO) Act will make it easier for both private and public sector workers to form a union
    - Town Meeting Referendum (Tanya)
    - Just Cause Eviction (sponsor, but RAD doing)
  - Improve Wages & Working Conditions
    - Minimum Wage
    - Universal Primary Care
    - Paid Family Leave
    - One Fair Wage
    - Safe Staffing
    - Prevent Workplace Violence (targeting healthcare workers)
    - Prevailing Wages for public construction projects
  - A Worker-Led Green New Deal (would include all of the above as well as progressive taxation to fund it)
- Conclusion

- "Simply put, worker power is essential to building our economy back better than before — it's just that basic — to counter corporate power, to grow the economy from the bottom up and the middle out." - President Joe Biden
- "If we fail to look after others when they need help, who will look after us?" – Buddha