

\$9.40 per hour: That's the wage advantage being union gives construction workers

Union construction workers earn an average of \$376 a week more than nonunion construction workers, according to the federal Bureau of Labor Statistics. That's a difference of \$9.40 an hour. That's the "nonunion dues" unrepresented workers never see on their paychecks.

To put it another way, the typical nonunion construction worker has to put in almost 13 hours a day to earn what the typical union construction worker earns in 8 hours.

In a work year of 1,400 hours, union construction workers bring home \$13,160 more than unrepresented workers doing similar jobs. And that doesn't include the higher level of benefits that union workers typically receive, which also helps them take care of themselves and their families.

Overall, union workers in the U.S. earn an average of \$200 a week more than nonunion workers, according to BLS' latest statistics from 2007. That's an advantage of 30.2 percent, \$5 an hour, or \$10,400 a year, based on a 40-hour workweek.

In practical terms, the union advantage in wages is even more dramatic for women and minority workers, who historically put up with below-average wages. One example: Women typically earn only 78 cents for every \$1 that a man earns. But union women actually earn more than nonunion men – union women earn \$1.07 for every \$1 a nonunion man sees on his paycheck.

