



## How to Write an Argumentative Essay

### **Should Public Workers Be Allowed to Strike?**

Say goodbye to 'stress at work' and welcome the 'freedom to express yourself'. Most public workers are denied their right of expression even after being exposed to bad working conditions and rights violations. These violations deny them the morale for performing well on their duties. Enabling workers to strike motivates them to work since it encourages them to speak out whenever they feel their rights, safety, and/or regulations have been compromised. Countries across the globe should always allow public workers to strike.

The primary reason to support the movement that workers should be allowed to strike is to be able to voice out the poor safety conditions that most workers are exposed to. For example, radioactive material could affect residents of its surrounding area—like in the case of the Chernobyl disaster. In this case, workers felt unable to speak up against their poor working conditions and it resulted in a global catastrophe. In the light of poor safety conditions, workers who strike can be justified by the fact that the government and public can be informed (Samuelsen, 2012).

Worker's strikes can also help increase production and confidence after the strike itself. When workers strike for better pay or good working conditions and their demands are met, employees return to their places of work with motivated and higher morale than before the walk-out. This results in higher productivity, which is beneficial to employers. In other instances, workers can be forced to participate in a strike against unfair hours or wages to fit in (Samuelsen, 2012). In addition, other workers might be forced to work beyond their normal or agreed working hours and through striking, it can pave a way for their demands to be met. At the moment a strike is the best way for public workers to protest against poor working conditions and pay democratically. For instance, there was an incident in 1913-1914 – when the Miner's Federation received official notice of wage



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cuts for miners, the trade unions called on bus drivers, railway laborers, and other workers to strike in support of miners (Larkin and McGuire, 2009, p. 35). On the fourth of May, two million laborers walked out to strengthen the cause of the pit workers.

Freedom to strike is healthy for democratic capitalist societies as it encourages unity among workers and prevents conflicts—altercations, the loss of jobs, and even the loss of lives in some cases. For example, in the essential writing of ‘King Martin Luther Jr.’ some Memphis sanitation workers lost their lives and most workers lost their jobs (Honey, 5). Striking helps workers get paid salaries equivalent to the kind of services they are offering and it also prompts workers to air their grievances or to get improved salaries and provisions regarding health benefits (if warranted). However, strikes do not also end up being successful: the editorial board of the Harvard Law failed to compromise with workers that began to strike, for instance.

It is difficult to imagine how many people deny that all workers should have the right to strike. Striking gives workers freedom of speech. Many people also argue that if workers are given the freedom to strike, they will be reluctant to complete their duties and use the opportunity to demand more favors or have more grievances without considering laws (Slater, 23). Some people also argue that public strikes may cause disruption for the general public because of the amenities that can be interrupted—like train and bus services and also hospitals (Samuelsen, 2012). This is according to the trade union’s congress whose strike results also caused disorganization to media spotlight for the employer, forcing them to give in to public pressure and cede to their employee's demands.

On the contrary, legalizing strikes (according to many workers) does not make sense at all to them. Being able to strike, in some industries, will lead to major



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consequences. For example, in the nuclear power industry, any breaches of safety can have consequences – employees can be exposed to nuclear material and it can lead to serious illnesses, such as leukemia, cancer, and radiation sickness (Slater, 50). But, by making public workers' strikes legal, countries can have the best employees—especially in public sectors like hospitals, schools, infrastructure, as well as public officers.

If striking would be legal across the globe, the world would be a better place to enjoy working as an employer—where delivering services to its citizens would be superior. The lives of many workers who work in dangerous work sectors like firefighters, will have their health protected as they will gain the right to better health treatment and they can always strike should their grievances be rejected (Samuelsen, 2012). Public workers would like the government to support them in strike should they feel not comfortable in their work. This helps them to invest fully into their duties and work with passion. Failure to allow striking can therefore lead to a loss of expertise in public spheres: if an employee feels that the service he or she is offering is not worthy a certain pay or is not happy with their working conditions, it might lead to them quitting—hence, losing qualified and skilled workers in the workforce in their particular fields of work. If the government supports workers' strikes, they should also set some restrictions so that the employees do not take advantage of the freedom to demand more than required (Hameed, 210). Governments should set restrictions that allow workers to give proper notices (maybe one week or a month) before going on strike.

According to Act no. 7783, June 1989 – enacted in Brazil, clause 1 of the act states that “the right to strike shall be guaranteed. Workers have the right to determine when the right to strike shall be exercised and to define the range of interest to be defended by strike action”. The Act goes on to impose restrictions on the right to strike,



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including a requirement of 48 hour notice for holding a strike—a requirement that demonstrations and acts of persuasion by strikers shall not impede access to work, impose threats, or cause harm to persons or property. A provision that strikes will merely “have the effect of suspending the contract of employment” and that strikes in essential services require 72 hours notice, is something to consider.

According to most workers, freedom to strike must be tailored so as to be compatible with a county’s labour systems and must protect the rights of employers and the community at large (Hameed, 210). People might think that freedom to strike cannot be compatible with industrial labour systems, but this has been proven wrong and cannot justify the argument that freedom to strike legislations are necessary—one legislation has been included in New Zealand’s recent Employment Contract Act. This same freedom to strike is also supported by the works of the late Mr. Justice Higgins, the second leader of the Commonwealth Arbitration Court and also a leader in the debates in the federal house.

People feel that public workers should not be allowed to strike since it will have a major impact on society. People are also afraid of strikes because they cause plenty of unnecessary occurrences, for example, if public teachers strike, children and teachers will have to stay in their homes. Parents will be forced to find someone to take care of their children while at home. This will add costs to parents as foregoing children’s education is not viable (Samuelsen, 2012). The same cases may happen to doctors and nurses, whereby patients may not get proper access to medical care—which may lead to the loss of lives or spread of diseases. Despite having these side effects as a result of a strike, people need to view strikes from the perspectives of the workers and their safety. If workers like teachers, doctors, nurses, and security officers are not



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comfortable and happy with their employment circumstances, then most they will most likely not be properly motivated to fulfill their duties. For instance, children will not receive quality education from their teachers, patients will not get good medical services, and national security might also fail to provide adequate services (Samuelson, 2012).

Public workers in the US have been outlawed from striking by the government not because of public safety, but because it is the only employment with the capacity to prohibit such strikes (Slater, 2004). However, public workers should strike for a variety of reasons. Not only will public sector strikes enable employees to defend their pensions, but strikes will protect both their conditions and pay.

Striking is a sign of democratic strength in the workplace and in countries across the world. Strikes will not cause harm to an economy, but instead it will improve the economy, as well as the welfare of people.

Public workers should be allowed to strike – it is the tool that allows employees the chance to air their grievances. Public workers should be allowed to strike when their rights, safety, and/or regulations have been compromised. Workers become motivated when they strike and their demands are met. As striking is both a cost for employers and employees, being able to strike also can have mutually beneficial outcomes. Public workers in particular should also be allowed to strike because it will unite them. In addition, strikes among workers can increase confidence and production after the action. There should be regulations if public workers are to be allowed to strike; this will enable the workers to air their grievances in an appropriate manner.



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