

Millions of Working People Don't Get Paid Time Off for Holidays or Vacation

Economic Snapshot • By Elise Gould • September 1, 2015

As Labor Day approaches, about a quarter (24 percent) of private sector workers will not be enjoying a paid day off on Monday. A similar number (23 percent) earn no paid vacation time. While this overall lack of paid holidays and vacation time is quite telling (especially compared to our international peers, who more or less universally mandate paid time off), access to paid time off varies dramatically between workers by their pay. As the chart below shows, only 34 percent of private-sector workers at the bottom of the wage distribution receive paid holidays and only 39 percent receive paid vacation. Among the top 10 percent of workers, meanwhile, 93 percent receive both paid holidays and paid vacation.

Millions of working people don't get paid time off for holidays or vacation

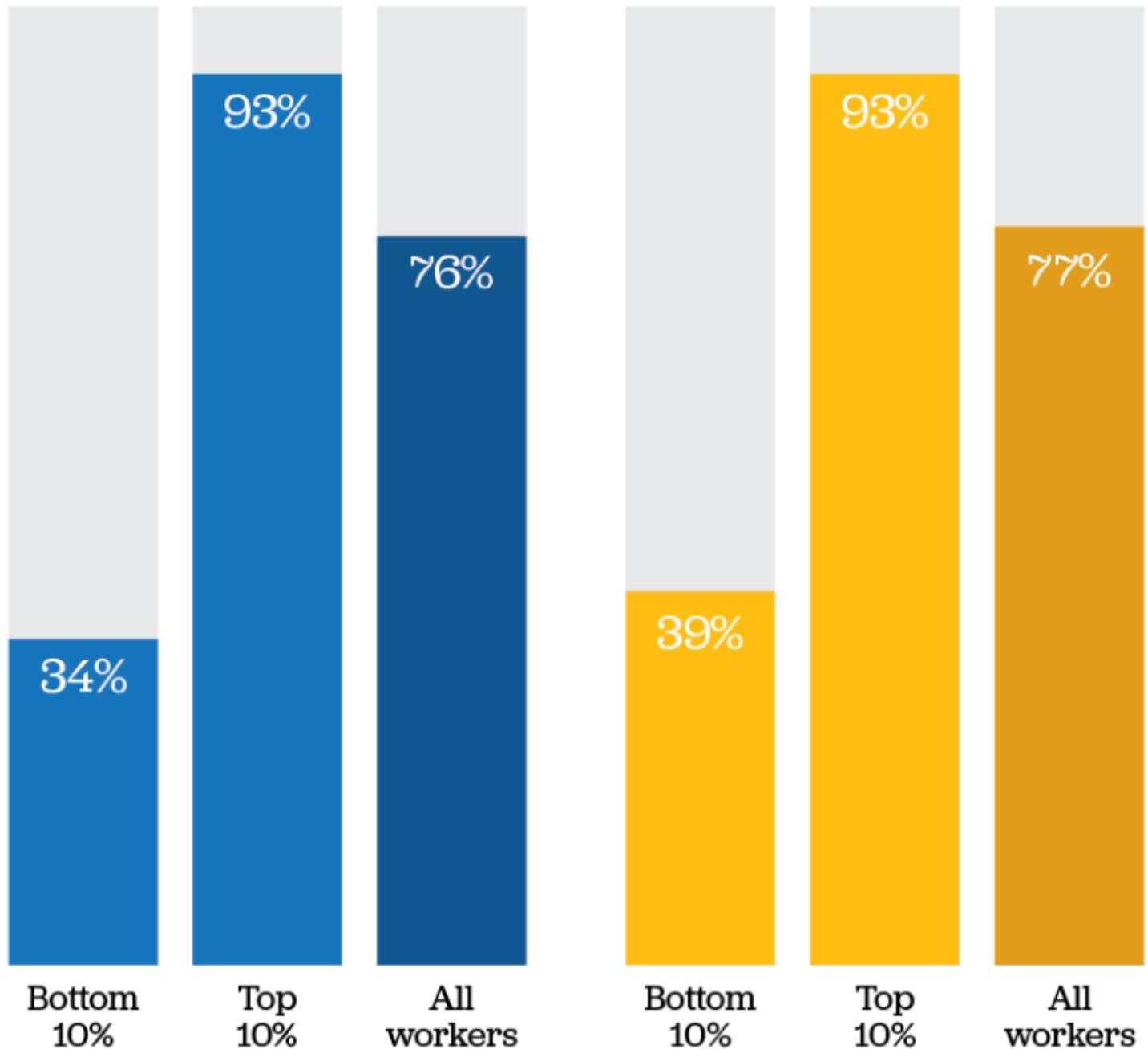
Share of private sector workers at different earnings levels receiving paid holidays and paid vacation



Paid holidays



Paid vacation



Source: EPI analysis of Bureau of Labor Statistics National Compensation Survey, March 2014

ECONOMIC POLICY INSTITUTE

It's important to remember how much the labor movement has done for workers: among its many victories are the establishment of weekends, the institution of a 40-hour work week, and the eradication of child labor. However, we must also remember what remains to be done, including guaranteeing that workers have access to paid leave.

See related work on **Income and wages** | **Wages, Incomes, and Wealth**

See more work by **Elise Gould**