

# News

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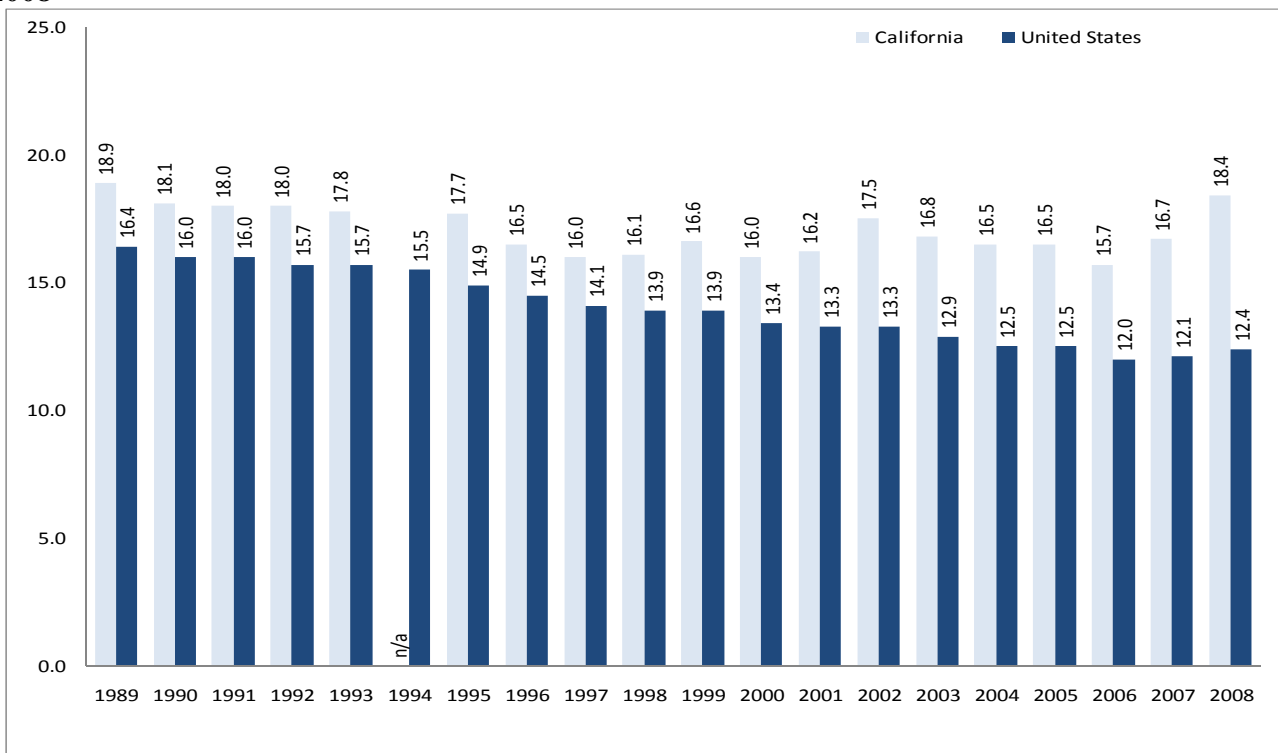
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## UNION MEMBERSHIP IN CALIFORNIA, 2008

In 2008, the number of workers belonging to a union was 2,740,000 in California according to the U.S. Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics. Regional Commissioner Richard J. Holden noted that California had the largest number of union members among all states nationwide. In 2008, 18.4 percent of wage and salary workers in California belonged to a union, compared with the 16.7 percent posted in 2007. At its peak in 1989, the first year for which comparable state data were available, 18.9 percent of workers in California belonged to a union. (See table A.)

Nationally, the number of workers belonging to a union rose by 428,000 to 16.1 million in 2008. Union members accounted for 12.4 percent of employed wage and salary workers, up from 12.1 percent a year earlier. In 1983, the first year for which national union data were available, the union membership rate was 20.1 percent. Notably, California has had union membership rates above the U.S. average since 1989, the first year state data were gathered. (See chart A.)

**Chart A. Members of unions as a percent of employed in the United States and California, 1989-2008**



In addition to California's 2,740,000 wage and salary workers who were union members in 2008, another 169,000 workers were represented by a union on their main job or were covered by an employee association or contract while not being union members themselves. (See table A.) Nationwide, about 16.1 million wage and salary workers were union members in 2008 and about 1.7 million wage and salary workers were represented by a union on their main job, but not union members themselves.

**Table A. Union affiliation of employed wage and salary workers in California, annual averages, 1989-2008 (numbers in thousands)**

| Year | Total employed | Members of unions[1] |                     | Represented by unions [2] |                     |
|------|----------------|----------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------------|
|      |                | Total                | Percent of employed | Total                     | Percent of employed |
| 1989 | 11,826         | 2,239                | 18.9                | 2,584                     | 21.9                |
| 1990 | 12,526         | 2,268                | 18.1                | 2,624                     | 21.0                |
| 1991 | 12,116         | 2,185                | 18.0                | 2,503                     | 20.7                |
| 1992 | 12,077         | 2,169                | 18.0                | 2,520                     | 20.9                |
| 1993 | 12,018         | 2,139                | 17.8                | 2,415                     | 20.1                |
| 1994 | n/a            | n/a                  | n/a                 | n/a                       | n/a                 |
| 1995 | 12,320         | 2,176                | 17.7                | 2,463                     | 20.0                |
| 1996 | 12,461         | 2,061                | 16.5                | 2,340                     | 18.8                |
| 1997 | 12,878         | 2,067                | 16.0                | 2,321                     | 18.0                |
| 1998 | 13,338         | 2,154                | 16.1                | 2,408                     | 18.1                |
| 1999 | 13,811         | 2,286                | 16.6                | 2,527                     | 18.3                |
| 2000 | 14,359         | 2,295                | 16.0                | 2,546                     | 17.7                |
| 2001 | 14,219         | 2,299                | 16.2                | 2,526                     | 17.8                |
| 2002 | 13,955         | 2,444                | 17.5                | 2,619                     | 18.8                |
| 2003 | 14,350         | 2,414                | 16.8                | 2,647                     | 18.4                |
| 2004 | 14,414         | 2,385                | 16.5                | 2,588                     | 18.0                |
| 2005 | 14,687         | 2,424                | 16.5                | 2,610                     | 17.8                |
| 2006 | 14,501         | 2,273                | 15.7                | 2,444                     | 16.9                |
| 2007 | 14,856         | 2,474                | 16.7                | 2,650                     | 17.8                |
| 2008 | 14,889         | 2,740                | 18.4                | 2,909                     | 19.5                |

[1] Data refer to members of a labor union or an employee association similar to a union.

[2] Data refer to members of a labor union or an employee association similar to a union, as well as workers who are not members but whose jobs are covered by a union or employee association contract.

n/a – Not available.

NOTE: Data refer to the sole or principal job of full- and part-time workers. Excluded are all self-employed workers regardless of whether or not their businesses are incorporated. Updated population controls are introduced annually with the release of January data.

In 2008, 29 states and the District of Columbia had union membership rates below that of the U.S. average, 12.4 percent, while 20 states had higher rates, and 1 state had the same rate. (See table 1.) All states in the East North Central, Middle Atlantic, and Pacific divisions reported union membership rates at or above the national average, and all states in the East South Central and West South Central divisions had rates below it. (See chart 1.) Union membership rates rose over the year in 26 states (including California) and the District of Columbia, declined in 20 states, and were unchanged in 4 states.

Six states had union membership rates below 5.0 percent in 2008, with North Carolina having the lowest rate (3.5 percent). The next lowest rates were recorded in Georgia (3.7 percent), South Carolina (3.9 percent), Virginia (4.1 percent), Texas (4.5 percent), and Louisiana (4.6 percent). Three states had union membership rates over 20.0 percent—New York (24.9 percent), Hawaii (24.3 percent), and Alaska (23.5 percent).

About half (8.0 million) of the 16.1 million union members in the U.S. lived in just 6 states (California, 2.7 million; New York, 2.0 million; Illinois, 0.9 million; Pennsylvania, 0.8 million; Michigan, 0.8 million; and Ohio, 0.7 million), though these states accounted for only one-third of wage and salary employment nationally.

State union membership levels depend on both the union membership rate and the employment level. For example, Pennsylvania had 89 percent more union members than Texas, despite having nearly 4.5 million fewer wage and salary workers. Similarly, North Carolina and Hawaii had a comparable number of union members (132,000 and 136,000, respectively), though North Carolina's wage and salary employment level, at 3.8 million, was almost seven times that of Hawaii at 562,000.

### **Technical Note**

The estimates in this release are obtained from the Current Population Survey (CPS), which provides the basic information on the labor force, employment, and unemployment. The survey is conducted monthly for the Bureau of Labor Statistics by the U.S. Census Bureau from a scientifically selected national sample of about 60,000 households. The union membership and earnings data are tabulated from one-quarter of the CPS monthly sample and are limited to wage and salary workers. All self-employed workers are excluded.

Union membership data, particularly for levels, are not strictly comparable with data for earlier years because of the introduction of updated population controls used in the CPS. These updated controls have little or no effect on unemployment rates and other ratios, such as union membership rates. For technical documentation and related information, including reliability of the CPS estimates, see [www.bls.gov/cps/documentation.htm](http://www.bls.gov/cps/documentation.htm).

For personal assistance or further information on union membership, as well as other Bureau programs, contact the Western Information Office at 415-625-2270 from 9:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. and 1:30 pm to 4:30 p.m. PT. Information in this release will be made available to sensory impaired individuals upon request. Voice phone: 202-692-5200, TDD message referral phone number: 1-800-877-8339.

### **Definitions**

The principal definitions used in this release are described briefly below.

*Union members.* Members of a labor union or an employee association similar to a union.

*Represented by unions.* Union members, as well as workers who have no union affiliation but whose jobs are covered by a union or an employee association contract.

*Wage and salary workers.* Workers who receive wages, salaries, commissions, tips, payment in kind, or piece rates. The group includes employees in both the private and public sectors, but for the purposes of the union membership and earnings series, excludes all self-employed persons, regardless of whether or not their businesses are incorporated.

**Table 1. Union affiliation of employed wage and salary workers by state**

(Numbers in thousands)

| State                      | 2007           |                                |                     |                                    |                     | 2008           |                                |                     |                                    |                     |
|----------------------------|----------------|--------------------------------|---------------------|------------------------------------|---------------------|----------------|--------------------------------|---------------------|------------------------------------|---------------------|
|                            | Total employed | Members of unions <sup>1</sup> |                     | Represented by unions <sup>2</sup> |                     | Total employed | Members of unions <sup>1</sup> |                     | Represented by unions <sup>2</sup> |                     |
|                            |                | Total                          | Percent of employed | Total                              | Percent of employed |                | Total                          | Percent of employed | Total                              | Percent of employed |
| Alabama .....              | 1,895          | 180                            | 9.5                 | 201                                | 10.6                | 1,858          | 181                            | 9.8                 | 199                                | 10.7                |
| Alaska .....               | 284            | 68                             | 23.8                | 70                                 | 24.7                | 289            | 68                             | 23.5                | 71                                 | 24.7                |
| Arizona .....              | 2,619          | 230                            | 8.8                 | 255                                | 9.7                 | 2,579          | 227                            | 8.8                 | 254                                | 9.8                 |
| Arkansas .....             | 1,154          | 62                             | 5.4                 | 75                                 | 6.5                 | 1,158          | 68                             | 5.9                 | 85                                 | 7.3                 |
| California .....           | 14,856         | 2,474                          | 16.7                | 2,650                              | 17.8                | 14,889         | 2,740                          | 18.4                | 2,909                              | 19.5                |
| Colorado .....             | 2,204          | 191                            | 8.7                 | 202                                | 9.2                 | 2,254          | 181                            | 8.0                 | 208                                | 9.2                 |
| Connecticut .....          | 1,617          | 253                            | 15.6                | 269                                | 16.6                | 1,625          | 275                            | 16.9                | 291                                | 17.9                |
| Delaware .....             | 396            | 47                             | 12.0                | 50                                 | 12.8                | 391            | 52                             | 13.4                | 57                                 | 14.7                |
| District of Columbia ..... | 278            | 29                             | 10.3                | 38                                 | 13.6                | 288            | 35                             | 12.2                | 41                                 | 14.3                |
| Florida .....              | 7,741          | 455                            | 5.9                 | 562                                | 7.3                 | 7,573          | 482                            | 6.4                 | 601                                | 7.9                 |
| Georgia .....              | 4,181          | 186                            | 4.4                 | 226                                | 5.4                 | 4,084          | 151                            | 3.7                 | 189                                | 4.6                 |
| Hawaii .....               | 556            | 130                            | 23.4                | 135                                | 24.2                | 562            | 136                            | 24.3                | 143                                | 25.5                |
| Idaho .....                | 635            | 33                             | 5.3                 | 41                                 | 6.4                 | 602            | 42                             | 7.1                 | 48                                 | 8.0                 |
| Illinois .....             | 5,802          | 842                            | 14.5                | 884                                | 15.2                | 5,662          | 939                            | 16.6                | 993                                | 17.5                |
| Indiana .....              | 2,779          | 333                            | 12.0                | 359                                | 12.9                | 2,811          | 349                            | 12.4                | 386                                | 13.7                |
| Iowa .....                 | 1,417          | 149                            | 10.5                | 185                                | 13.1                | 1,437          | 153                            | 10.6                | 187                                | 13.0                |
| Kansas .....               | 1,274          | 89                             | 7.0                 | 110                                | 8.7                 | 1,273          | 89                             | 7.0                 | 111                                | 8.7                 |
| Kentucky .....             | 1,734          | 157                            | 9.1                 | 192                                | 11.1                | 1,703          | 146                            | 8.6                 | 163                                | 9.6                 |
| Louisiana .....            | 1,670          | 94                             | 5.6                 | 108                                | 6.5                 | 1,724          | 80                             | 4.6                 | 97                                 | 5.6                 |
| Maine .....                | 574            | 67                             | 11.7                | 79                                 | 13.8                | 574            | 71                             | 12.3                | 84                                 | 14.7                |
| Maryland .....             | 2,598          | 335                            | 12.9                | 376                                | 14.5                | 2,610          | 329                            | 12.6                | 380                                | 14.5                |
| Massachusetts .....        | 2,882          | 379                            | 13.2                | 402                                | 14.0                | 2,909          | 458                            | 15.7                | 491                                | 16.9                |
| Michigan .....             | 4,193          | 819                            | 19.5                | 865                                | 20.6                | 4,089          | 771                            | 18.8                | 801                                | 19.6                |
| Minnesota .....            | 2,460          | 400                            | 16.3                | 419                                | 17.0                | 2,430          | 392                            | 16.1                | 412                                | 17.0                |
| Mississippi .....          | 1,068          | 72                             | 6.7                 | 95                                 | 8.9                 | 1,089          | 57                             | 5.3                 | 79                                 | 7.3                 |
| Missouri .....             | 2,585          | 275                            | 10.7                | 308                                | 11.9                | 2,543          | 285                            | 11.2                | 327                                | 12.8                |
| Montana .....              | 399            | 54                             | 13.5                | 62                                 | 15.6                | 389            | 47                             | 12.2                | 61                                 | 15.7                |
| Nebraska .....             | 836            | 65                             | 7.8                 | 81                                 | 9.7                 | 840            | 70                             | 8.3                 | 90                                 | 10.7                |
| Nevada .....               | 1,177          | 182                            | 15.4                | 208                                | 17.7                | 1,192          | 199                            | 16.7                | 217                                | 18.2                |
| New Hampshire .....        | 631            | 61                             | 9.7                 | 70                                 | 11.2                | 635            | 67                             | 10.6                | 79                                 | 12.4                |
| New Jersey .....           | 3,897          | 748                            | 19.2                | 802                                | 20.6                | 3,843          | 703                            | 18.3                | 731                                | 19.0                |
| New Mexico .....           | 800            | 62                             | 7.7                 | 91                                 | 11.4                | 807            | 58                             | 7.2                 | 94                                 | 11.6                |
| New York .....             | 8,150          | 2,055                          | 25.2                | 2,146                              | 26.3                | 8,165          | 2,029                          | 24.9                | 2,170                              | 26.6                |
| North Carolina .....       | 3,771          | 114                            | 3.0                 | 147                                | 3.9                 | 3,799          | 132                            | 3.5                 | 189                                | 5.0                 |
| North Dakota .....         | 303            | 19                             | 6.4                 | 23                                 | 7.6                 | 308            | 19                             | 6.1                 | 25                                 | 8.2                 |
| Ohio .....                 | 5,187          | 730                            | 14.1                | 797                                | 15.4                | 5,046          | 716                            | 14.2                | 783                                | 15.5                |
| Oklahoma .....             | 1,456          | 103                            | 7.1                 | 124                                | 8.5                 | 1,529          | 102                            | 6.6                 | 127                                | 8.3                 |
| Oregon .....               | 1,582          | 227                            | 14.3                | 243                                | 15.4                | 1,566          | 259                            | 16.6                | 272                                | 17.4                |
| Pennsylvania .....         | 5,496          | 830                            | 15.1                | 910                                | 16.6                | 5,504          | 847                            | 15.4                | 899                                | 16.3                |
| Rhode Island .....         | 497            | 75                             | 15.0                | 78                                 | 15.8                | 471            | 78                             | 16.5                | 82                                 | 17.4                |
| South Carolina .....       | 1,873          | 78                             | 4.1                 | 111                                | 5.9                 | 1,792          | 70                             | 3.9                 | 105                                | 5.8                 |
| South Dakota .....         | 354            | 23                             | 6.5                 | 27                                 | 7.7                 | 369            | 18                             | 5.0                 | 24                                 | 6.4                 |
| Tennessee .....            | 2,596          | 138                            | 5.3                 | 166                                | 6.4                 | 2,534          | 139                            | 5.5                 | 166                                | 6.6                 |
| Texas .....                | 9,899          | 463                            | 4.7                 | 566                                | 5.7                 | 9,991          | 449                            | 4.5                 | 559                                | 5.6                 |
| Utah .....                 | 1,153          | 67                             | 5.8                 | 78                                 | 6.8                 | 1,178          | 68                             | 5.8                 | 84                                 | 7.1                 |
| Vermont .....              | 288            | 30                             | 10.4                | 35                                 | 12.2                | 284            | 29                             | 10.4                | 36                                 | 12.8                |
| Virginia .....             | 3,502          | 129                            | 3.7                 | 167                                | 4.8                 | 3,597          | 146                            | 4.1                 | 178                                | 5.0                 |
| Washington .....           | 2,874          | 579                            | 20.2                | 616                                | 21.4                | 2,912          | 578                            | 19.8                | 626                                | 21.5                |
| West Virginia .....        | 724            | 97                             | 13.3                | 107                                | 14.7                | 736            | 101                            | 13.8                | 112                                | 15.3                |
| Wisconsin .....            | 2,631          | 376                            | 14.3                | 405                                | 15.4                | 2,642          | 396                            | 15.0                | 422                                | 16.0                |
| Wyoming .....              | 239            | 19                             | 7.9                 | 22                                 | 9.4                 | 241            | 19                             | 7.7                 | 21                                 | 8.9                 |

<sup>1</sup> Data refer to members of a labor union or an employee association similar to a union.

<sup>2</sup> Data refer to members of a labor union or an employee association similar to a union as well as workers who report no union affiliation but whose jobs are covered by a union or an employee association contract.

NOTE: Data refer to the sole or principal job of full- and part-time workers. Excluded are all self-employed workers regardless of whether or not their businesses are incorporated. Updated population controls are introduced annually with the release of January data.

# Chart 1. Union membership rates by state, 2008 annual averages

(U.S. rate = 12.4 percent)

