

# News

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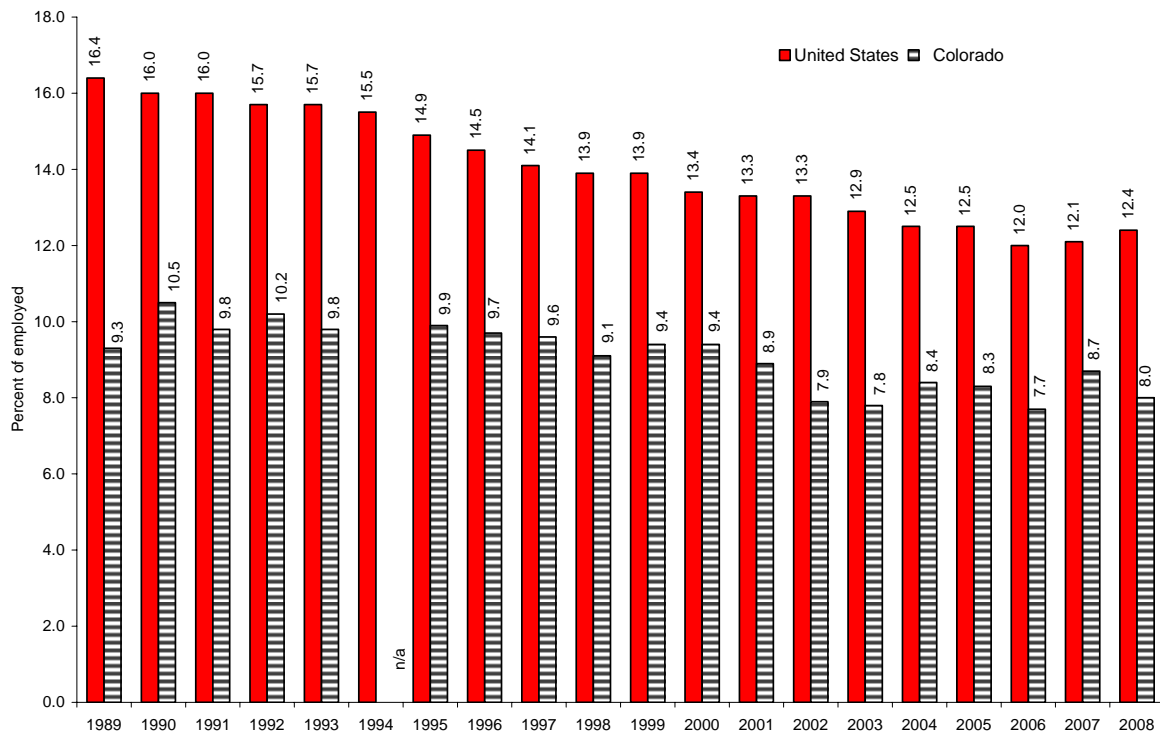
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## UNION MEMBERSHIP IN 2008 Membership Rate in Colorado was 8.0 Percent

In 2008, the number of workers in Colorado belonging to a union was 181,000, the Bureau of Labor Statistics of the U.S. Department of Labor reported today. Regional Commissioner Stanley W. Suchman noted that union members accounted for 8.0 percent of wage and salary workers in Colorado in 2008, compared with the 8.7 percent posted in 2007. At its peak in 1990, the union membership rate for the State was 10.5 percent. (See chart A.)

Nationally, the number of workers belonging to a union rose by 428,000 to 16,098,000 in 2008. Union members accounted for 12.4 percent of employed wage and salary workers, up from 12.1 percent in 2007. In 1983, the first year for which comparable national union data were available, the union membership rate was 20.1 percent. Since 1989, when state data were first available for comparison, Colorado's union membership rate has been below the U.S. average every year.

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



In addition to Colorado's 181,000 wage and salary workers who were union members in 2008, another 27,000 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. 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 Colorado, annual averages, 1989 – 2008 (Numbers in thousands)**

Year	Total employed	Members of unions <sup>1</sup>		Represented by unions <sup>2</sup>	
		Total	Percent of employed	Total	Percent of employed
1989	1,395	129	9.3	158	11.3
1990	1,473	154	10.5	177	12.0
1991	1,480	145	9.8	174	11.7
1992	1,478	150	10.2	177	11.9
1993	1,559	153	9.8	178	11.4
1994	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
1995	1,725	170	9.9	208	12.0
1996	1,722	167	9.7	185	10.8
1997	1,814	174	9.6	201	11.1
1998	1,887	171	9.1	189	10.0
1999	1,927	181	9.4	199	10.4
2000	1,984	187	9.4	209	10.6
2001	2,000	179	8.9	207	10.3
2002	1,996	157	7.9	180	9.0
2003	2,007	156	7.8	180	9.0
2004	2,050	172	8.4	191	9.3
2005	2,052	170	8.3	193	9.4
2006	2,154	165	7.7	186	8.6
2007	2,204	191	8.7	202	9.2
2008	2,254	181	8.0	208	9.2

<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 are not members but whose jobs are covered by a union or employee association contract.

n/a - Not available.

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.) Union membership rates rose over the year in 26 states and the District of Columbia, declined in 20 states (including Colorado), 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). (See chart 1.) Three states had union membership rates over 20.0 percent—New York (24.9 percent), Hawaii (24.3 percent), and Alaska (23.5 percent).

Colorado is one of eight states in the Mountain division; in this geographic grouping, only Nevada (16.7 percent) posted a union membership rate above the national average. In the East North Central, Middle Atlantic, and the Pacific divisions, all of the states reported union membership rates at or above that for the United States. In contrast, all states in the East South

Central and West South Central divisions had union membership rates that were below the national average.

About half (8.0 million) of the 16.1 million union members in the United States 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 employment level and union membership rate. For example, Colorado and Alabama had the same number of union members (181,000) even though Colorado had nearly 400,000 more wage and salary workers. Similarly, North Carolina and Hawaii had a comparable number of union members (132,000 and 136,000, respectively), even though North Carolina's wage and salary employment level was almost seven times that of Hawaii.

### 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 in the U.S. The survey is conducted monthly for the Bureau of Labor Statistics by the U.S. Census Bureau from a scientifically selected sample of about 60,000 households nationwide. The union membership 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. The effect of the revised population controls on the union membership estimates is unknown. These updated controls had 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 data, contact the Kansas City Information Office at 816-285-7000 from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. and 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. CT. Information in this release will be made available to sensory impaired individuals upon request. Voice phone: 202-691-5200, 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, 2007-2008**  
(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.

NOTE: Data refer to the sole or principal job of full- and part-time wage and salary 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)**

