

# AFL-CIO

AMERICA'S UNIONS

# Union Membership in the US

## Overall unionization levels and rates

- In 2022, more than 16 million workers in the United States were represented by a union—an **increase of 200,000 from 2021**.
- At the same time, **the share of workers represented by a union declined from 11.6% to 11.3%**.
- How is it possible that unionization *levels* increased but unionization *rates* decreased in 2022? The answer is straightforward: More jobs were unionized, but nonunion jobs were added at a faster rate.

# Union Membership

## Overall unionization levels and rates

Of all major racial and ethnic groups, Black workers continue to have the highest unionization rates, at **12.8%**. This compares with 11.2% for white workers, 10.0% for Latinx workers, and 9.2% for Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) workers.

The gender gap in unionization is small—0.6 percentage points—and held steady in 2022. The unionization rate for men is 11.6% and the unionization rate for women is 11.0%.

Union women will overtake men in the coming years.

# Union Membership

- Union membership peaked in the 1950s at about one-third of the private sector workforce, but is just over 6 percent today.
- The current level of private sector union membership is the lowest recorded since the enactment of the National Labor Relations Act in 1935
- Contrast this percentage to public sector employees where 33.9 percent belonged to a union in 2021.

# Union Membership

Number of unionized workers in the United States increased by 200,000 from 2021 to 2022.

Union growth came entirely from workers of color.

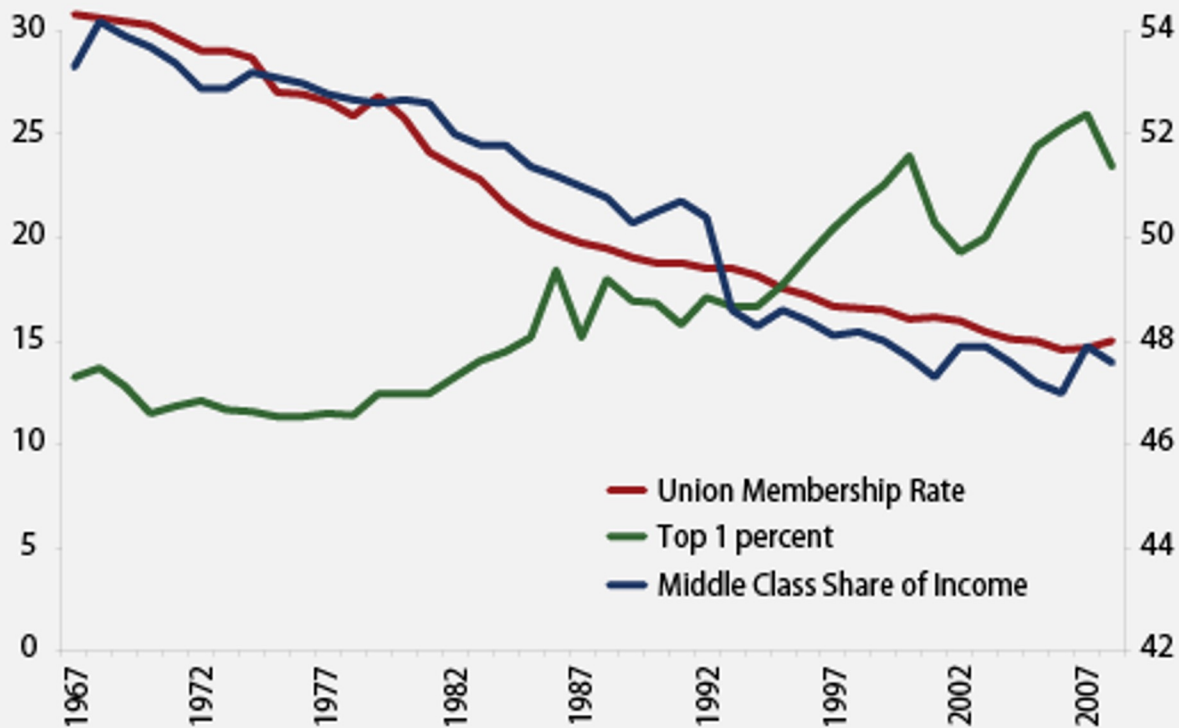
Increase in 231,000 unionized workers of color last year, while white unionized workers actually *decreased* by 31,000. Further, of all racial and ethnic groups,

Black workers have continued leading unionization rates, at 12.8 percent, higher than the figure of total unionized workers.

## As Union Membership Rates Decrease, Middle Class Share of Income Shrinks and Top 1 Percent Incomes Explode

Union Membership Rate/Share of Income Going to Top 1 Percent

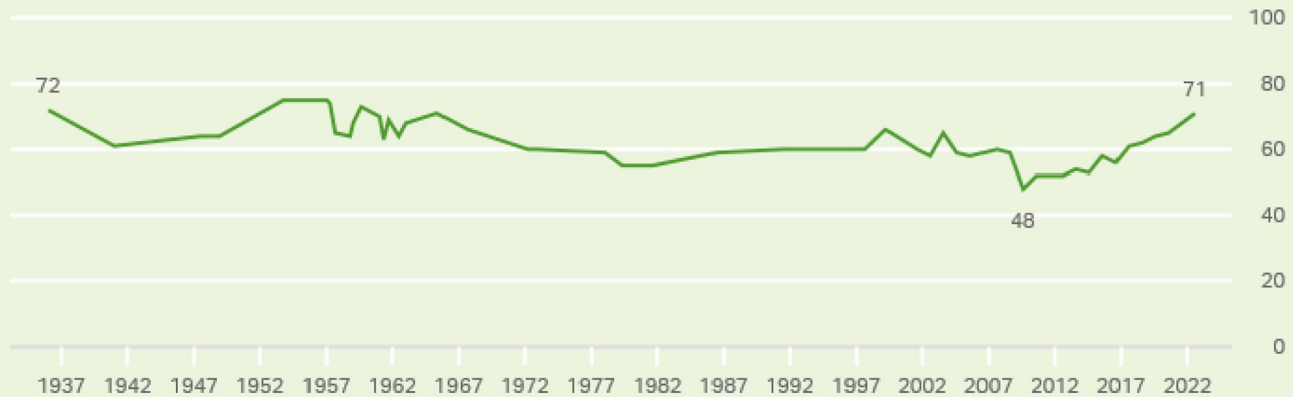
Middle Class Share of Aggregate Income



# Historical Support for Unions

Do you approve or disapprove of labor unions?

— % Approve



GALLUP

# Current Support for Unions

Nationwide support for organized labor has reached a high not seen since the 1970s.

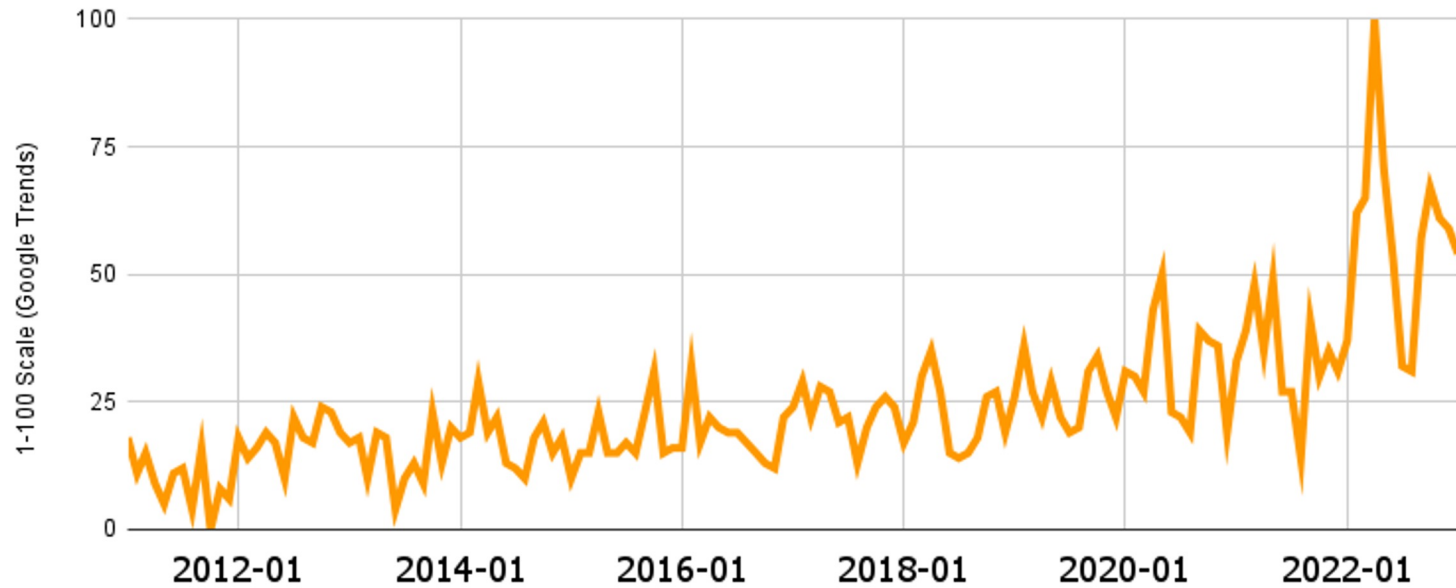
Seventy-one percent of Americans now approve of labor unions. Although statistically similar to last year's 68%, it is up from 64% before the pandemic and is the highest since 1965.

Voters under 45 are generally more positive toward unions than those over 45, with an average favorability (out of 100) of 54.2 throughout 2021. That's higher than the average favorability of the Supreme Court and Congress

The number of unionized workers in the United States increased by 200,000 from 2021 to 2022. And that growth came entirely from workers of color. There was an increase in 231,000 unionized workers of color last year, while white unionized workers actually *decreased* by 31,000. Further, of all racial and ethnic groups, Black workers have continued leading unionization rates, at 12.8 percent, higher than the figure of total unionized workers.



## "How Do I Form A Union?" (Google searches 2011-2022)



# Corporations Attack the Right to Organize

The New York Times

## Uber Drivers Cannot Unionize, Says National Labor Relations Board

A memo says the drivers are contractors, not employees.

5.15.2019 5:45 PM

### How Amazon Crushes Unions

In a secret settlement in Virginia, Amazon swore off threatening and intimidating workers. As the company confronts increased labor unrest, its tactics are under scrutiny.



(Gabriele Holtermann-Gorden/ZUMA Press/Newscom)

# Young Workers Driving Union Campaigns

Amazon

Starbucks

Universities

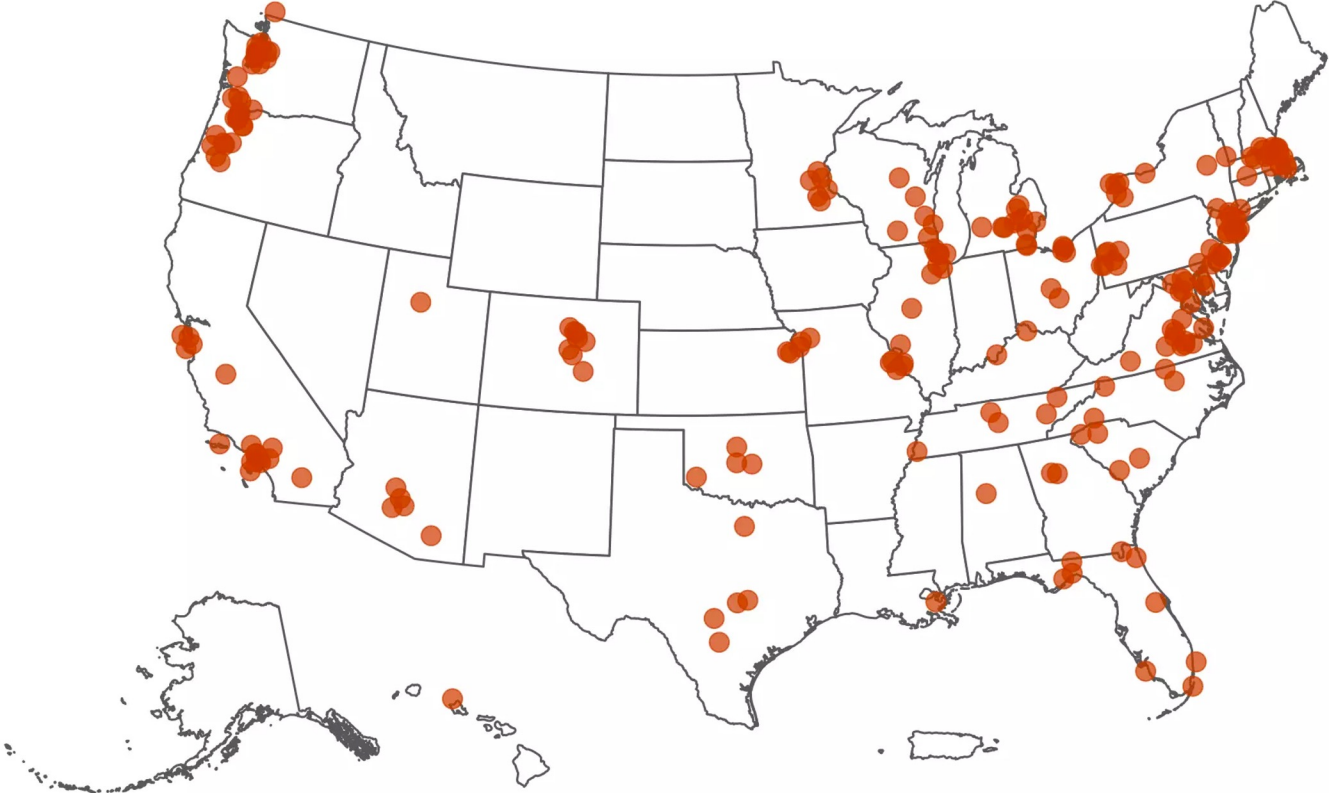
Trader Joe's

Microsoft

Google



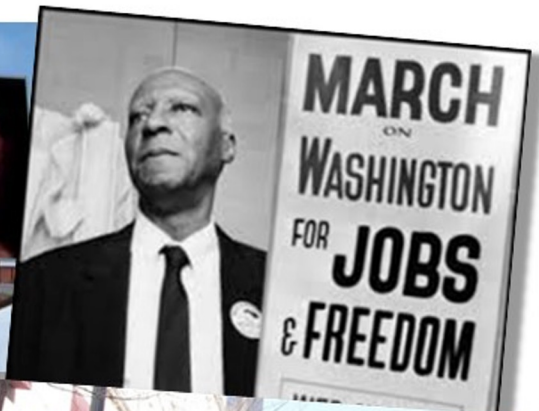
# Open Starbucks Union Filings



Location is approximate based on cities. Each is jittered so overlapping cases are obvious.



# The Labor Movement is a Social Justice Movement

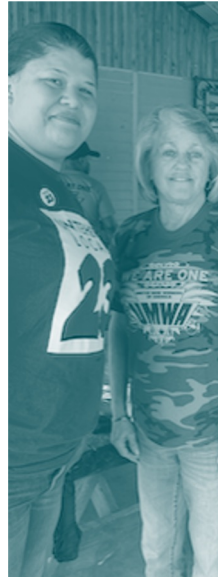


# The Labor Movement: Building a New Social Contract

- Well-paying, climate friendly **jobs** and investment in communities;
- **Enforcement of rights**, including freedom of association and collective bargaining and workers' rights in the digital age;
- **Access to social protection**, including a global social protection fund for the poorest countries and increased overseas development aid for social protection programs;
- **Fostering equality** by tackling racism, gender discrimination, discrimination against migrants, and other forms of discrimination; and
- **Inclusive, sustainable development** based in multilateral cooperation, commitment to the Sustainable Development Goals, and promoting equitable access to technology.

In order to rebuild trust in democracy, we must rebuild the floor on which workers and their families can stand.

# Turning 1 trillion USD into one million new union jobs



# U.S. investment laws

## American Rescue Plan

- \$2T
- Broad Recovery Funds
- some manufacturing/training \$

## Bipartisan Infrastructure Law/ IIJA

- \$1.2T\*
- Broad infrastructure investment, **energy, transportation**
- **Batteries, H2, materials mfg**
- PLA, apprenticeship, Buy America expansion

## CHIPS +

- \$280B+
- **Semiconductor manufacturing**
- Science + R&D
- workforce \$

## Inflation Reduction Act

- \$370B+\*
- **Major Energy Projects**
- **Major Clean Tech Manufacturing**
- Significant labor and domestic content conditions



# Historic investment in jobs

The Biden administration's Infrastructure and Jobs Act and Inflation Reduction Act represent a historic investment in domestic construction, manufacturing, and transport



6 M jobs



9 M jobs

Upper end jobs  
estimates

# Focus on the future: highest job creation potential

Wind



Solar

EV & battery



Hydrogen & CCS



# Challenges



Anti-union employers



Laws make it hard to form unions



Slow and complex permitting



Skills needed



Conflicts with environmental movement



Information & capacity

# Getting Involved!



# Fighting Wage Theft

Students at Penn State organizing to hold Nike accountable. It involves wage theft in factory in Thailand. Owe workers over \$500,000 dollars.

Organizing on campus to make sure that university enforces its labor rights standards in licensing agreement which is part of the code of conduct



**Thank you!**

**[https://www.youtube.com/watch?app=desktop  
&v=f2Oc9K3qaMI](https://www.youtube.com/watch?app=desktop&v=f2Oc9K3qaMI)**