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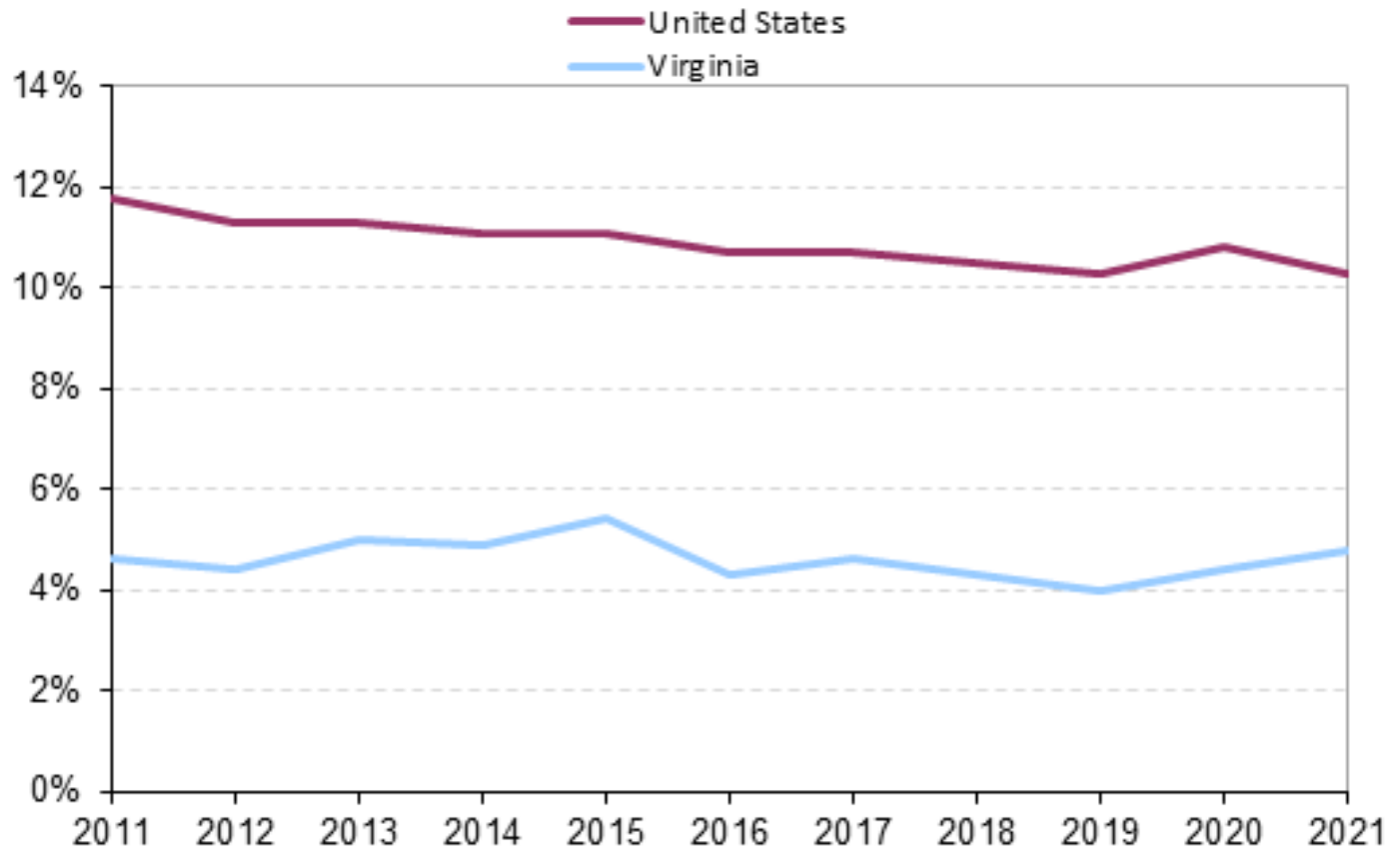
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Union Members in Virginia — 2021

In 2021, union members accounted for 4.8 percent of wage and salary workers in Virginia, compared with 4.4 percent in 2020, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reported today. Regional Commissioner Alexandra Hall Bovee noted that the union membership rate for the state was at its peak in 1992, when it averaged 9.3 percent, and at its low point in 2007 at 3.7 percent. (See [chart 1](#) and [table A](#).) Nationwide, union members accounted for 10.3 percent of employed wage and salary workers in 2021. The rate was down from 10.8 percent in 2020 when the rate increased due to a disproportionately large decline in the total number of nonunion workers compared with the decline in the number of union members. The 2021 unionization rate for the nation was the same as the 2019 rate of 10.3 percent. Since 1989, when state data became available, union membership rates in Virginia have been the below the U.S. rate.

Chart 1. Members of unions as a percent of employed in the United States and Virginia, 2011–21



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Virginia had 176,000 union members in 2021. In addition to these members, another 64,000 wage and salary workers in Virginia were represented by a union on their main job or covered by an employee association or contract while not union members themselves.

Nationwide, 14.0 million wage and salary workers were union members in 2021 and 1.8 million wage and salary workers were not affiliated with a union but had jobs covered by a union contract. The number of wage and salary workers belonging to unions (14.0 million) was down by 241,000 from 2020.

Table A. Union affiliation of employed wage and salary workers in Virginia, annual averages, 2011–2021 (numbers in thousands)

Year	Total employed	Members of unions ⁽¹⁾		Represented by unions ⁽²⁾	
		Total	Percent of employed	Total	Percent of employed
2011.....	3,550	163	4.6	198	5.6
2012.....	3,592	159	4.4	197	5.5
2013.....	3,601	180	5.0	229	6.4
2014.....	3,665	179	4.9	228	6.2
2015.....	3,736	202	5.4	258	6.9
2016.....	3,748	160	4.3	226	6.0
2017.....	3,801	176	4.6	222	5.8
2018.....	3,875	168	4.3	213	5.5
2019.....	3,881	156	4.0	201	5.2
2020.....	3,703	164	4.4	201	5.4
2021.....	3,685	176	4.8	240	6.5

Note: See footnotes at end of table.

Footnotes:

(1) Data refer to members of a labor union or an employee association similar to a union.

(2) Data refer to both union members and 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 wage and salary workers. All self-employed workers are excluded, both those with incorporated businesses as well as those with unincorporated businesses. Updated population controls are introduced annually with the release of January data.

In 2021, 30 states and the District of Columbia had union membership rates below that of the U.S. average, 10.3 percent, while 20 states had rates above it. Ten states had union membership rates below 5.0 percent in 2021. South Carolina had the lowest rate (1.7 percent), followed by North Carolina (2.6 percent) and Utah (3.5 percent). Two states had union membership rates over 20.0 percent in 2021: Hawaii (22.4 percent) and New York (22.2 percent). (See [chart 2.](#))

Coronavirus (COVID-19) Pandemic Impact on 2021 Union Members Data

Union membership data for 2021 continue to reflect the impact on the labor market of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. Comparisons with union membership measures for 2020, including metrics such as the union membership rate should be interpreted with caution. The onset of the pandemic in 2020 led to an increase in the unionization rate for the nation due to a disproportionately large decline in the number of nonunion workers compared with the decline in the number of union members. The decrease in the national rate in 2021 reflects a large gain in the number of nonunion workers and a decrease in the number of union workers. More information on labor market developments in recent months is available at www.bls.gov/covid19/effects-of-covid-19-pandemic-and-response-on-the-employment-situation-news-release.htm.

Technical Note

The estimates in this release are obtained from the Current Population Survey (CPS), which provides 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 eligible households. 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.

Beginning in January of each year, data reflect revised population controls used in the CPS. Additional information about population controls is available on the BLS website at www.bls.gov/cps/documentation.htm#pop.

Information about the reliability of data from the CPS and guidance on estimating standard errors is available at www.bls.gov/cps/documentation.htm#reliability.

Definitions

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

Union members. Data refer to members of a labor union or an employee association similar to a union.

Union membership rate. Data refer to the proportion of total wage and salary workers who are union members.

Represented by unions. Data refer to both union members and workers who report 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. Union membership and earnings data exclude all self-employed workers, both those with incorporated businesses as well as those with unincorporated businesses.

Information in this release will be made available to individuals with sensory impairments upon request. Voice phone: 202-691-5200; Telecommunications Relay Service: 7-1-1.

Chart 2. Union membership rates by state, 2021 annual averages

