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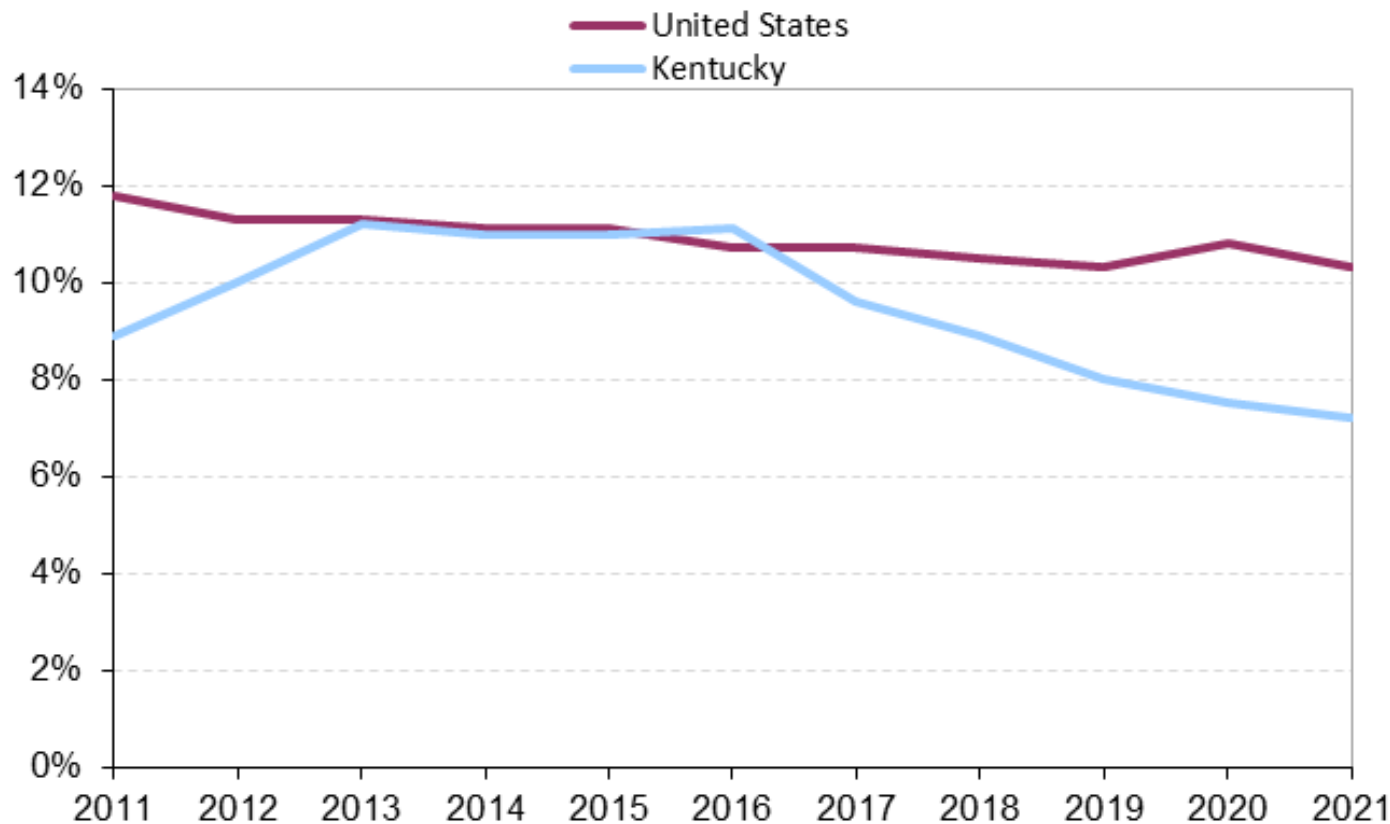
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### Union Members in Kentucky — 2021

In 2021, union members accounted for 7.2 percent of wage and salary workers in Kentucky, compared with 7.5 percent in 2020, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reported today. Regional Commissioner Janet S. Rankin noted that the union membership rate for the state was at its peak in 1989, when it averaged 14.8 percent, and at its low point in 2021 at 7.2 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 Kentucky have been below the U.S. average apart from one year.

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



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Kentucky had 126,000 union members in 2021. In addition to these members, another 44,000 wage and salary workers in Kentucky 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 Kentucky, annual averages, 2011–2021 (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
2011 .....	1,678	150	8.9	173	10.3
2012 .....	1,742	174	10.0	198	11.4
2013 .....	1,735	194	11.2	226	13.0
2014 .....	1,714	189	11.0	219	12.8
2015 .....	1,705	187	11.0	207	12.1
2016 .....	1,710	190	11.1	228	13.4
2017 .....	1,810	174	9.6	232	12.8
2018 .....	1,812	161	8.9	207	11.4
2019 .....	1,786	144	8.0	169	9.5
2020 .....	1,694	127	7.5	160	9.4
2021 .....	1,740	126	7.2	170	9.8

Footnotes:

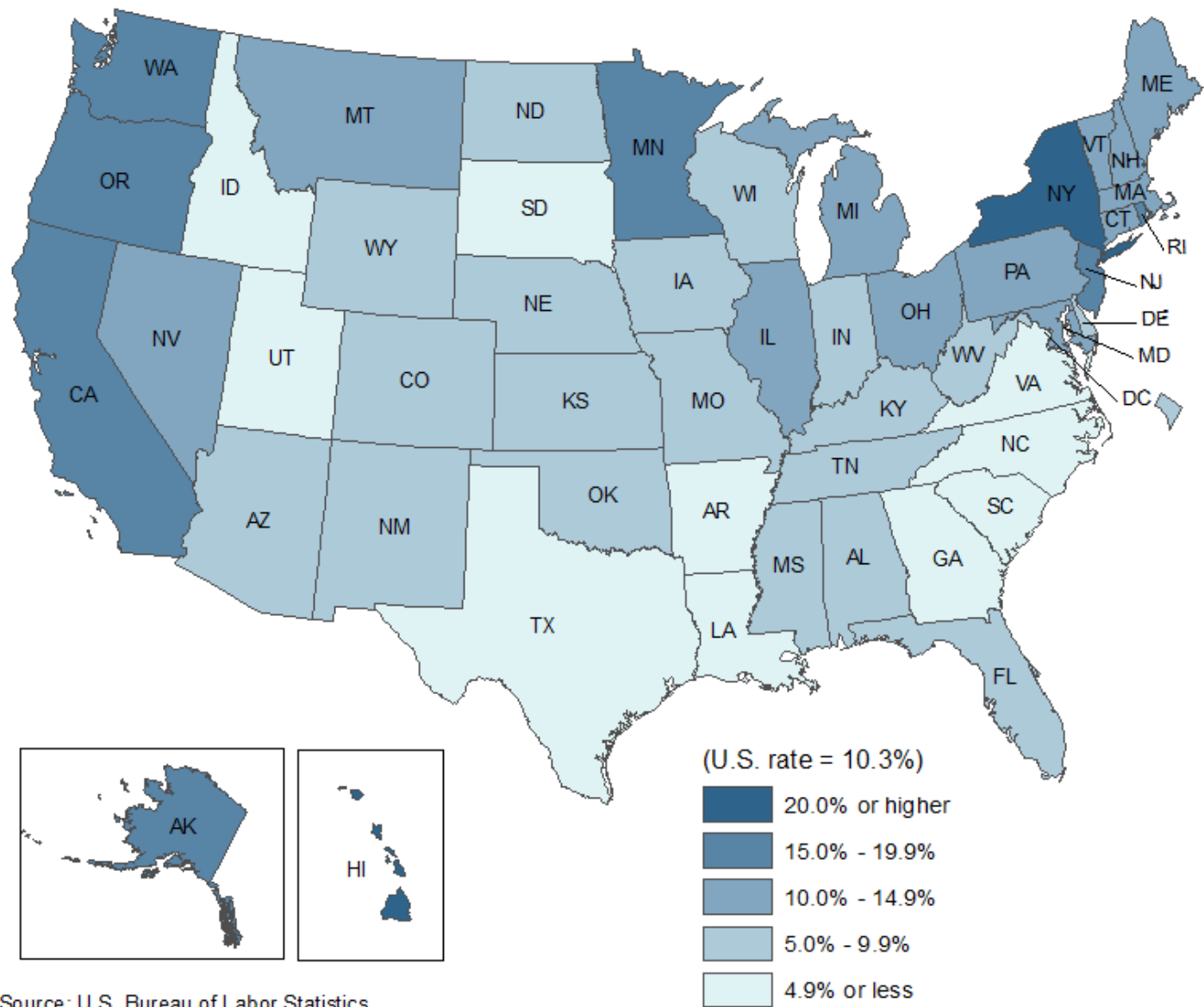
(1) Data refer to members of a labor union or an employee association similar to a union.

(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. (See [table 1](#).) 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](#).)

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



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

Data on union members for 2020 reflect the impact on the labor market of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic and efforts to contain it. Comparisons with union membership measures for earlier years, including metrics such as the union membership rate should be interpreted with caution. The overall union membership rate and the rates by many demographic and employment characteristics increased despite declines in the number of union members. These increases reflect the disproportionately large decline in total wage and salary employment (mostly among nonunion workers) compared with the decline in the number of union members. Increases in median weekly earnings reflect the disproportionately large decline in employment in 2020, notably among lower-paid workers, such as those in the leisure and hospitality industry. 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](http://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](http://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](http://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.



**Table 1. Union affiliation of employed wage and salary workers by state, 2020–2021 annual averages  
(numbers in thousands)**

State	2020					2021				
	Total employed	Members of unions(1)		Represented by unions(2)		Total employed	Members of unions(1)		Represented by unions(2)	
		Total	Percent of employed	Total	Percent of employed		Total	Percent of employed	Total	Percent of employed
Alabama .....	1,896	151	8.0	164	8.7	1,938	115	5.9	133	6.9
Alaska .....	280	49	17.7	55	19.5	293	46	15.8	50	17.2
Arizona .....	2,909	155	5.3	207	7.1	3,116	167	5.4	208	6.7
Arkansas .....	1,158	55	4.7	69	5.9	1,167	46	3.9	51	4.4
California .....	15,069	2,441	16.2	2,655	17.6	15,497	2,468	15.9	2,757	17.8
Colorado .....	2,470	182	7.4	202	8.2	2,538	165	6.5	192	7.5
Connecticut .....	1,533	262	17.1	282	18.4	1,524	223	14.6	248	16.3
Delaware .....	424	41	9.7	44	10.3	435	42	9.7	44	10.2
District of Columbia .....	343	30	8.6	33	9.5	350	31	8.9	35	9.9
Florida .....	8,155	524	6.4	644	7.9	8,667	448	5.2	529	6.1
Georgia .....	4,173	194	4.6	271	6.5	4,404	211	4.8	256	5.8
Hawaii .....	508	120	23.7	130	25.7	541	121	22.4	131	24.1
Idaho .....	732	41	5.6	47	6.4	767	36	4.7	42	5.5
Illinois .....	5,178	739	14.3	788	15.2	5,397	752	13.9	818	15.2
Indiana .....	2,838	235	8.3	270	9.5	2,844	256	9.0	290	10.2
Iowa .....	1,401	93	6.6	128	9.1	1,428	93	6.5	118	8.3
Kansas .....	1,282	114	8.9	144	11.2	1,300	120	9.2	148	11.4
Kentucky .....	1,694	127	7.5	160	9.4	1,740	126	7.2	170	9.8
Louisiana .....	1,682	99	5.9	113	6.7	1,722	81	4.7	98	5.7
Maine .....	559	82	14.7	93	16.7	563	70	12.4	83	14.7
Maryland .....	2,690	351	13.1	380	14.1	2,689	295	11.0	332	12.3
Massachusetts .....	2,982	357	12.0	383	12.8	3,181	402	12.6	433	13.6
Michigan .....	3,974	604	15.2	661	16.6	4,047	540	13.3	620	15.3
Minnesota .....	2,515	398	15.8	427	17.0	2,608	416	16.0	446	17.1
Mississippi .....	1,034	74	7.1	86	8.3	1,080	59	5.5	74	6.9
Missouri .....	2,525	238	9.4	254	10.1	2,615	235	9.0	266	10.2
Montana .....	419	50	12.0	54	13.0	438	49	11.2	56	12.9
Nebraska .....	890	85	9.6	94	10.5	896	61	6.8	72	8.0
Nevada .....	1,208	161	13.4	186	15.4	1,249	153	12.2	176	14.1
New Hampshire .....	629	62	9.8	70	11.1	643	65	10.1	73	11.3
New Jersey .....	3,719	600	16.1	660	17.8	3,762	608	16.2	672	17.9
New Mexico .....	743	53	7.1	64	8.6	770	58	7.5	70	9.1
New York .....	7,552	1,661	22.0	1,784	23.6	7,770	1,729	22.2	1,869	24.1
North Carolina .....	4,128	129	3.1	161	3.9	4,225	108	2.6	142	3.4
North Dakota .....	338	21	6.2	25	7.4	349	19	5.4	24	6.9
Ohio .....	4,815	637	13.2	686	14.2	4,966	596	12.0	647	13.0
Oklahoma .....	1,501	90	6.0	114	7.6	1,546	87	5.6	105	6.8
Oregon .....	1,694	275	16.2	293	17.3	1,784	318	17.8	336	18.8
Pennsylvania .....	5,307	717	13.5	775	14.6	5,380	693	12.9	732	13.6
Rhode Island .....	455	81	17.8	87	19.1	474	75	15.7	83	17.4
South Carolina .....	2,036	59	2.9	77	3.8	2,070	34	1.7	42	2.0
South Dakota .....	385	17	4.3	21	5.5	393	16	4.0	20	5.0
Tennessee .....	2,678	117	4.4	137	5.1	2,820	145	5.2	166	5.9
Texas .....	11,607	563	4.9	693	6.0	12,057	454	3.8	571	4.7
Utah .....	1,403	51	3.7	75	5.4	1,465	51	3.5	96	6.5
Vermont .....	265	31	11.8	36	13.8	262	32	12.3	37	14.2
Virginia .....	3,703	164	4.4	201	5.4	3,685	176	4.8	240	6.5
Washington .....	3,201	557	17.4	596	18.6	3,308	629	19.0	661	20.0
West Virginia .....	666	71	10.7	75	11.3	693	66	9.6	73	10.5
Wisconsin .....	2,592	227	8.7	264	10.2	2,705	215	7.9	251	9.3
Wyoming .....	240	18	7.6	22	9.3	234	13	5.7	16	6.9

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.

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State	2019					2020				
	Total employed	Members of unions(1)		Represented by unions(2)		Total employed	Members of unions(1)		Represented by unions(2)	
		Total	Percent of employed	Total	Percent of employed		Total	Percent of employed	Total	Percent of employed
Alabama .....	2,041	173	8.5	199	9.8	1,896	151	8.0	164	8.7
Alaska .....	282	48	17.1	53	18.7	280	49	17.7	55	19.5
Arizona .....	3,028	174	5.7	214	7.1	2,909	155	5.3	207	7.1
Arkansas .....	1,200	62	5.2	71	5.9	1,158	55	4.7	69	5.9
California .....	16,485	2,504	15.2	2,726	16.5	15,069	2,441	16.2	2,655	17.6
Colorado .....	2,631	237	9.0	259	9.8	2,470	182	7.4	202	8.2
Connecticut .....	1,680	244	14.5	269	16.0	1,533	262	17.1	282	18.4
Delaware .....	432	38	8.7	43	9.9	424	41	9.7	44	10.3
District of Columbia .....	361	34	9.3	37	10.2	343	30	8.6	33	9.5
Florida .....	8,827	551	6.2	667	7.6	8,155	524	6.4	644	7.9
Georgia .....	4,422	180	4.1	223	5.0	4,173	194	4.6	271	6.5
Hawaii .....	574	135	23.5	147	25.5	508	120	23.7	130	25.7
Idaho .....	764	37	4.9	46	6.0	732	41	5.6	47	6.4
Illinois .....	5,658	771	13.6	832	14.7	5,178	739	14.3	788	15.2
Indiana .....	3,007	249	8.3	296	9.8	2,838	235	8.3	270	9.5
Iowa .....	1,543	97	6.3	122	7.9	1,401	93	6.6	128	9.1
Kansas .....	1,280	112	8.7	130	10.1	1,282	114	8.9	144	11.2
Kentucky .....	1,786	144	8.0	169	9.5	1,694	127	7.5	160	9.4
Louisiana .....	1,784	94	5.3	108	6.1	1,682	99	5.9	113	6.7
Maine .....	588	69	11.8	81	13.7	559	82	14.7	93	16.7
Maryland .....	2,912	330	11.3	371	12.8	2,690	351	13.1	380	14.1
Massachusetts .....	3,397	406	12.0	449	13.2	2,982	357	12.0	383	12.8
Michigan .....	4,323	589	13.6	648	15.0	3,974	604	15.2	661	16.6
Minnesota .....	2,662	364	13.7	381	14.3	2,515	398	15.8	427	17.0
Mississippi .....	1,105	70	6.3	93	8.4	1,034	74	7.1	86	8.3
Missouri .....	2,661	297	11.1	333	12.5	2,525	238	9.4	254	10.1
Montana .....	437	46	10.5	52	12.0	419	50	12.0	54	13.0
Nebraska .....	894	75	8.4	86	9.6	890	85	9.6	94	10.5
Nevada .....	1,379	201	14.6	222	16.1	1,208	161	13.4	186	15.4
New Hampshire .....	677	69	10.3	79	11.6	629	62	9.8	70	11.1
New Jersey .....	4,094	642	15.7	712	17.4	3,719	600	16.1	660	17.8
New Mexico .....	813	58	7.1	72	8.8	743	53	7.1	64	8.6
New York .....	8,253	1,732	21.0	1,877	22.7	7,552	1,661	22.0	1,784	23.6
North Carolina .....	4,396	102	2.3	150	3.4	4,128	129	3.1	161	3.9
North Dakota .....	356	21	6.0	27	7.5	338	21	6.2	25	7.4
Ohio .....	5,127	610	11.9	673	13.1	4,815	637	13.2	686	14.2
Oklahoma .....	1,554	96	6.2	123	7.9	1,501	90	6.0	114	7.6
Oregon .....	1,772	255	14.4	277	15.7	1,694	275	16.2	293	17.3
Pennsylvania .....	5,642	676	12.0	740	13.1	5,307	717	13.5	775	14.6
Rhode Island .....	475	83	17.4	90	19.0	455	81	17.8	87	19.1
South Carolina .....	2,140	47	2.2	59	2.7	2,036	59	2.9	77	3.8
South Dakota .....	395	22	5.6	26	6.7	385	17	4.3	21	5.5
Tennessee .....	2,947	135	4.6	162	5.5	2,678	117	4.4	137	5.1
Texas .....	12,334	497	4.0	642	5.2	11,607	563	4.9	693	6.0
Utah .....	1,409	62	4.4	83	5.9	1,403	51	3.7	75	5.4
Vermont .....	290	33	11.2	35	12.0	265	31	11.8	36	13.8
Virginia .....	3,881	156	4.0	201	5.2	3,703	164	4.4	201	5.4
Washington .....	3,393	638	18.8	684	20.2	3,201	557	17.4	596	18.6
West Virginia .....	704	72	10.2	78	11.1	666	71	10.7	75	11.3
Wisconsin .....	2,698	218	8.1	245	9.1	2,592	227	8.7	264	10.2
Wyoming .....	243	18	7.3	21	8.7	240	18	7.6	22	9.3

Note: See footnotes at end of table.



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