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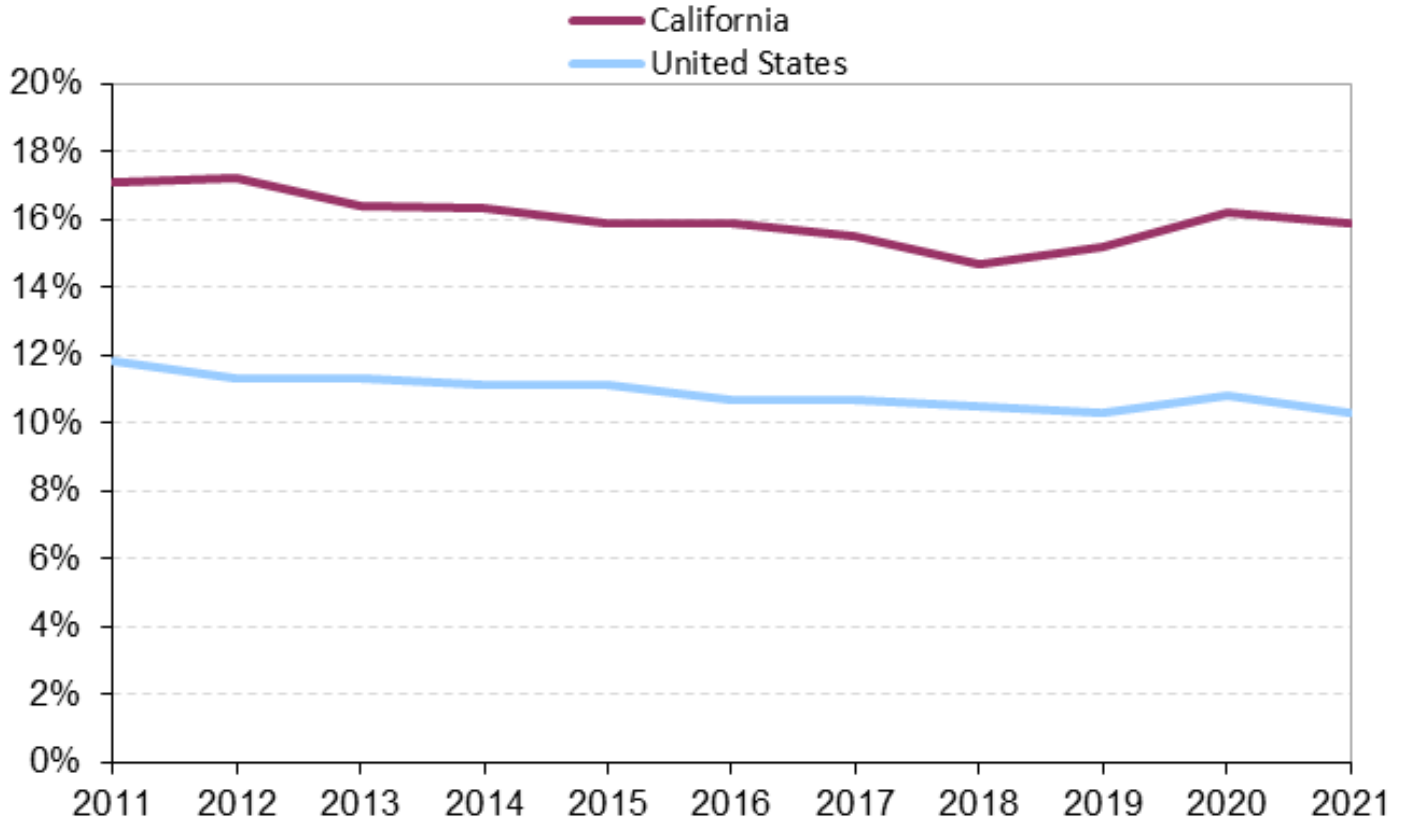
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Union Members in California — 2021

In 2021, union members accounted for 15.9 percent of wage and salary workers in California, compared with 16.2 percent in 2020, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reported today. Regional Commissioner Chris Rosenlund noted that the union membership rate for the state was at its peak in 1989, when it averaged 18.9 percent, and at its low point in 2018 at 14.7 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 California have been above the U.S. average.

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



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

California had 2,468,000 union members in 2021. In addition to these members, another 289,000 wage and salary workers in California 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 California, 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	13,931	2,379	17.1	2,532	18.2
2012	14,483	2,489	17.2	2,666	18.4
2013	14,835	2,430	16.4	2,579	17.4
2014	15,135	2,472	16.3	2,652	17.5
2015	15,657	2,486	15.9	2,689	17.2
2016	16,001	2,551	15.9	2,796	17.5
2017	16,064	2,491	15.5	2,708	16.9
2018	16,399	2,405	14.7	2,587	15.8
2019	16,485	2,504	15.2	2,726	16.5
2020	15,069	2,441	16.2	2,655	17.6
2021	15,497	2,468	15.9	2,757	17.8

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](#).)

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.

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.

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.

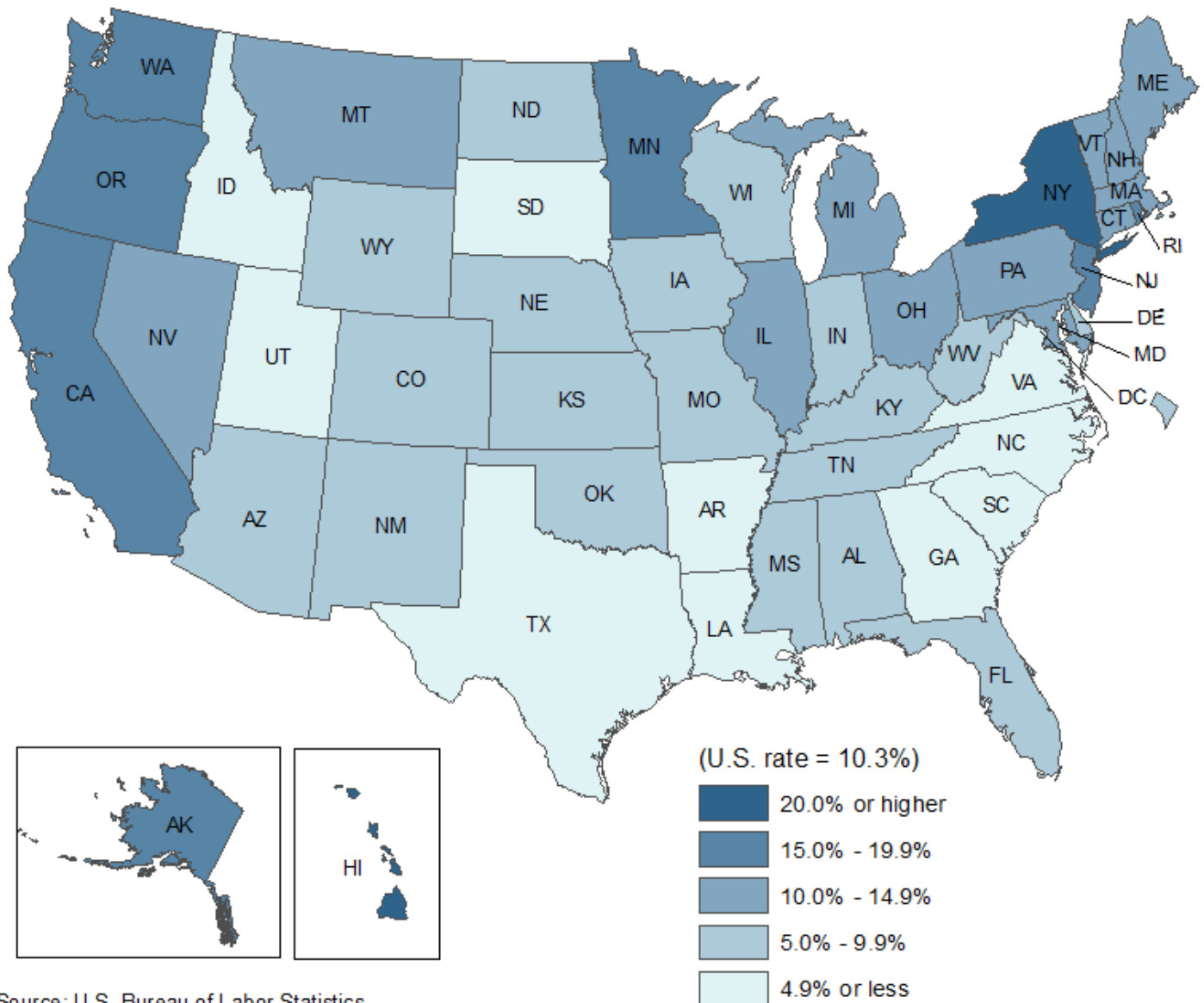
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Chart 2. Union membership rates by state, 2021 annual averages



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.