

THE STATE OF THE UNIONS 2023

A Profile of Unionization in Chicago, in Illinois, and in the United States

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Public approval of labor unions remains at a six-decade high, with bipartisan support from across the political spectrum. Data shows that union workers earn higher wages, are more likely to have health insurance coverage, and have greater access to paid leave.

Though the unionization rate fell nationally for the second consecutive year, the United States added union members in 2022 for the first time since 2017.

- The United States added 277,000 new union members in 2022.
- Illinois and the Chicago area both experienced small declines in unionization in 2022.
- Unionization rates both nationally and in Illinois are at their lowest levels in 10 years.

Today, Illinois' union membership rate is about 13 percent, which is significantly higher than the national average (10 percent) and is the 12th-highest union density among the 50 U.S. states.

- Between 2013 and 2022, the unionization rate declined by 2.6 percentage points in Illinois, driven primarily by a transition from a more highly unionized manufacturing-based economy towards service- and knowledge-based sectors with low union densities.
- Despite declines in unionization over the past ten years in Illinois, there has been a recent increase in new organizing activity over the last two years, with 2022 producing more successful union petitions and newly represented workers than at any comparable time over the past decade.
- The union success rate for new organizing drives in Illinois was 56 percent in 2022.

Certain groups of workers are significantly more likely to be unionized than their peers in Illinois.

- 17 percent of Black workers are unionized compared to 14 percent of white workers.
- One-in-five military veterans (22 percent) is a union member.
- Workers with master's degrees (20 percent) are more likely to be union members.
- Since 2019, workers aged 25 to 34 years old have experienced increases in unionization.

Essential workers and public sector workers are more likely to be union members in Illinois.

- About half of all public sector workers are unionized (49 percent) compared to fewer than one-in-twelve private sector workers (8 percent).
- About 24,000 fewer state and local government workers are union members since the *Janus* Supreme Court decision, but the decrease may be attributed to labor shortages and unfilled positions.
- Unionization rates are 84 percent for police officers and firefighters, 83 percent for public pre-K through 12 teachers, and 48 percent for construction and extraction workers.

Labor unions promote strong outcomes for workers, businesses, and taxpayers.

- In Illinois, unions lift worker earnings by an average of 12 percent, the 5th-highest union wage effect in the nation.
- Research has linked union representation with better job quality, including improved healthcare access, safer workplaces, lower turnover, and less reliance on government assistance programs.

Illinois has fared better than neighboring states that have weakened workers' rights.

- From 2013 through 2022, hourly earnings grew 9 percent faster in Illinois than Indiana, Iowa, Kentucky, and Wisconsin—four neighboring states with so-called “right-to-work” laws.
- While union membership decreased by 116,000 members in Illinois (-14 percent), it fell by 246,000 members (-27 percent) in the four neighboring states with “right-to-work” laws.
- In November 2022, a bipartisan majority of Illinois voters (59 percent) supported the Workers' Rights Amendment, which declares that “no law shall be passed that interferes with, negates, or diminishes the right of employees to organize and bargain collectively.”

Despite long-term declines, there are positive signs for Illinois' labor movement. Rising union success rates demonstrate that many unorganized workers want to join and form unions. Additionally, the Workers' Rights Amendment guarantees the fundamental right to unionize and bargain collectively. The Amendment could improve worker bargaining power and expand union membership in Illinois over the next decade.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Executive Summary	i
Table of Contents	ii
About the Authors	ii
Introduction	1
Data	3
Unionization Rates and Trends by Demographics, Geography, and Education	3
Unionization Rates by Sector, Industry, and Occupation	8
The Impact of Union Membership on Worker Wages	12
Illinois Has Fared Better than States that Weakened Workers' Rights	13
The Impact of the 2018 <i>Janus</i> Supreme Court Decision	16
Conclusion	18
Sources	19
Cover Photo Credits	21
Appendix	22

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INTRODUCTION

Public approval of labor unions remains at its highest level in six decades. Fully 67 percent of Americans and 71 percent of registered voters approve of unions, including nine-in-ten Democrats, seven-in-ten independents, and half of all Republicans (Saad, 2023; GBAO, 2023; McCarthy, 2022). More than three-fifths of Americans say that unions have a positive effect on the U.S. economy, and four out of every five registered voters says that unions positively impact workplace safety, worker pay and hours, and the ability to afford and access healthcare (GBAO, 2023; Saad, 2023). Additionally, a majority of Americans, 58 percent, say the long-term decline in the share of workers represented by unions has been “bad” for the country versus only 38 percent who say that it has been “good” (Van Green, 2022).

Research has shown a longstanding connection between unionization and good, middle-class jobs (U.S. Treasury, 2023). In the United States, union households have earned an average of 10 percent to 20 percent more than nonunion households every year since the 1930s (U.S. Treasury, 2023; Farber et al., 2021; Schmitt, 2008). Unionization has also been found to boost a worker’s lifetime earnings by \$1.3 million over the course of a career (Parolin & VanHeuvelen, 2023). The U.S. Department of Labor reports that 95 percent of union workers have access to healthcare coverage, 95 percent have access to retirement plans, and 92 percent have access to paid sick leave. By contrast, just 69 percent of nonunion workers have healthcare access, 69 percent have retirement plan access, and 77 percent have paid leave (BLS, 2022). Labor unions give workers a voice, “creating publicly valuable outcomes relating to work” through collective bargaining (Budd, 2014).

Union membership, however, has gradually declined. Almost one-in-four U.S. workers (23 percent) was a member of a labor union in 1980. Over four decades later, just one-in-ten workers (10 percent) is unionized (Hirsch & Macpherson, 2023). A significant driver of the decline in union density has been the erosion of worker organizing rights across the United States. In the last decade, five states passed so-called “right-to-work” legislation allowing workers to “free ride,” or receive all the services, benefits, and representation from unions without paying either dues or fees. A 5-4 Supreme Court decision in *Janus v. American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees, Council 31, et al.* overturned four decades of precedent and permitted free-riding amongst all state and local government employees nationwide. Allowing some workers to benefit from collective bargaining without contributing their fair share has been found to reduce the resources that unions have available to advocate for employees and organize new members, which can weaken worker bargaining power and decrease union membership (Fortin, Lemieux, & Lloyd, 2022; VanHeuvelen, 2020; Hogler, Shulman, & Weiler, 2004; Davis & Huston, 1993). As union density and bargaining power has been weakened, economic inequality has worsened (Stansbury & Summers, 2020; Western & Rosenfeld, 2011).

Recently, in some states, there have been signs of a resurgent labor movement. In March 2023, Michigan became the first state in 58 years to repeal a so-called “right-to-work” law (Cappelletti, 2023; Hendrickson, 2023). The repeal will go into effect on March 30, 2024, just over 11 years after Michigan became a “right-to-work” state (Mikula & Stuart, 2023). In November 2022, Illinois voters approved the Workers’ Rights Amendment to the state’s constitution, with 59 percent support versus 41 percent opposed (Ballotpedia, 2023). The constitutional amendment guarantees the fundamental right of workers to unionize and bargain collectively and declares that “no law shall be passed that interferes with, negates, or diminishes the right of employees to organize and bargain collectively over their wages, hours, and other terms and conditions of employment and work place safety,” effectively banning in perpetuity “right-to-work” laws (Manzo & Bruno, 2023).

Even prior to the passage of the Workers’ Rights Amendment, there had been a recent uptick in union petitions in Illinois (Figure 1). The rise in union petitions included “workers in industries that have been traditionally thought of as difficult to organize,” including Starbucks and other coffee shop workers, adjunct professors and graduate students, and nursing assistants (Soglin & Mijares Torres, 2022; Schuba, 2021). Data on union petitions in Illinois assigned to the Region 13 Chicago office of the National Labor Relations Board are presented in Figure 1.

Both the number of union petitions and successful union petitions have been on a two-year upswing since 2020 after declining for much of the past decade (Figure 1). In 2022, there were 72 successful union petitions at Illinois workplaces that newly unionized more than 9,600 workers. This represents a 56 percent union success rate at the 129 workplaces with closed petitions last year. The 129 closed petitions were the most since 2014, when 155 petitions for union representation were carried out. The 56 percent success rate is significantly higher than at any time over the past decade except for 2021, when it was 61 percent. Otherwise, union success rates had previously ranged between 33 percent and 47 percent. The rise in the success rate in 2021 and 2022 demonstrates that more workers from diverse workplaces are interested in unionizing.

The 72 union workplaces and 9,600 newly unionized employees are both the highest amounts in Illinois at any point over the past decade (Figure 1). The largest gains were in private institutions of higher education. In 2022, graduate assistants, teaching assistants, and research assistants voted 1,644 yes in favor of union representation (82 percent) while 114 voted no (6 percent) and 256 ballots were challenged (13 percent) at Northwestern University, newly unionizing 3,500 employees (NLRB, 2022a). Graduate assistants, teaching assistants, and research assistants also voted 1,696 yes for union representation (87 percent) versus 155 no (8 percent), with 95 challenged ballots (5 percent), at the University of Chicago, newly unionizing 3,000 employees (NLRB, 2022b). Similarly, non-tenured teaching faculty at the Art Institute of Chicago voted 377 yes out of 410 total ballots counted in favor of union representation (92 percent), unionizing another 668 workers (NLRB, 2022c).

FIGURE 1: UNION PETITION DATA, ILLINOIS PETITIONS AT NLRB REGION 13 (CHICAGO), 2012-2022

Year	Successful Petitions	Union Petitions	Closed Petitions	Success Rate (of Closed)	New Employees Represented
2012	62	131	131	47.3%	2,648
2013	52	116	116	44.8%	2,900
2014	62	155	155	40.0%	3,787
2015	56	128	128	43.8%	2,284
2016	42	95	95	44.2%	1,257
2017	38	92	92	41.3%	4,331
2018	35	77	77	45.5%	2,317
2019	51	112	112	45.5%	2,409
2020	25	76	76	32.9%	983
2021	60	100	98	61.2%	2,824
2022	72	133	129	55.8%	9,611

Source: "Recent Charges and Petitions Filings" from the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB, 2023).

This report, conducted by researchers at the Illinois Economic Policy Institute (ILEPI) and the Project for Middle Class Renewal (PMCR) at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, analyzes the course of unionization in Illinois, in the Chicago metropolitan statistical area (MSA), and in the United States from 2013 to 2022. It is the ninth annual report of its kind for union members in the Chicago area and in Illinois, with the previous release in September 2022 and the first release back in April 2014 (Manzo & Bruno, 2022; Manzo, Bruno & Parks, 2014). The report tracks unionization rates and investigates union membership across demographic, educational, sectoral, industry, and occupational classifications. The study subsequently evaluates the impact that labor union membership has on worker wages in Illinois and across the United States. The report concludes by recapping key findings.

DATA

This report utilizes data from the *Current Population Survey Outgoing Rotation Groups* (CPS-ORG). The CPS-ORG is collected, analyzed, and released by the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) at the U.S. Department of Labor. CPS-ORG data reports individual-level information on more than 20,000 respondents nationwide each month. The records include data on wages, unionization, hours worked, sector, industry, and occupation, as well as other demographic, geographic, and education variables. The data was extracted from Economic Policy Institute Microdata Extracts (EPI, 2023). Analytic weights are provided by the Department of Labor to match the sample to the actual U.S. population 16 years of age or older.

The 10-year dataset from 2013 through 2022 captures information on more than 2.9 million individuals aged 16 to 80 years old in the United States. These observations include information on 83,444 Illinois residents, of whom 50,012 were employed. In 2022, respondents with at least one job totaled 3,956 in Illinois and 2,710 in the Illinois portion of the Chicago-Naperville-Elgin metropolitan statistical area (“Chicago MSA”). No out-of-state residents who work in Illinois are included. For example, Indiana and Wisconsin residents are excluded from the Chicago area estimates.

In this analysis, the biggest limitation is that not every surveyed worker replies to the union membership question. For example, in 2022, union membership data was only available for 3,605 of the 3,956 surveyed workers (91.1 percent) in Illinois. While this does not impact unionization *rates*, estimates are likely underreported for both total union members and total nonunion workers.

UNIONIZATION RATES AND TRENDS BY DEMOGRAPHICS, GEOGRAPHY, AND EDUCATION

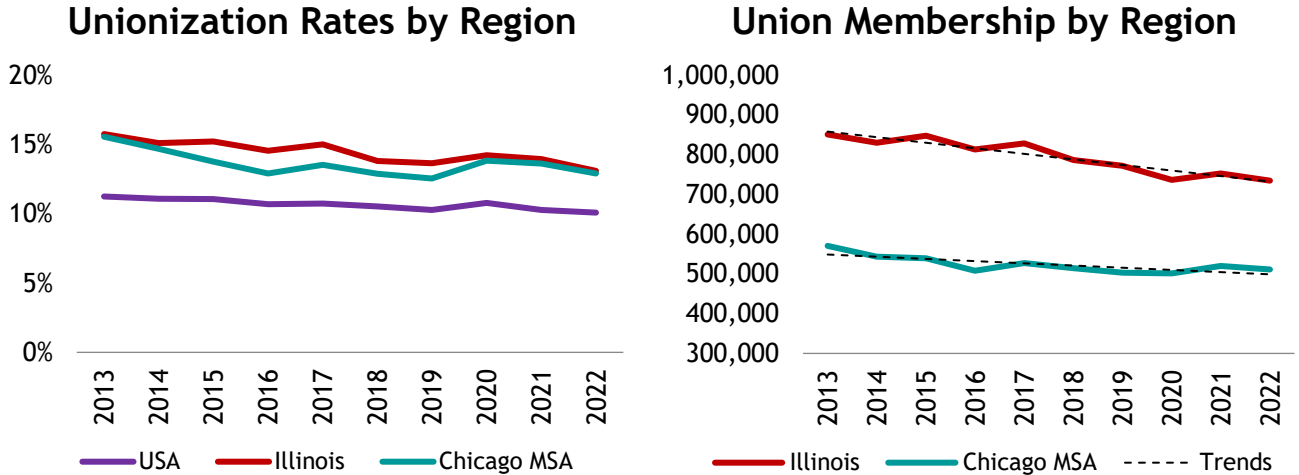
Nationally, there were 14.3 million union members in 2022 (Figure 2). While this represents fewer dues-paying union members than in 2013, it is about 277,000 more than there were in 2021 (14.0 million). This means that the United States added new union members in 2022 for the first time since 2017.

In Illinois, unionization has declined since 2013 (Figure 2). The total union membership rate was 15.7 percent in 2013 but fell to 13.1 percent in 2022. Chicago area’s unionization rate also decreased between 2013 and 2022, from 15.5 percent to 12.9 percent. As of 2022, there were about 734,000 employed union members in Illinois. This is about 18,000 fewer union members in Illinois than in 2021. It also represents 116,000 fewer dues-paying union members in the state than there were in 2013, including 59,000 fewer union members in the Chicago area and 57,000 fewer union members in Downstate communities. This broad-based decline in unionization in Illinois was primarily the result of an increasingly polarizing economy, due to a continued shift away from manufacturing and unionized sectors towards service- and knowledge-based industries with low union densities over the last decade ([Illinois Future of Work Task Force, 2022](#)).

Gender Identification

The unionization rate for employed men in Illinois has fallen from 16.5 percent in 2013 to 15.4 percent in 2022, a drop of 1.1 percentage point (or 7 percent) (Figure 3). By contrast, the unionization rate of employed women has substantially decreased, from 14.9 percent to 10.7 percent, a drop of 4.2 percentage points (or 28 percent). However, both men and women in Illinois continue to have higher unionization rates than their counterparts across the United States. Illinois’ male unionization rate is 4.9 percentage points higher and its female unionization rate is 1.1 percentage point higher than their comparable national averages (10.5 percent and 9.6 percent, respectively).

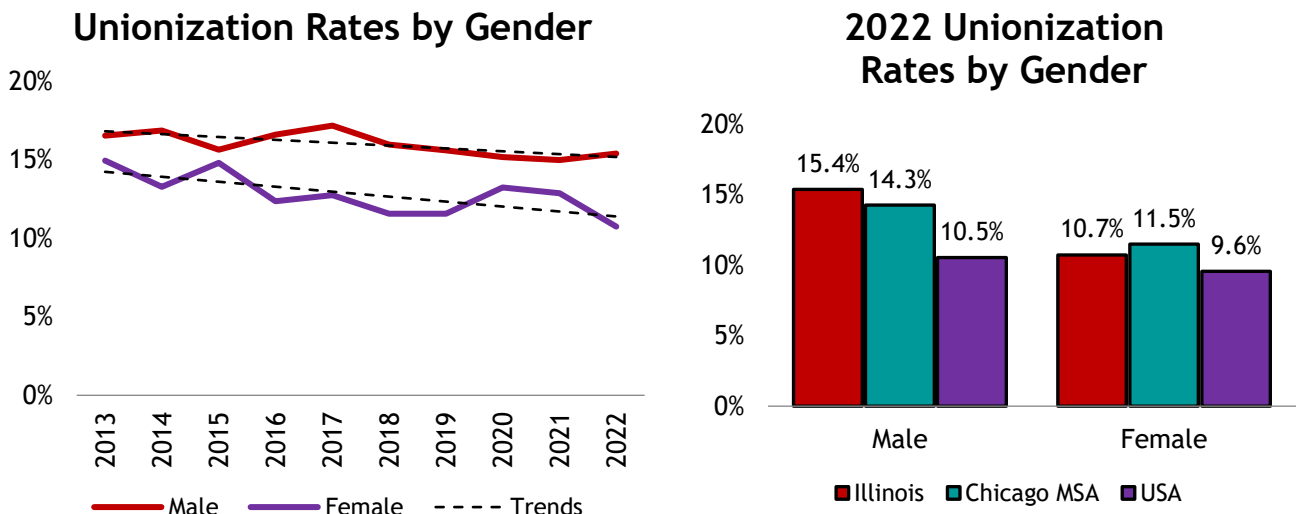
FIGURE 2: GRAPHS OF UNIONIZATION RATES AND TOTAL UNION MEMBERSHIP BY REGION, 2013-2022



Year	Illinois		Chicago MSA		USA	
	Members	Rate	Members	Rate	Members	Rate
2013	850,557	15.7%	570,390	15.5%	14,515,755	11.2%
2014	829,757	15.1%	543,428	14.7%	14,569,936	11.1%
2015	846,984	15.2%	539,036	13.8%	14,786,281	11.1%
2016	812,397	14.5%	508,058	12.9%	14,549,634	10.7%
2017	828,066	15.0%	526,875	13.5%	14,811,525	10.7%
2018	785,966	13.8%	514,629	12.9%	14,740,188	10.5%
2019	771,465	13.6%	503,086	12.5%	14,566,657	10.3%
2020	736,186	14.2%	501,209	13.8%	14,250,234	10.8%
2021	752,063	13.9%	520,254	13.6%	14,003,553	10.3%
2022	734,430	13.1%	510,982	12.9%	14,280,077	10.1%
Average	794,787	14.4%	523,795	13.6%	14,507,384	10.7%

Source: CPS-ORG, Economic Policy Institute, 2013-2022 (EPI, 2023).

FIGURE 3: GRAPHS OF UNIONIZATION RATES BY GENDER IDENTIFICATION, 2013-2022

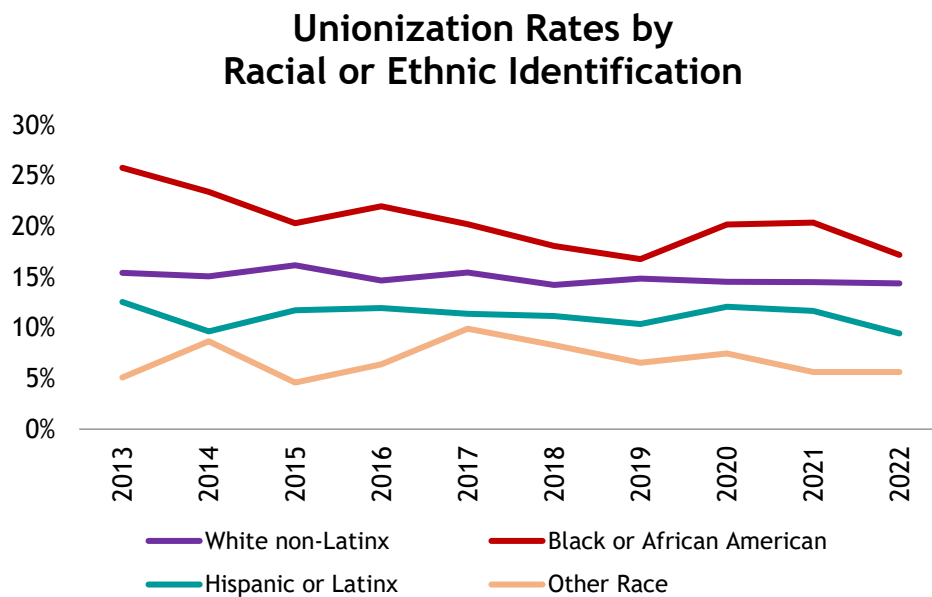
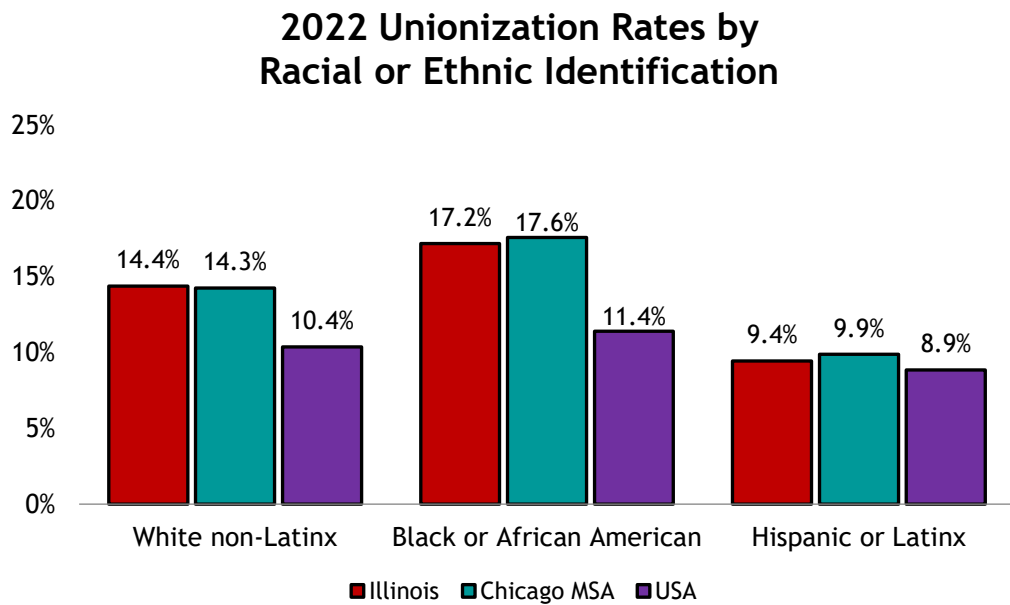


Source: CPS-ORG, Economic Policy Institute, 2013-2022 (EPI, 2023).

Racial or Ethnic Background

Black and African American workers are the most unionized racial or ethnic group (Figure 4). The unionization rate for Black and African American workers is 17.2 percent in Illinois, 17.6 percent in the Chicago area, and 11.4 percent in the United States. In comparison, white union density is 14.4 percent in the state, 14.3 percent in Illinois’ largest metropolitan area, and 10.4 percent across the nation. Respective unionization rates for Hispanic and Latinx workers are also lower, at 9.4 percent, 9.9 percent, and 8.9 percent. Black and Hispanic workers in Illinois experienced declines in union membership between 2013 and 2022, but union membership rates for white workers have consistently been between 14 percent and 16 percent over the decade (Figure 4).

FIGURE 4: GRAPHS OF UNIONIZATION RATES BY RACIAL OR ETHNIC IDENTIFICATION, 2013-2022

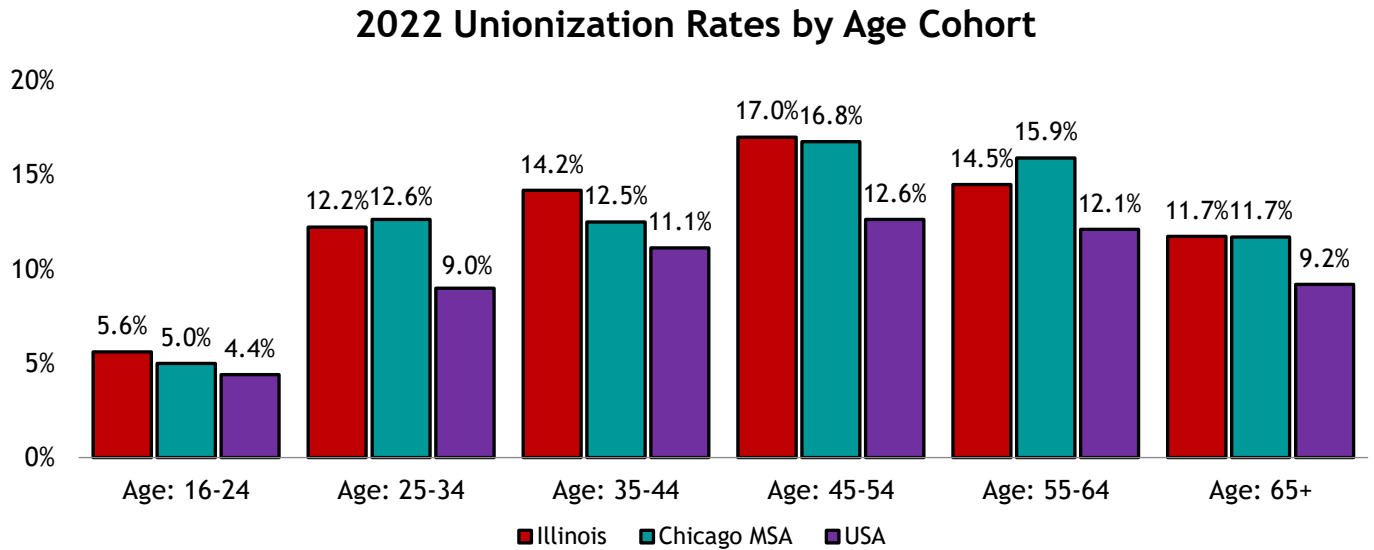


Source: CPS-ORG, Economic Policy Institute, 2013-2022 (EPI, 2023).

Age Cohort

Unionization rates are much higher for middle-aged workers than for young workers and older workers (Figure 5). For example, the unionization rates of workers between the ages of 45 and 54 years old are 17.0 percent in Illinois and 16.8 percent in the Chicago area. Similarly, workers aged 35 to 44 years old and those aged 55 to 65 years have unionization rates exceeding 14 percent in Illinois. By contrast, for young workers aged 16 to 24 years old, unionization rates are just 5.6 percent in Illinois and 5.0 percent in the Chicago area. Workers aged 25 to 34 years old and those 65 years or older have unionization rates around 12 percent in Illinois and in the Chicago area. Across all age cohorts, workers in Illinois and in the Chicago area are more likely to be union members than the national average.

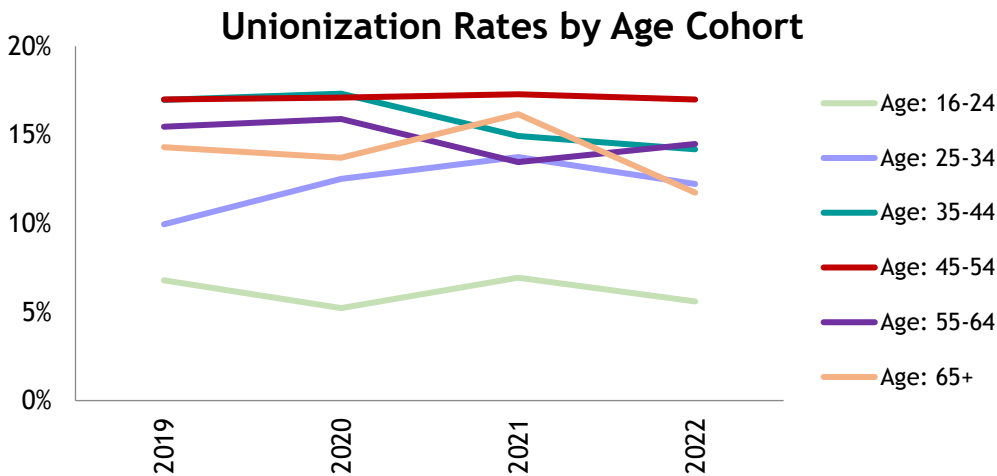
FIGURE 5: UNIONIZATION RATES BY AGE COHORT BY REGION, 2022



Source: CPS-ORG, Economic Policy Institute, 2022 (EPI, 2023).

Unionization rates have recently increased for younger workers in Illinois (Figure 6). Since 2019, those between the ages of 25 and 34 years old saw a 2.3 percentage-point increase in unionization. By contrast, the largest decreases in unionization since 2019 were among those between the ages of 35 and 44 years old (-2.8 percentage points) and those workers aged 65 years or older (-2.6 percentage points).

FIGURE 6: ILLINOIS UNIONIZATION RATES BY AGE COHORT, 2019-2022

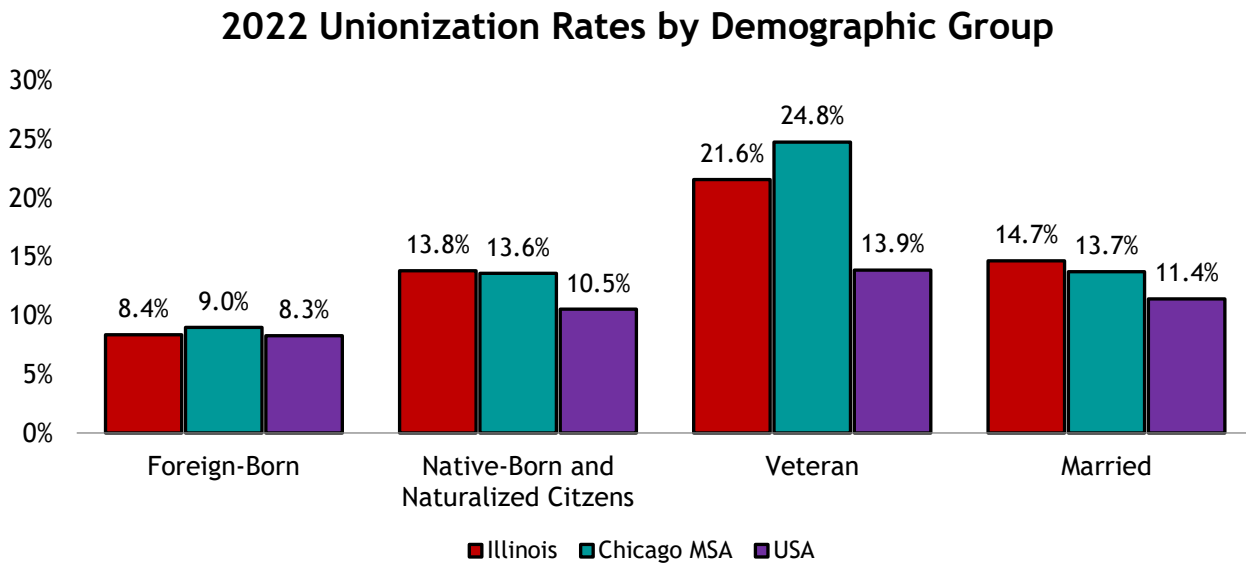


Source: CPS-ORG, Economic Policy Institute, 2019-2022 (EPI, 2023).

Other Demographic Groups

Union membership varies across other demographic classifications as well (Figure 7). Among the most unionized groups are military veterans. More than one-in-five employed veterans is a union member in Illinois (21.6 percent) and one-in-four is in the Chicago area (24.8 percent). This finding has been consistent for every previous release of *The State of the Unions* since 2014 (Manzo & Bruno, 2022; Manzo, Bruno & Parks, 2014). For the United States, 13.9 percent of employed veterans are unionized. The unionization rate for married workers, foreign-born workers, and native-born and naturalized citizens are all above the national average in Illinois and in the Chicago area. Native-born and naturalized citizens are more likely to be union members than foreign-born workers in Illinois, the Chicago area, and the nation.

FIGURE 7: UNIONIZATION RATES OF SELECTED DEMOGRAPHIC GROUPS BY REGION, 2022

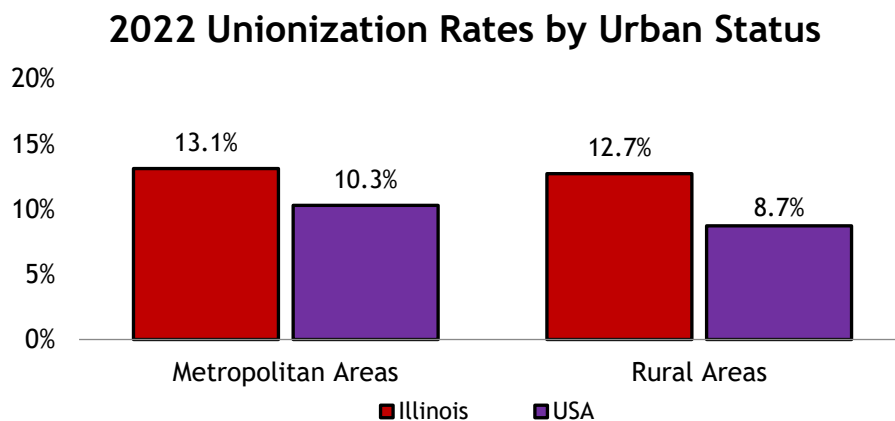


Source: CPS-ORG, Economic Policy Institute, 2022 (EPI, 2023).

Geography

Figure 8 reveals that unionization is comparable regardless of urban status in Illinois. The union membership rate is 13.1 percent in metropolitan areas like Chicago, Rockford, and Springfield, which is statistically indistinguishable from the 12.7 percent rate in rural Illinois. Nationally, however, metropolitan areas are more unionized (10.3 percent) than rural areas (8.7 percent).

FIGURE 8: UNIONIZATION RATES BY URBAN STATUS IN ILLINOIS AND THE UNITED STATES, 2022



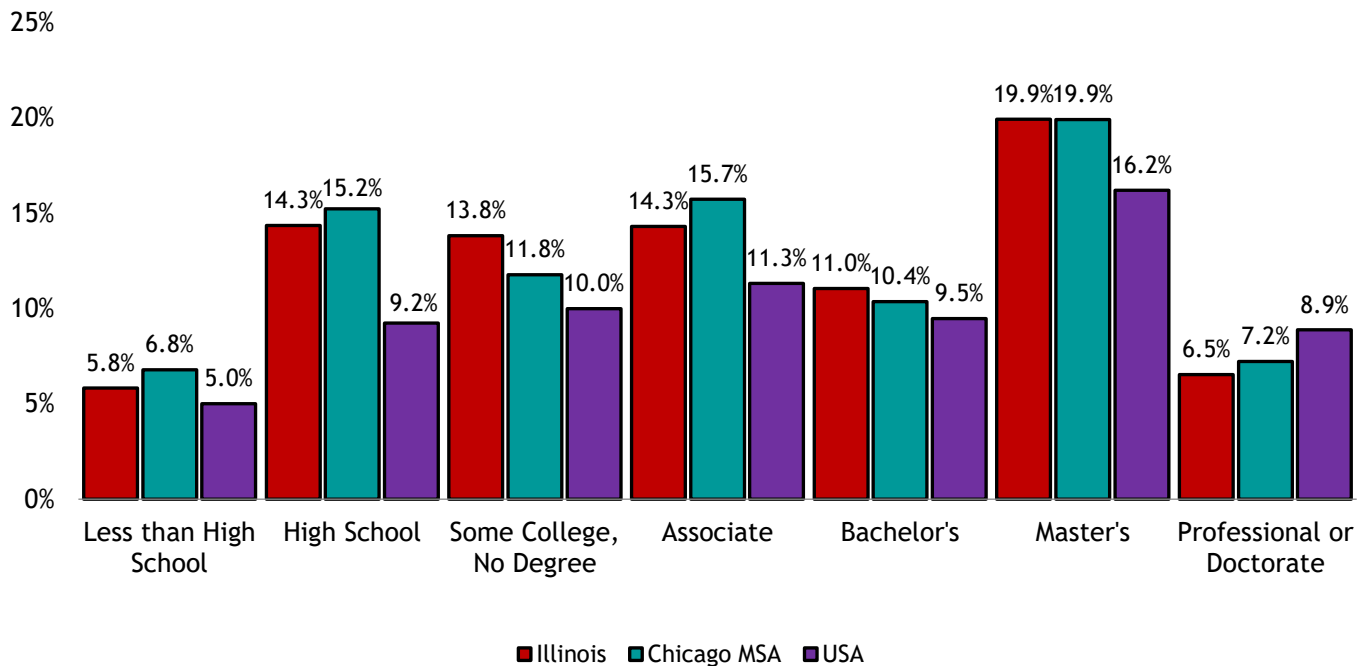
Source: CPS-ORG, Economic Policy Institute, 2022 (EPI, 2023).

Educational Attainment

Workers with master’s degrees are the most unionized educational group (Figure 9). Nationally, one-in-six master’s degree holders is a union member (16.2 percent). In Illinois, one-in-five workers with master’s degrees is a union member (19.9 percent), including 19.9 percent in the Chicago area. Workers with associate degrees also have relatively higher unionization rates, at 14.3 percent in Illinois, 15.7 percent in the Chicago area, and 11.3 percent in the United States. Workers without high school degrees and workers with professional or doctorate degrees comprise the two least-unionized educational groups in Illinois. Except for workers with professional and doctorate degrees, unionization rates are higher in Illinois than the national average across all levels of educational attainment.

FIGURE 9: UNIONIZATION RATES BY EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT OR STATUS BY REGION, 2022

2022 Unionization Rates by Educational Attainment



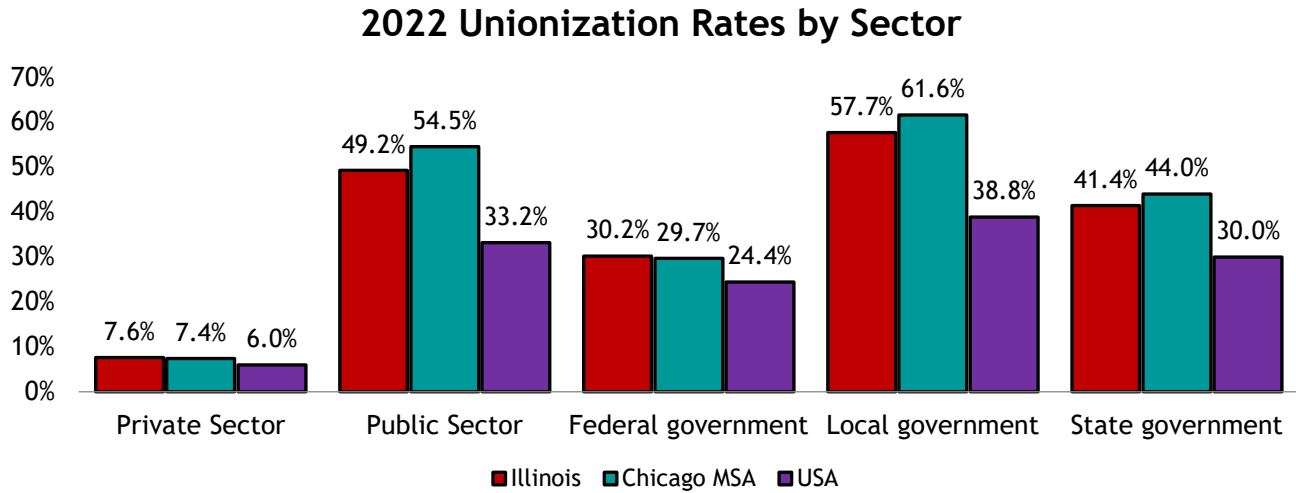
Source: CPS-ORG, Economic Policy Institute, 2022 (EPI, 2023).

UNIONIZATION RATES BY SECTOR, INDUSTRY, AND OCCUPATION

Sector

While fewer than one-in-twelve private sector workers is now a union member in Illinois (7.6 percent), the Chicago MSA (7.4 percent), and the United States (6.0 percent), unionization rates are significantly higher for public sector workers (Figure 10). About half of all public sector workers are unionized in both Illinois (49.2 percent) and the Chicago area (54.5 percent), as are about one-third nationwide (33.2 percent). The most unionized public sector group is local government employees in Illinois (57.7 percent) and nationally (38.8 percent), which includes teachers, police officers, and firefighters. About four-in-ten state government employees, including workers at public universities, are unionized in Illinois (41.4 percent) and in the Chicago area (44.0 percent). It is also important to note that private sector employment increased by nearly 205,000 workers between 2013 and 2022, a growth of 3.9 percent, while public sector employment added just over 3,000 workers, a growth of just 0.4 percent—which contributed to lower unionization rates for the overall Illinois workforce over the decade.

FIGURE 10: UNIONIZATION RATES BY SECTOR OR LEVEL OF GOVERNMENT BY REGION, 2022



Source: CPS-ORG, Economic Policy Institute, 2022 (EPI, 2023).

Industry

Union membership varies significantly by industry (Figure 11). The top four industries by unionization rates in Illinois are public administration (40.1 percent), construction (33.5 percent), transportation and utilities (23.4 percent), and the combined educational and health services industry (21.0 percent). The manufacturing workforce, associated historically as a leader in industrial unionization, is now only 7.9 percent organized nationally, 7.9 percent in the Chicago area, and 8.8 percent across Illinois. The least-unionized industries generally are financial activities and professional and business services. These industries were, however, among the fastest growing in the state over the past decade, with financial activities adding nearly 83,000 jobs (18.6 percent) and professional and business services adding more than 98,000 jobs (13.5 percent) between 2013 and 2022.

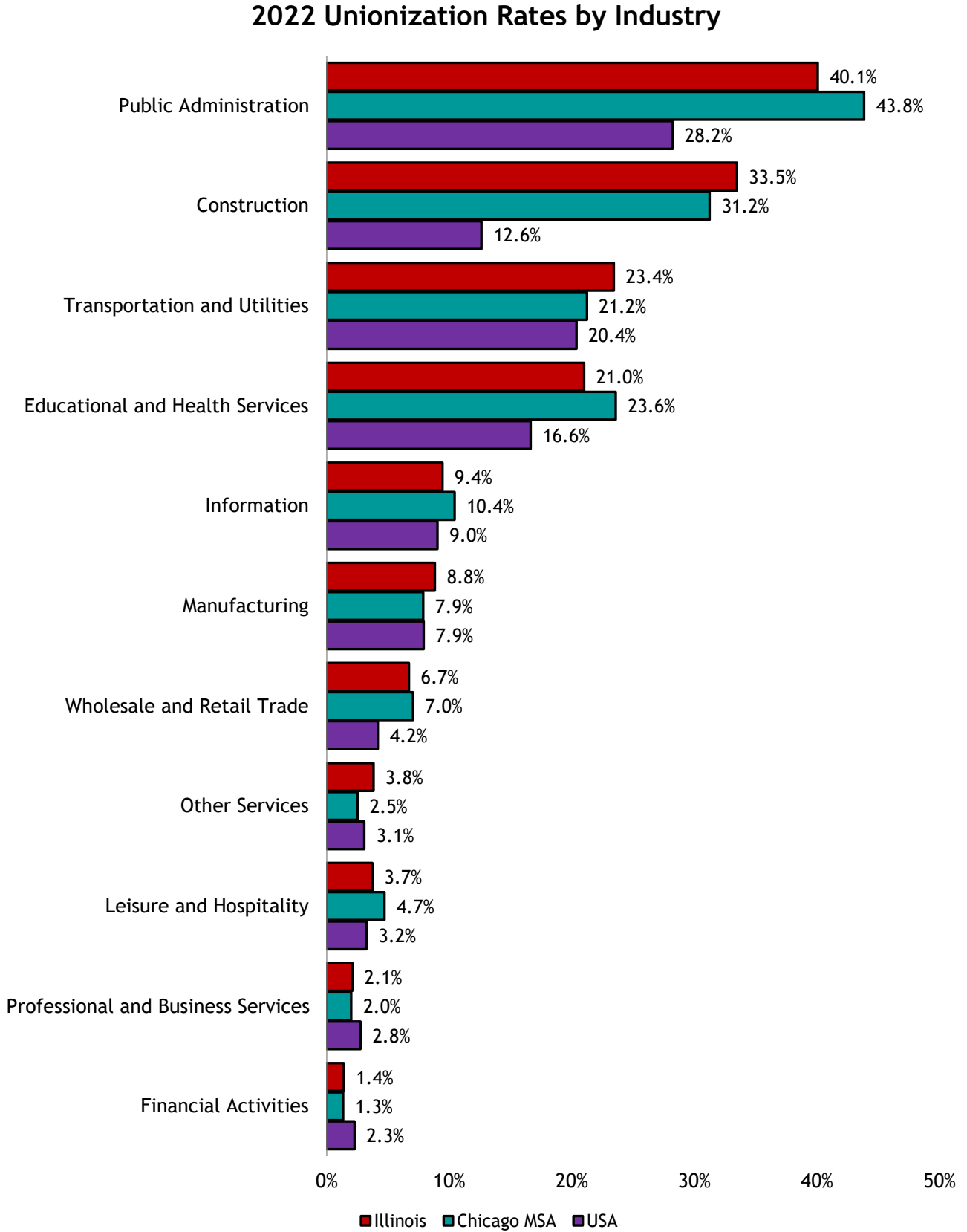
Figure 12 presents breakdowns of total union membership in Illinois compared to total employment in the state for selected industries. Industries are organized in descending order by unionization rate. Note that the estimates include all occupations within an industry. The construction industry, for example, includes white-collar workers who typically are not union members, such as engineers and architects. The top five industries with the most union members in Illinois are educational and health services (289,000 members), construction (97,000 members), public administration (94,000 members), transportation and warehousing (88,000 members), and manufacturing (65,000 members) (Figure 12).

Occupation

Figure 13 depicts the unionization rates of occupations in Illinois. Construction and extraction workers (47.7 percent); education, training, and library careers (47.0 percent); protective service occupations (44.7 percent); installation, maintenance, and repair workers (27.4 percent); and community and social service workers (23.3 percent) all have relatively high levels of unionization exceeding 20 percent. Compared to the nation, unionization rates in these five occupations are significantly elevated in Illinois. Union membership in construction and extraction occupations, as an example, is 31.3 percentage points higher in Illinois than the comparable U.S. average.

Essential workers are also more likely to be union members (Figure 14). The unionization rate of police officers and firefighters is 83.6 percent in Illinois. Public pre-K through 12 teachers are 83.4 percent unionized. As noted in Figure 13, fully 47.7 percent of blue-collar construction and extraction workers—such as operating engineers, carpenters, and laborers—are union members. Registered nurses are 11.9 percent unionized and manufacturing production workers like machinists are 11.2 percent unionized.

FIGURE 11: UNIONIZATION RATES BY INDUSTRY BY REGION, 2022



Source: CPS-ORG, Economic Policy Institute, 2022 (EPI, 2023).

FIGURE 12: ILLINOIS INDUSTRY UNIONIZATION RATES, EMPLOYMENT, AND UNION MEMBERS, 2022

Selected Industries (2022)	Unionization Rate	Total Employment	Total Union Members	Total Sample
Public Administration	40.1%	234,000	94,000	148
Construction	33.5%	291,000	97,000	192
Transportation and Utilities	23.4%	374,000	88,000	235
Educational and Health Services	21.0%	1,376,000	289,000	879
Manufacturing	8.8%	742,000	65,000	486
Information	9.4%	72,000	7,000	47
Wholesale and Retail Trade	6.7%	647,000	43,000	418
Leisure and Hospitality	3.7%	442,000	16,000	280
Other Services	3.8%	235,000	9,000	150
Financial Activities	1.4%	475,000	7,000	309
Professional and Business Services	2.1%	699,000	15,000	442

Source: CPS-ORG, Economic Policy Institute, 2022 (EPI, 2023). All estimates rounded to the nearest thousand.

FIGURE 13: UNIONIZATION RATES BY SELECTED OCCUPATION BY REGION, 2022

Selected Occupations (2022)	Illinois	Chicago MSA	USA
Construction and Extraction	47.7%	45.6%	16.4%
Education, Training, and Library	47.0%	50.2%	33.8%
Protective Service	44.7%	49.3%	34.6%
Installation, Maintenance, and Repair	27.4%	26.6%	13.0%
Community and Social Service	23.3%	21.9%	15.9%
Transportation and Material Moving	17.3%	18.1%	13.0%
Building and Grounds Cleaning and Maintenance	11.7%	15.9%	9.5%
Production	11.2%	10.1%	11.4%
Healthcare Support	9.7%	9.6%	8.3%
Healthcare Practitioner and Technical	8.9%	13.2%	11.3%
Office and Administrative Support	8.5%	7.3%	8.4%
Arts, Design, Entertainment, Sports, and Media	8.4%	7.5%	7.9%
Legal	6.5%	7.4%	5.1%
Food Preparation and Serving Related	6.1%	7.1%	3.6%
Life, Physical, and Social Science	5.6%	4.6%	9.0%
Architecture and Engineering	3.7%	3.1%	6.0%
Personal Care and Service	3.5%	4.5%	4.2%
Sales and Related	2.8%	3.4%	3.0%

Source: CPS-ORG, Economic Policy Institute, 2022 (EPI, 2023).

FIGURE 14: UNIONIZATION RATES OF ESSENTIAL WORKERS IN ILLINOIS, SELECTED EXAMPLES, 2022

Essential Workers in Illinois vs. Illinois Average (2022)	Unionization Rate
Police Officers and Firefighters	83.6%
Pre-K through 12 Teachers	83.4%
Construction and Extraction Workers	47.7%
Registered Nurses	11.9%
Production	11.2%
Illinois Average	13.1%

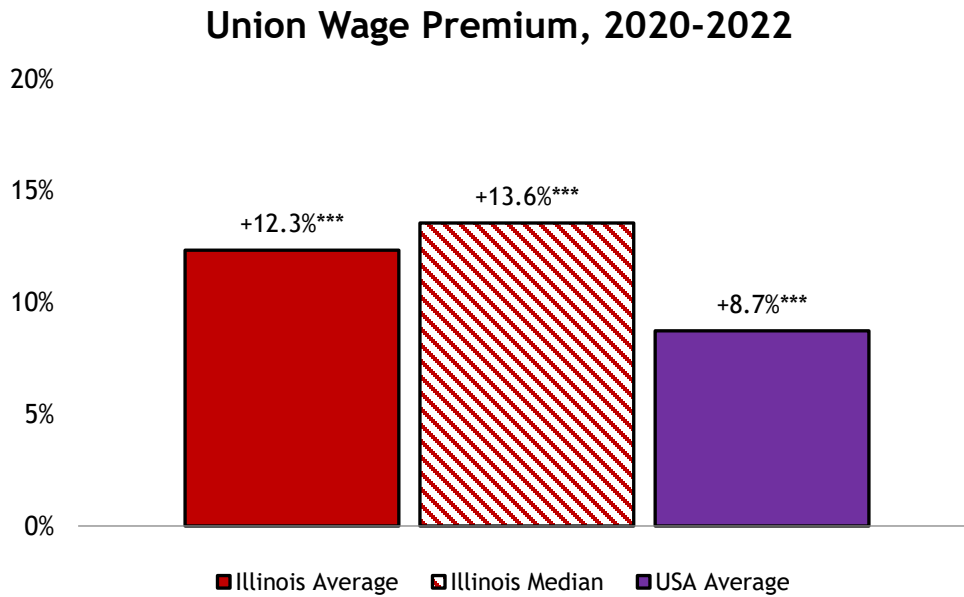
Source: CPS-ORG, Economic Policy Institute, 2022 (EPI, 2023).

THE IMPACT OF UNION MEMBERSHIP ON WORKER WAGES

Union workers earn more than their nonunion counterparts (Figure 15). Many factors can influence a workers’ earnings, including age, level of educational attainment, occupation, geographic location, and demographics. Statistical models called “regressions” are utilized to account for these and similar factors to isolate the independent effect of union membership on wages. After accounting for these variables, union membership statistically increases a worker’s hourly earnings by 8.7 percent in the United States.

The union wage premium is even higher in Illinois (Figure 15). Union membership boosts Illinois workers’ hourly earnings by an average of 12.3 percent. Furthermore, a unique analytical tool called a “quantile regression,” permits evaluation for the median worker. While union membership is statistically associated with a 12.3 percent increase in the *average* Illinois worker’s wage, the wage premium is 13.6 percent for the median worker. All results are statistically significant at the 99-percent level of confidence. The data show that unionization boosts earnings for Illinois’ middle class.

FIGURE 15: REGRESSIONS OF UNION WAGE PREMIUMS FOR THE UNITED STATES AND ILLINOIS, 2020-2022



Three asterisks (***) indicate significance at the 1-percent level. Two asterisks (**) indicates significance at the 5-percent level. Source: CPS-ORG, Economic Policy Institute, 2020-2022 (EPI, 2023). Statistics are adjusted by the outgoing rotation group earnings weight to match the total population 16 years of age or older. Regression outputs are converted to percent changes using correct adjustments to interpret natural logarithms (Kennedy, 1981; IDRE, 2023). For more, see the Appendix.

How does the average Illinois union earnings difference of 12.3 percent compare to the wage premium in other states? Similar 2020 through 2022 regressions are run to assess each of the 49 other states plus the District of Columbia against Illinois. The results, reported in Figure 16, reveal that Illinois has the 5th-highest union wage premium in the nation, behind only Nevada (17.5 percent), Delaware (14.8 percent), Connecticut (14.4 percent), and Wyoming (12.7 percent). A total of 22 states have union wage effects that are higher than the national average of 8.7 percent. Importantly, a positive union wage premium exists in every state. Research has also linked union representation with better job quality, including improved access to healthcare plans, safer workplaces, lower worker turnover, and less reliance on government assistance programs (Banerjee et al., 2021; Ford & Freund, 2022; Bach & Kinder, 2021; Sojourner & Pacas, 2018; Manzo, 2022).

FIGURE 16: UNION WAGE PREMIUMS BY STATE, OLS REGRESSIONS, 2020-2022

Rank	State	Union Premium	Rank	State	Union Premium
--	<i>United States</i>	+8.7%	26	Oregon	+8.2%
1	Nevada	+17.5%	27	Indiana	+8.2%
2	Delaware	+14.8%	28	Massachusetts	+8.2%
3	Connecticut	+14.4%	29	Minnesota	+8.1%
4	Wyoming	+12.7%	30	Louisiana	+8.0%
5	Illinois	+12.5%	31	Nebraska	+7.5%
6	South Carolina	+11.9%	32	Alaska	+7.5%
7	New Jersey	+11.4%	33	Vermont	+7.5%
8	Colorado	+10.7%	34	California	+7.1%
9	Arizona	+10.6%	35	New York	+7.0%
10	Missouri	+10.3%	36	Florida	+6.7%
11	Montana	+10.3%	37	Washington	+6.6%
12	Hawaii	+10.1%	38	Maine	+6.6%
13	New Hampshire	+10.1%	39	Virginia	+6.3%
14	North Dakota	+10.0%	40	Ohio	+6.0%
15	Wisconsin	+9.8%	41	Tennessee	+5.9%
16	Oklahoma	+9.8%	42	Arkansas	+5.9%
17	Idaho	+9.6%	43	Maryland	+5.4%
18	Pennsylvania	+9.5%	44	Iowa	+4.5%
19	Georgia	+9.5%	45	Alabama	+4.5%
20	Texas	+9.3%	46	West Virginia	+3.9%
21	Rhode Island	+9.0%	47	North Carolina	+3.6%
22	Michigan	+8.9%	48	South Dakota	+2.7%
23	Kansas	+8.5%	49	Utah	+0.9%
24	New Mexico	+8.3%	50	Mississippi	+0.6%
25	Kentucky	+8.2%	51	District of Columbia	+0.5%

All estimates are significant at the 1-percent level except for the following: South Carolina, Maine, Virginia, Tennessee, Arkansas, Maryland, Alabama, and West Virginia (which are all significant at the 5-percent level); Iowa (which is significant at the 10-percent level); and North Carolina, South Carolina, Utah, Mississippi, and the District of Columbia (which are not statistically significant). Source: CPS-ORG, Economic Policy Institute, 2020-2022 (EPI, 2023). Statistics are adjusted by the outgoing rotation group earnings weight to match the total population 16 years of age or older. Regression outputs are converted to percent changes using correct adjustments to interpret natural logarithms (Kennedy, 1981; IDRE, 2023). For more, see the Appendix.

ILLINOIS HAS FARED BETTER THAN STATES THAT WEAKENED WORKERS' RIGHTS

Differences between the states that protect workers' rights and the states that have so-called "right-to-work" laws are explored using the 10 years of data from January 2013 through December 2022. The 23 states that protected workers' rights throughout the decade, plus the District of Columbia, are evaluated against the 22 states that previously had "right-to-work" laws on the books as well as the five states that newly enacted "right-to-work" legislation between 2012 and 2017 (Figure 17).

Wages and salaries grew 5 percent faster in the states that protected workers' rights between 2013 and 2022 (Figure 17). Average earnings were about \$24 per hour in the states that protected workers' rights in 2013 but increased by nearly \$12 per hour to \$36 per hour by 2022, a growth of 48.4 percent. By contrast, both in the states that were previously "right-to-work" and in those that newly became "right-to-work," average earnings started at \$21 per hour and increased by \$9 per hour to a little over \$30 per hour, growth rates of 43.3 percent. Note that average hourly earnings are *not* adjusted for inflation. Ultimately, workers experienced slower hourly earnings growth if they were in states that always had or recently introduced "right-to-work" laws (Figure 17).

States with so-called “right-to-work” laws experienced a disproportionate share of the loss of union members in the United States between 2013 and 2022 (Figure 17). States that protected workers’ rights over the decade experienced an increase of more than 100,000 union members, or a 1.0 percent gain. At the same time, states that were previously “right-to-work” saw unions lose nearly 62,000 members, or 2.2 percent of their union members, and the five states that enacted new “right-to-work” laws experienced a substantial loss of about 274,000 members, or 18.6 percent of their union members. In total, the “right-to-work” states lost just over 336,000 union members from 2013 to 2022 (Figure 17).

FIGURE 17: EARNINGS AND UNION MEMBERSHIP IN STATES BY LABOR POLICY, 2013 VS. 2022

Outcome	Type of State	2013	2022	Net Change	Growth	Difference
Average Hourly Earnings	24 States that Protect Workers’ Rights	\$24.24	\$35.98	+\$11.74	+48.4%	--
	22 Previous “Right-to-Work” States	\$21.33	\$30.55	+\$9.23	+43.3%	-5.2%
	5 States that Became “Right-to-Work”	\$21.05	\$30.16	+\$9.11	+43.3%	-5.1%
Total Union Members	24 States that Protect Workers’ Rights	10,187,511	10,287,872	+100,361	+1.0%	--
	22 Previous “Right-to-Work” States	2,850,295	2,788,648	-61,647	-2.2%	-3.1%
	5 States that Became “Right-to-Work”	1,477,947	1,203,557	-274,389	-18.6%	-19.6%
Union Membership Rate	24 States that Protect Workers’ Rights	15.4%	14.6%	--	-0.9%	--
	22 Previous “Right-to-Work” States	5.5%	4.8%	--	-0.8%	+0.1%
	5 States that Became “Right-to-Work”	12.8%	9.7%	--	-3.0%	-2.2%

Source: CPS-ORG, Economic Policy Institute, 2013-2022 (EPI, 2023). Numbers may not sum perfectly due to rounding.

FIGURE 18: EARNINGS AND UNION MEMBERSHIP IN ILLINOIS AND SELECTED NEIGHBORS, 2013 VS. 2022

Outcome	State	2013	2022	Net Change	Growth	Difference
Average Hourly Earnings	Illinois	\$23.70	\$35.53	+\$11.83	+49.9%	
	“Right-to-Work” Neighbors	\$20.48	\$28.96	+\$8.48	+41.4%	-8.5%
	Indiana	\$20.83	\$29.80	+\$8.97	+43.1%	-6.8%
	Iowa	\$20.42	\$27.80	+\$7.38	+36.1%	-13.8%
	Kentucky	\$18.93	\$27.94	+\$9.01	+47.6%	-2.3%
	Wisconsin	\$21.20	\$29.35	+\$8.15	+38.4%	-11.5%
Total Union Members	Illinois	850,557	734,430	-116,127	-13.7%	
	“Right-to-Work” Neighbors	902,583	656,114	-246,469	-27.3%	-17.1%
	Indiana	248,604	223,343	-25,261	-10.2%	+3.5%
	Iowa	143,400	105,244	-38,156	-26.6%	-13.0%
	Kentucky	193,984	140,677	-53,307	-27.5%	-13.8%
	Wisconsin	316,596	186,850	-129,745	-41.0%	-27.3%
Union Membership Rate	Illinois	15.7%	13.1%	--	-2.6%	
	“Right-to-Work” Neighbors	10.7%	7.3%	--	-3.4%	-0.8%
	Indiana	9.3%	7.4%	--	-1.9%	+0.8%
	Iowa	10.1%	7.0%	--	-3.1%	-0.4%
	Kentucky	11.2%	7.9%	--	-3.3%	-0.7%
	Wisconsin	12.3%	7.1%	--	-5.2%	-2.6%

Source: CPS-ORG, Economic Policy Institute, 2013-2022 (EPI, 2023). Numbers may not sum perfectly due to rounding.

Figure 18 compares Illinois, which experienced losses between 2013 and 2022, to its four neighboring states with so-called “right-to-work” laws. On average, hourly earnings grew 8.5 percent faster in Illinois (49.9 percent) than in the four neighboring “right-to-work” states (41.4 percent). Illinois workers’ wage growth ranged from 2.3 percent faster than their peers in Kentucky to 13.8 percent faster than their counterparts in Iowa. Furthermore, while the unionization rate declined by 2.6 percentage points and unions lost 116,000 members in Illinois, the unionization rate declined by 3.4 percentage points and unions lost more than 246,000 members in the similarly-sized comparison group of Indiana, Iowa, Kentucky, and Wisconsin. Consequently, union membership dropped by 27.3 percent in the four neighboring states with “right-to-work” laws between 2013 and 2022, or twice as much as it did in Illinois (-13.7 percent). Union membership rates are now between 7.0 percent in Iowa and 7.9 percent in Kentucky in these four neighboring states with “right-to-work” laws compared to Illinois’ 13.1 percent.

In November 2022, Illinois voters approved the Workers’ Rights Amendment, adding Section 25 to the Illinois Constitution. The Amendment declares that “no law shall be passed that interferes with, negates, or diminishes the right of employees to organize and bargain collectively over their wages, hours, and other terms and conditions of employment and work place safety” (ILGA, 2023). The Amendment effectively bans in perpetuity “right-to-work” laws and blocks any future legislation that would limit the items over which public sector employees can bargain, similar to Wisconsin’s Act 10, which prohibited unions representing most public sector workers from negotiating over wages, health insurance, staffing, and working conditions.

To become enshrined in the Illinois Constitution, the Workers’ Rights Amendment required either 60 percent approval from those voting on the question or a simple majority (50 percent plus one) from all voters who cast ballots in the election. The Workers’ Rights Amendment received 58.7 percent approval on the question itself and 53.4 percent yes votes among all ballots cast, passing based on the *majority of ballots cast* criterion (Figure 19). Of the 4.1 million ballots cast by voters, 3.8 million voted on the Amendment. In total, more than 2.2 million Illinois residents voted yes on the Amendment compared to fewer than 1.6 million who voted no (State Board of Elections, 2022). The yes vote won by 17.4 percentage points on the question and by 15.9 percentage points among all ballots cast (Figure 19). The Workers’ Rights Amendment passed with bipartisan support, driven by union members, military veterans, and households with middle-class incomes—and outpaced Democrats in rural, Republican leaning, and white working-class communities (Manzo & Bruno, 2023).

FIGURE 19: VOTES ON THE WORKERS’ RIGHTS AMENDMENT, QUESTION AND BALLOTS CAST, 2022

2022 General Election Results: Illinois	Votes on Question	Ballots Cast
Total Votes	3,768,928	4,144,126
Yes Votes	2,212,999	2,212,999
No Votes	1,555,929	1,555,929
Yes Share	58.7%	53.4%
No Share	41.3%	37.5%
Not Voting Share	--	9.1%
Net Yes Percent	+17.4%	+15.9%

Source(s): Illinois’ Official Canvas of the General Election on November 8, 2022 (State Board of Elections, 2022).

The Workers’ Rights Amendment guarantees the fundamental right of workers to unionize and bargain collectively in Illinois. It applies to any worker in an employer-employee relationship in Illinois, including those not covered by the National Labor Relations Act (NLRA), which could lead to new unionization efforts among workers in independent contracting work arrangements or in the agricultural industry (Sheridan, 2022). The full effects of the Workers’ Rights Amendment on unions and union members, however, will not become known until 2024 and beyond.

THE IMPACT OF THE 2018 JANUS SUPREME COURT DECISION

On June 27, 2018, the U.S. Supreme Court struck down a 41-year precedent in a 5-4 decision in *Janus v. American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees, Council 31, et al.* (Oyez, 2018). The *Janus* ruling effectively imposed a national “right-to-work” regime on state and local government workers, permitting and incentivizing free riding among workers in bargaining units.

This section explores nine years of data from January 2014 through December 2022 to assess the impact of the decision in states that protect workers’ rights. Those in states with so-called “right-to-work” laws could already opt out and choose to receive union services and benefits without paying anything for them prior to the 5-4 ruling. Accordingly, “right-to-work” states and those that newly enacted “right-to-work” laws or stricter restrictions on state and local government employees, like Wisconsin—which prohibited unions representing most public sector workers from negotiating over health insurance, staffing, and working conditions and restricted their growth in wages—are not included in the analysis (Marley, 2021).

FIGURE 20: STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEE UNION MEMBERSHIP, PRE- AND POST-JANUS

State and Local Government Employees by State	Average Unionization Rate			Average Union Members		
	Pre-Janus	Post-Janus	Change	Pre-Janus	Post-Janus	Change
Alaska	52.3%	45.9%	-6.4%	32,000	26,000	-6,000
California	56.8%	55.7%	-1.1%	1,197,000	1,154,000	-43,000
Colorado	20.0%	20.5%	+0.6%	67,000	75,000	+8,000
Connecticut	66.2%	68.1%	+1.9%	143,000	127,000	-16,000
Delaware	39.9%	35.3%	-4.6%	21,000	20,000	-1,000
District of Columbia	38.2%	32.4%	-5.8%	10,000	8,000	-2,000
Hawaii	60.0%	64.6%	+4.6%	52,000	55,000	+3,000
Illinois	53.9%	50.6%	-3.3%	334,000	310,000	-24,000
Maine	50.3%	47.8%	-2.5%	38,000	36,000	-2,000
Maryland	41.5%	43.4%	+1.9%	141,000	151,000	+10,000
Massachusetts	58.7%	56.7%	-2.0%	214,000	192,000	-22,000
Minnesota	51.2%	56.9%	+5.8%	168,000	191,000	+23,000
Missouri	19.4%	25.1%	+5.6%	62,000	79,000	+17,000
Montana	39.0%	38.5%	-0.5%	27,000	25,000	-2,000
New Hampshire	47.8%	48.3%	+0.5%	37,000	36,000	-1,000
New Jersey	61.9%	61.2%	-0.7%	315,000	308,000	-7,000
New Mexico	16.5%	18.8%	+2.4%	23,000	25,000	+2,000
New York	71.6%	68.7%	-3.0%	880,000	792,000	-87,000
Ohio	44.6%	46.6%	+2.0%	254,000	285,000	+31,000
Oregon	54.7%	56.5%	+1.8%	119,000	143,000	+24,000
Pennsylvania	53.7%	56.5%	+2.9%	268,000	289,000	+21,000
Rhode Island	67.3%	69.3%	+2.0%	37,000	36,000	-1,000
Vermont	48.7%	45.1%	-3.6%	19,000	18,000	-1,000
Washington	54.6%	56.3%	+1.7%	226,000	267,000	+41,000
States that Protect Workers’ Rights	53.5%	53.2%	-0.4%	4,684,000	4,649,000	-35,000

Source: CPS-ORG, Economic Policy Institute, 2014-2022 (EPI, 2023). NOTE: Union member data are rounded to the nearest thousand. Numbers may not sum perfectly due to rounding. The change in union membership rates were only statistically significant with 95 percent confidence for Alaska, Delaware, the District of Columbia, Hawaii, Illinois, Minnesota, Missouri, New York, and Pennsylvania (standards t-tests), without considering changes in private sector unionization.

Figure 20 compares the average unionization rates for state and local government employees in the 54 pre-*Janus* months, or four and a half years, to the 54 post-*Janus* months, or four and a half years, for all 23 states that protect workers’ rights plus the District of Columbia. There are pro-collective bargaining

states where state and local government employee union membership rates have statistically declined, ranging from New York (-3.0 percentage points) to Alaska (-6.0 percentage points). However, there are also pro-collective bargaining states where state and local government worker union membership rates have statistically expanded, ranging from Pennsylvania (+2.9 percentage points) to Minnesota (+6.0 percentage points). Illinois is in the former group, with a 3.3 percentage-point decrease in the state and local government worker unionization rate, resulting in about 24,000 fewer union members (Figure 20).

Across the country, 13 of these states experienced increases in state and local government employee unionization rates while 11 experienced decreases. Similarly, 10 saw total state and local government employee union membership increase while 14 had membership losses, leading to a cumulative decline of approximately 35,000 members across all 24 states that protect workers' rights—a decrease of less than 1 percent. Ultimately, the *Janus* decision has had a small overall impact on unionization for state and local government employees, but a slightly negative impact within Illinois (Figure 20).

Some organizations have suggested that public sector union membership levels have fallen precipitously since the *Janus* decision (Pino, 2023). For example, a think tank in Illinois reported that the American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees Council 31 experienced a decrease of 12,000 members between 2017 and 2022 (Smith, 2023). These numbers are misleading, however, because they include both dues-paying union members and 7,000 “fair share” fee payers who were not members in 2017, per the Office of Labor-Management Standards at the U.S. Department of Labor from which the data were obtained (OLMS, 2023). After excluding the “fair share” nonmembers who became free riders, the union experienced about a 5,000-member decrease from 2017 to 2022. Claims of membership decline also do not account for the fact that public sector employment is not keeping pace with private sector employment in Illinois.

Labor shortages and job vacancies may be responsible for large portions of the decreases in union members (Lavigna, 2023). The number of unfilled positions at state and local governments, including education, increased from 534,000 job openings in June 2018 to 953,000 job openings by December 2022, an increase of 78.5 percent (BLS, 2023). At the same time, unfilled positions in the private sector increased by 53.8 percent (from 6.6 million to 10.1 million), meaning that the rise in unfilled positions was 24.7 percentage points higher for state governments, local governments, and public schools. While the reasons for unfilled public sector jobs are varied, “surveys of government employees show a high level of dissatisfaction with wages” as the primary culprit (Ghosh, 2022).

In Illinois, about 8,000 state government jobs were vacant in 2022, representing 13 percent of all state positions, and thousands more city, village, county, township, university, and other educational positions were available (Griffin, 2023). According to the data, about half of the workers who would fill these positions would likely become dues-paying union members, offsetting some—and potentially all—of the drop since 2017 if they were in fact filled.

Furthermore, the number of unfilled positions at Illinois' school districts more than doubled between 2017 and 2022 (ISBE, 2023). In 2017, which was the year before the *Janus* decision, Illinois' school districts reported about 2,000 unfilled positions. By 2022, Illinois schools had 5,300 unfilled positions, an increase of 164 percent. Unfilled teaching opportunities increased from about 1,000 positions in 2017 to more than 2,100 opportunities in 2022, a rise of 112 percent. The number of additional paraprofessionals, administrators, and other support personnel and licensed staff that school districts were looking to hire also grew by 216 percent (Figure 21).

FIGURE 21: UNFILLED POSITIONS REPORTED BY ILLINOIS SCHOOL DISTRICTS, 2017 VS. 2022

Unfilled Positions Reported by Illinois School Districts	2017	2022	Change
All Unfilled Positions	2,007	5,302	+164.2%
Teaching Positions	1,007	2,139	+112.4%
Paraprofessional, Administrative, and Support Positions	1,000	3,163	+216.3%

Source(s): Authors' analysis of “Unfilled Positions 2017-2022” data from the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE, 2023).

CONCLUSION

Since 2013, unionization has declined in Illinois, due largely to a transitioning and increasingly polarizing economy away from manufacturing and unionized sectors towards service- and knowledge-based industries with low union densities. There are approximately 116,000 fewer union members in Illinois today than there were in 2013. Still, about 13 percent of all workers in Illinois are unionized, with the highest rates among Black workers, military veterans, and workers with master's degrees. Essential workers like police officers, firefighters, teachers, construction workers, production workers, and registered nurses are more likely to be union members.

Labor unions are currently polling at historically high levels in public opinion surveys and continue to promote job quality and increase hourly earnings. Illinois has the 5th-highest union wage premium in the nation, with unions raising wages for the average worker by 12 percent. Unions particularly boost earnings for Illinois' middle-class residents: The median Illinois worker earns 14 percent higher wages due to union membership.

Despite long-term declines, there are positive signs for Illinois' labor movement. Union petitions have increased and workers are voting in favor of unionizing at high rates, demonstrating that thousands of unorganized workers want to join and form unions. Additionally, the bipartisan passage of the Workers' Rights Amendment means that Illinois voters resoundingly chose to protect their ability to unionize and bargain collectively. Going forward, the Workers' Rights Amendment could improve worker bargaining power and expand union membership in Illinois.

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APPENDIX

TABLE A: ROBUST OLS AND QUANTILE REGRESSIONS OF THE IMPACT OF UNION MEMBERSHIP ON THE NATURAL LOG OF HOURLY WAGES, 2020-2022

Ln(Nominal Wage)	(1) USA Mean		(1) Illinois Mean		(2) Illinois Median, Q(.5)		(3) Indiana Mean	
	Coefficient	(St. Err.)	Coefficient	(St. Err.)	Coefficient	(St. Err.)	Coefficient	(St. Err.)
Union member	0.0837***	(0.0031)	0.1164***	(0.0159)	0.1272***	(0.0167)	0.0813***	(0.0212)
Age	0.0336***	(0.0004)	0.0316***	(0.0024)	0.0252***	(0.0022)	0.0301***	(0.0027)
Age ²	-0.0003***	(0.0000)	-0.0003***	(0.0000)	-0.0002***	(0.0000)	-0.0003***	(0.0000)
Female identity	-0.1698***	(0.0021)	-0.1729***	(0.0117)	-0.1456***	(0.0105)	-0.1790***	(0.0138)
White	0.0148***	(0.0042)	-0.0003	(0.0225)	-0.0039	(0.0226)	0.0516	(0.0399)
Black/African American	-0.1112***	(0.0048)	-0.0849***	(0.0274)	-0.0878***	(0.0266)	-0.0262	(0.0429)
Hispanic/Latinx	-0.0889***	(0.0043)	-0.0788***	(0.0227)	-0.0789***	(0.0228)	0.0025	(0.0421)
Veteran	0.0239***	(0.0046)	0.0453	(0.0302)	0.0394	(0.0335)	-0.0590**	(0.0267)
Married	0.0672***	(0.0021)	0.0684***	(0.0118)	0.0698***	(0.0115)	0.0885***	(0.0132)
Citizen	0.0566***	(0.0049)	0.0493**	(0.0229)	0.0540***	(0.0210)	0.0036	(0.0451)
Foreign-born	-0.0315***	(0.0039)	-0.0152	(0.0198)	-0.0411**	(0.0195)	-0.1094***	(0.0355)
Metro Area	0.0748***	(0.0027)	0.1093***	(0.0183)	0.1072***	(0.0166)	-0.0768***	(0.0148)
Federal government	0.0236***	(0.0063)	0.0170	(0.0397)	-0.0322	(0.0317)	-0.0563	(0.0463)
State government	-0.1275***	(0.0045)	-0.1737***	(0.0304)	-0.1912***	(0.0326)	-0.1089***	(0.0323)
Local government	-0.1132***	(0.0041)	-0.1275***	(0.0226)	-0.1525***	(0.0247)	-0.1622***	(0.0255)
Usual hours worked	0.0040***	(0.0001)	0.0043***	(0.0006)	0.0054***	(0.0005)	0.0049***	(0.0007)
Less than high school	-0.1270***	(0.0035)	-0.1232***	(0.0185)	-0.1057***	(0.0149)	-0.0915***	(0.0225)
Some college	0.0411***	(0.0026)	0.0576***	(0.0147)	0.0504***	(0.0132)	0.0076	(0.0169)
Associate's	0.0805***	(0.0031)	0.0929***	(0.0180)	0.0806***	(0.0190)	0.1095***	(0.0199)
Bachelor's	0.2998***	(0.0030)	0.3282***	(0.0165)	0.3189***	(0.0162)	0.2555***	(0.0186)
Master's	0.4336***	(0.0041)	0.4476***	(0.0220)	0.4619***	(0.0220)	0.3435***	(0.0267)
Professional/Doctorate	0.5906***	(0.0067)	0.6244***	(0.0340)	0.6826***	(0.0406)	0.5913***	(0.0521)
Industry Dummies	Y		Y		Y		Y	
Occupation Dummies	Y		Y		Y		Y	
State Dummies	Y		N		N		N	
Constant	2.0085***	(0.0124)	1.9117***	(0.0596)	1.9689***	(0.0560)	2.0062***	(0.0810)
R ²	0.4171		0.4137		0.2786		0.4031	
Observations	369,422		10,564		10,564		6,347	
Weighted	Y		Y		Y		Y	

Three asterisks (***) indicate significance at the 1% level, two asterisks (**) indicates significance at the 5% level, and one asterisk (*) indicates significance at the 10% level. Source: CPS-ORG, Economic Policy Institute, 2020-2022 (EPI, 2023). The data are adjusted by the outgoing rotation group earnings weight to match the total population 16 years of age or older.

Robust ordinary least squares (OLS) and quantile regression models account for other variables to parse out the actual and unique causal effect that union membership has on hourly wages on average. The analyses control for a host of demographic, work, sector, industry, occupation, and education variables that could also have an impact a worker's wages. In the U.S. model, state indicator variables are included to factor in unmeasured state-specific characteristics. The sample, in all cases, is weighted to match the actual population. Regression (1) compares the impact of union membership on wages for Illinois compared to the nation from robust OLS analyses, regression (2) provides the median regression from a quartile regression for Illinois, and regression (3) uses Indiana as an example of robust OLS results from other states.

NOTE: In this report, regression outputs are converted to percent changes using correct adjustments to interpret natural logarithms (Kennedy, 1981; IDRE, 2023). The correct interpretations of these results are $e^{(\text{coefficient})} - 1$.

