

To: Interested Parties

From: GBAO

Date: August 25, 2023

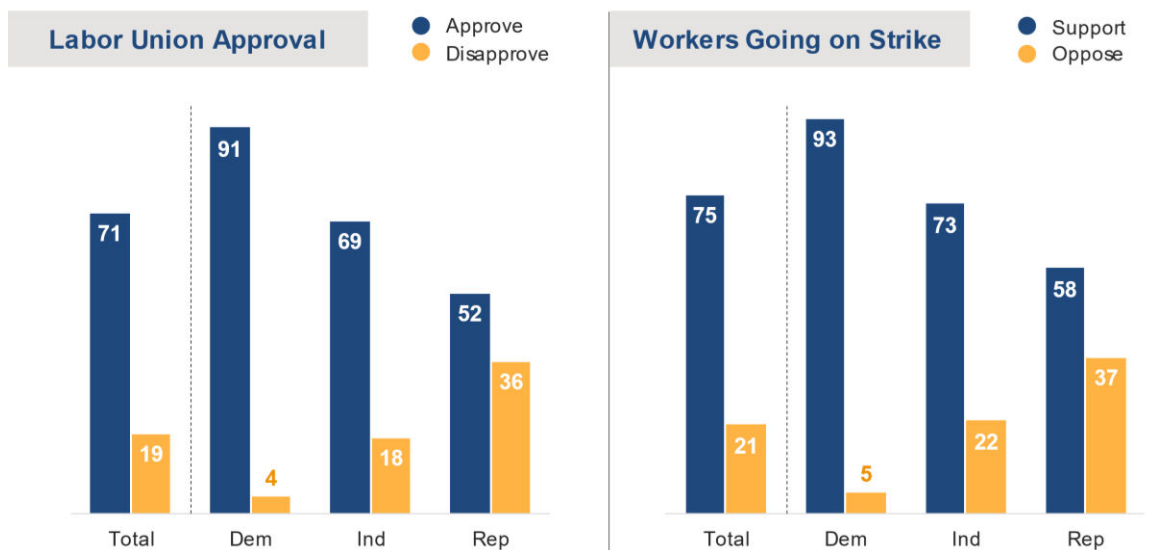
The State of Labor Unions Is Strong

As we approach Labor Day, our recent poll of registered voters suggests voters across the board strongly see labor unions as beneficial, more needed now than ever, and yet harder to join. Support transcends partisan groups, with Republicans and independents supporting unions, and younger voters particularly likely to support them.

Key Findings

- An overwhelming majority supports unions and strikes, even majorities of Republicans and independents.** Seven-in-ten (71%) approve of labor unions, while less than a fifth (19%) disapprove. Labor union approval transcends party—with 91% of Democrats, along with more than two-thirds (69%) of independents and half of Republicans (52%) approving.

Support for strikes further exceeds union approval. Three-fourths (75%) support “workers going on strike to negotiate for better wages, benefits, and working conditions” with nearly half (47%) strongly supporting doing so. Again, clear majorities of Democrats (93%), independents (73%), and Republicans (58%) support strikes.



- **The want and need for unions is greatest among those newest to the workforce: voters under 30.** Across every metric tested, voters under 30 show wide support for labor unions with near universal approval (88%) and support for strikes (90%). Yet this group is also more likely to say it's hard to join a union and should be easier.

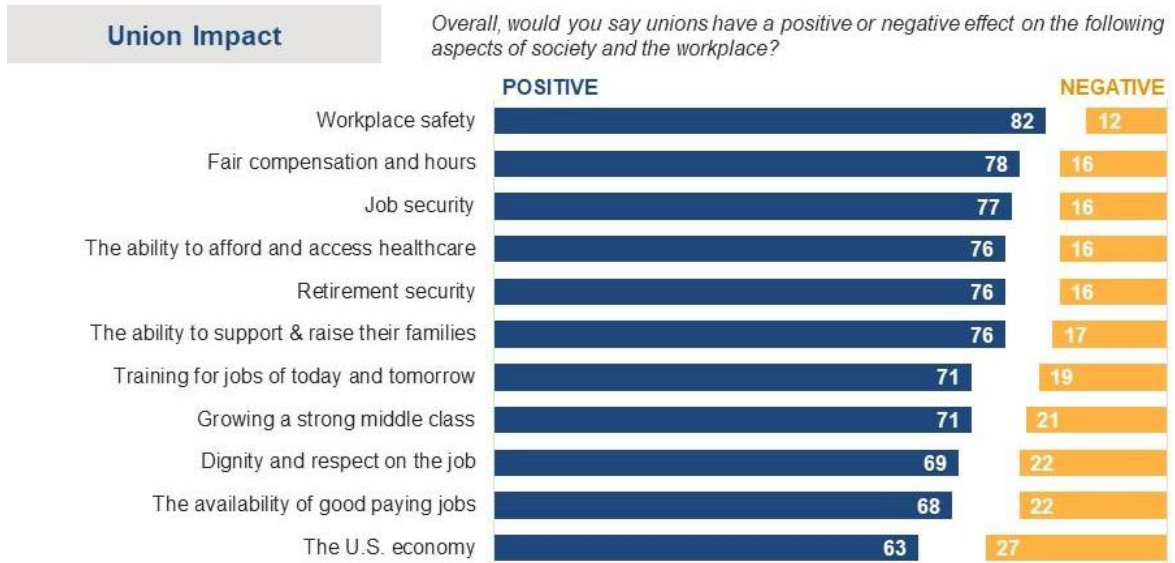
| | <30 | 30-49 | 50+ |
|---|-----|-------|-----|
| Labor union approval | 88% | 69% | 67% |
| Support for strikes | 90% | 72% | 72% |
| Currently hard to join a union | 62% | 51% | 37% |
| Should be easier to form or join a union | 70% | 52% | 41% |
| Unions more needed than in the past | 77% | 57% | 51% |
| Would join union if had the option | 65% | 54% | 49% |
| Society would be better with more people in a union | 70% | 50% | 45% |

The generational divide extends beyond party, as voters under 50 show more support for unions and strikes than voters over 50 within each partisan group.

| | Dem <50 | Dem 50+ | Ind <50 | Ind 50+ | Rep <50 | Rep 50+ |
|--|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| Labor union approval (Approve-Disapprove margin) | +91 | +82 | +59 | +41 | +26 | +8 |
| Strikes (Support-Oppose margin) | +90 | +86 | +58 | +43 | +33 | +13 |

- **Unions are seen as more needed than before, and most believe having more workers in unions would be a boon for society.** Compared to the past, twice as many voters say labor unions are more needed (57%) today than less needed (30%). Voters also believe more workers in unions would benefit society at large, with a majority (51%) saying society would be better off compared to just a third (34%) saying it would not be better off.
- **However, many find unions hard to join, and majorities of voters believe it should become easier and would join a union if given the option.** More believe it's hard to join a union today (46%) than say it is easy (37%). Half (50%) also say it should be easier for working people to form or join a union, a third (32%) say things should stay the same, and very few (8%) say it should be harder. And over half (53%) would join a union if they had the option at their most recent job, while just over a third (37%) would not. An even higher percentage in most non-supervisory roles would join a union if given the option (58%).

- Voters believe unions have a positive impact on workers and on the economy at large.** Over three-quarters believe unions have a positive effect on safety, pay, hours, job security, and benefits for workers. Large majorities also say unions have a positive effect on economic measures like the U.S. economy broadly, the availability of good paying jobs, and growing a strong middle class. Relatively few think unions have a negative impact on any of these.



- Many have experienced problems in the workplace, and nearly all say a union would have made the situation better.** Two-thirds (66%) report having experienced at least one from a series of problems with salary or pay, healthcare or retirement benefits, hours or schedule, workplace culture, workplace safety, or discrimination or sexual harassment. Of those who have experienced a problem, salary/pay (69%), workplace culture (59%), and hours/schedule (57%) were more prevalent, although women and Black voters also report being particularly likely to experience discrimination or sexual harassment in the workplace. And of those who reported a problem, nearly all (90%) say a union could help solve one or more of the listed problems.
- An emerging concern is artificial intelligence displacing workers. Voters believe unions can also help on this front to protect jobs from being replaced by AI.** Seven-in-ten (70%) report being concerned about AI displacing workers, with more saying they are “very” concerned (34%) than not concerned (29%). Concerns about AI bridge nearly every demographic group including by party, age, race, education, class, and urbanicity, though women (77%) express more concern than men (63%). Among those who are concerned, a margin of 2-1 thinks unions can help protect workers from being replaced by artificial intelligence (59% union can help, 28% unions can’t help).

Methodology

GBAO conducted a survey of 1,200 registered voters and oversamples of voters under 30, AAPI voters, and union members. The survey was conducted August 1-8, 2023 with live dialers to cell phones and landlines and text-to-web interviews, and is subject to a margin of error of +/- 2.8 percentage points at the 95% confidence level. Sample demographics were balanced and weighted to match population estimates of registered voters.