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Label & Service Trades Department, AFL-CIO

Broken Labor Law, Corporate Union-Busting Keep Union Density Flat Despite Renewed Organizing Push, Popularity of Unions

At the end of January, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) released its annual report on union density, revealing that the percentage of workers in a union remained flat in 2024 despite significant organizing wins across various sectors of the economy.

AFL-CIO President Liz Shuler issued the following statement in response to the report:

"It's plain as day that more working people want a union now than at any point in our lifetimes. Across our economy and in every part of the country, workers are standing together to demand fair treatment, better wages, and dignity and respect on the job. Our organizing has resulted in remarkable victories in traditional and emerging sectors like manufacturing, health care, clean energy, infrastructure, retail and restaurants, hospitality, and on college campuses, in technology, in public service, and much more."

[The] BLS numbers don't begin to tell the real story of the desire workers have to join a union. The number of union elections has doubled since 2021, boosted by efforts from the Biden administration to give workers a fair shot at joining a union. In 2024 alone, there were nearly 1,800 union elections. with workers winning the vast majority. Many of these victories are not reflected in the numbers released today because employers are exploiting a broken system to delay bargaining a first contract. But these wins-including an election for the first-ever Whole Foods union in Philadelphia just last night (January 27) —are proof positive of working people's incredible desire to join and form unions.

CHALLENGES PERSIST AMID GROWING MOMENTUM

Public approval for unions is at a nearly 70-year high because in an economy that continues to heavily tilt to the wealthy few and leaves workers behind, the only way to get ahead is by joining together. The recent successful organizing campaigns at places like Starbucks, Amazon, Volkswagen, and other massive corporations show workers' momentum and hunger to join unions, no matter how many hurdles bosses and antiunion politicians throw their way. There are 60 million workers who would join a union today if given the opportunity, but between broken labor law and corporate bosses like Elon Musk and Jeff Bezos engaging in often illegal union-busting every year with little consequence, far too few get that chance.

"It's time for change," Shuler emphasized. "We call on the Trump administration to live up to its campaign promises to support workers by prioritizing fixing America's broken labor law through the Protecting the Right to Organize (PRO) Act and the Public Service Freedom to Negotiate Act. These bills would finally update our archaic, broken laws and give workers what we so desperately want: a free and fair shot at joining a union on the job."

A UNIFIED LABOR MOVEMENT

The AFL-CIO is now nearly 15 million members strong with the recent affiliation of the Service Employees International Union (SEIU), marking the most unified labor movement seen in decades. Many unions are experiencing an all-time high in membership and continue to grow. This year, workers will continue to organize vigorously, flex their power through strikes and other workplace actions, and demand that corporate CEOs and politicians give them the respect they deserve.

Labor Board Kneecapped by Trump Firing of Board Chair

"By leaving only two board members in their posts, the President has effectively shut down the National Labor Relations Board's operations, leaving the workers it defends on their own in the face of union-busting and retaliation." - Liz Shuler, AFL-CIO President

One week into his second term, President Donald Trump fired National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) General Counsel Jennifer Abruzzo — who had been a powerful advocate for workers during her tenure as an appointee — and board member Gwynne Wilcox, whose illegal dismissal leaves the NLRB without quorum. The firing of Wilcox, who was confirmed by the U.S. Senate in September 2023 to a second five-year-term, was unprecedented and illegal, the AFL-CIO says.

"President Trump's firing of NLRB member Gwynne Wilcox, the first Black woman

SEIU Rejoins the AFL-CIO, Strengthening Labor Solidarity

Throughout

their time out-

side the AFL-CIO,

SEIU remained

a powerful force

in the fight for

workers' rights,

organizing and

advocating along-

side their union

siblings. Many

stayed connect-

ed to state and

local labor bodies

through solidarity

charters, ensur-

locals

SEIU



From left: Rocio Sáenz SEIU Secretary-Treasurer, Ai-Jen Poo President National Domestic Workers Alliance, Liz Shuler President AFL-CIO, and April Verrett SEIU President

The labor movement has grown even stronger with the return of the Service Employees International Union (SEIU) to the AFL-CIO. After nearly two decades outside the national federation, SEIU's decision to reaffiliate marks a renewed commitment to solidarity and collective action for working people.

ing continued collaboration with AFL-CIO state federations and central labor councils.

Rich Kline, president of the Union Label Department, welcomed SEIU's return, emphasizing the importance of labor unity. "Having SEIU back in the AFL-CIO strengthens our movement and our ability to take on corporate greed," Kline said. "When unions stand together, we get a little bit closer to seeing true economic justice."

As corporate interests and anti-union forces ramp up their attacks on workers, a unified labor movement is more crucial than ever. SEIU's return to the AFL-CIO ensures that millions more workers can mobilize under a single, powerful federation, advocating for policies that protect union jobs, expand organizing rights, and advance economic fairness.

With SEIU back in the fold, the AFL-CIO is positioned to make an even greater impact in the ongoing fight for justice and dignity for all workers. Their return is not just a moment of celebration but a signal that the labor movement is growing stronger and more united in its mission.

April Verrett: Championing Change as SEIU President

April Verrett was elected president of the Service Employees International Union (SEIU) in 2024. She brings to her office bold leadership, strategic vision, and a relentless commitment to workers' rights. Under her guidance, SEIU continues to amplify the voices of essential workers, advocating for dignity, fair wages, and safe workplaces across diverse industries.

"Make no mistake — working people are under attack and the stakes have never been higher; but the real challenge and opportunity of leading our union in this moment is meeting the momentum of workers across the country — especially the young people of color — who are showing us what's possible," said Verrett following her election.

Verrett served in labor organizing for more than two decades and was previously chair of the SEIU National Home Care Council and co-chair of the union's National Organizing Committee.

Since assuming the presidency, Verrett has positioned SEIU as a vanguard for

social and economic justice. Her tenure has been marked by innovative campaigns that intertwine traditional labor organizing with broader movements for equity. Recognizing that worker struggles often intersect with healthcare, housing, and racial justice, she has spearheaded initiatives that holistically address these challenges.

Verrett's leadership has united workers across racial, economic, and geographic divides. Her emphasis on coalition-building has fortified SEIU's partnerships with community organizations, other unions, and progressive allies, ensuring that the fight for workers' rights remains central to national and local conversations.

As one of the few women leading a major international union, Verrett is breaking barriers and inspiring a new generation of women in the labor movement. Her presidency highlights the importance of inclusive leadership and the unique perspectives women bring to the table.



April Verrett SEIU President

Hockey Unions Join AFL-CIO, Strengthening the Labor Movement



In a historic move, the National Hockey League Players' Association (NHLPA) and the Professional Hockey Players' Association (PHPA) have joined the AFL-CIO and its Sports Council, marking yet another significant expansion of the labor federation to 63 affiliated unions representing over 15 million workers.

The NHLPA, which represents roughly 750 players across 32 NHL teams, and the PHPA, representing about 1,800 players across 61 teams in the American Hockey League and ECHL, bring new voices to the AFL-CIO's push for stronger union

contracts, fair wages, and safer working conditions. "Whether our work is on the rink, in the classroom or on the factory floor, every worker deserves a voice on the job," said AFL-CIO President Liz Shuler, emphasizing the broader benefits of union solidarity.

This latest affiliation follows SEIU's move in early January, further uniting the labor movement. As both hockey associations gear up for upcoming collective bargaining negotiations, they will now have the full support of the AFL-CIO at the bargaining table. The AFL-CIO Sports Council, established in 2022, continues to build power across the sports industry by aligning the interests of athletes with other workers in fields such as hospitality and service.

With this groundbreaking development, professional hockey players are not only set to bolster their working conditions and professional opportunities but also contribute to a broader wave of labor solidarity across North America.

Wilcox Says Firing was 'Unprecedented and Illegal'

Continued from page 1

to serve on the board, is illegal and will have immediate consequences for working people," said Liz Shuler, president of the AFL-CIO, in a press release.

"By leaving only two board members in their posts, the President has effectively shut down the National Labor Relations Board's operations, leaving the workers it defends on their own in the face of unionbusting and retaliation."

On February 5, Wilcox sued Mr. Trump alleging that her firing was "unprecedented and illegal." In the 90 years since Congress established the agency, no president has attempted to remove a member of the board, Wilcox told CBS News in a February 6 interview. "I handled cases where workers were fired and retaliated against for their conduct, but I never imagined that I would be the person being fired for doing my job." According to Wilcox's suit, a board member cannot be removed from their position unless they've engaged in neglect of duty or malfeasance. The lawsuit, filed in the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia, asserts her dismissal was "blatant violation" of the National Labor Relations Act that protects board members from being fired without cause.

"He does not have the authority to remove me based on my views," said Wilcox, a lawyer who prior to her position at NLRB represented labor unions.

Wilcox says she is asking a judge to declare her removal unlawful and reinstate her as a member of the board. In her filing, she notes that Mr. Trump may try to use the litigation as a "test case" for the courts. And she states that "if her firing is upheld, it could set a precedent that would expand presidential power." But, she says, "if she didn't take legal action, it would render the laws protecting the independence of agencies like hers meaningless."

"If I don't fight, that means the president gets to do whatever he wants to do in violation of the law," Wilcox told CBS News.

During her interview with CBS, Wilcox noted that the board took actions to protect the rights of workers at Amazon and SpaceX. The latter owned by Elon Musk, who, through his Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE), has been working his way across federal government agencies under the guise of rooting out inefficiency. Several news outlets have noted his conflicts of interest as many of the federal agencies he has called for closing had been investigating companies owned by the billionaire.

In Rushed DEI Deletions, Federal Agencies Fail to Consider Context Before Pulling Manuals and Content

Upon taking office, President Trump issued an executive order calling for the removal of all mentions of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) from departments and agencies throughout the federal government. At the the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), that order may have gone too far when the agency destroyed and deleted 18 publications on workplace safety practices.

According to the news website Popular Information, the overzealous destruction of the safety manuals used keyword searches but failed to take in to account the context of word usage.

"For example, one of the purged publications is 'OSHA Best Practices for Protecting EMS Responders During Treatment and Transport of Victims of Hazardous Substance Releases," writes Popular Information. "An archived version of that publication details the steps employers need to take to protect their EMS responders from becoming additional victims while on the front line of medical response," the publication explains.

Further, it notes the manual "does not reference DEI. However the words 'diversity' and 'diverse' are used in a context that have nothing to do with race or gender."

What could be a life-saving manual has now been removed from circulation at the agency becuase it references a "diversity of state-specific certification, training, and regulatory requirements" for "EMS agencies" and "diverse conditions under which EMS responders could work."

It also states that "EMS responders are a diverse group" and states that "risks

Whole Foods Asks NLRB to Nullify Union Election in Philadelphia

In late January, workers at Whole Foods in Philadelphia voted to join the United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) Local 1776. Now, the Amazon-owned grocery store is calling on the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB), to nullify the election, claiming the election results still need to be certified by a regional director, which Whole Foods says can't lawfully be done since the agency currently does not have a third board member in Washington, DC. President Trump illegally fired Board Chair Gwynne A. Wilcox after taking office in January.

The company also says the union interfered in the election process by promising employees a 30 percent wage increase if they unionized and providing free transportation to employees the day of the vote. The upscale grocer also claims the union intimidated employees who supported Whole Foods. The company did not provide specific details on its allegations, which the union disputes.

In a statement from union officials, UFCW Local 1776 called the company's allegations baseless. It also said the objections filed by Whole Foods were a legal maneuver to delay the bargaining process.

"We fully expected Whole Foods to try to stall this process," said Wendell Young, IV, the president of the Local 1776. "Amazon has a well-documented history of using baseless objections to undermine the rights of workers seeking representation, and this case is no different."

In its objection to the election, the company also accused the NLRB of tainting the process by keeping the grocery store from communicating its views on unionization to employees through captive audience meetings.

With no quorum at the NRLB, the union and the company will likely be at a standstill for the foreseeable future.

vary with their primary and secondary roles."

In another now deleted manual, "Guidelines for Nursing Homes: Ergonomics for the Prevention of Musculoskeletal Disorders," page 10, states, "development of MSDs may be related to genetic causes, gender, age, and other factors." The single use of the word "gender" appears to have flagged the publication for deletion and destruction.

The list goes on. Only one of the 18 publications, "Restroom Access for Transgender Workers, Best Practices," appears to have anything to do with DEI.

That publication details federal and state legal precedent recognizing "employees should be allowed to use the restrooms that correspond to their gender identity." All of the targeted publications, however, include a keyword related to diversity or gender.

The National Security Agency (NSA) did a "Big Delete" too. That agency banned 27 words including "privilege," "bias," and "inclusion."

According to a Washington Post analysis, "words like diversity, equity, and inclusion were removed at least 231 times from the websites of federal agencies. A page on the Department of the Interior's website that boasted of its museums' 'diverse collections,' removed the word 'diverse.'"

The dangers of using a simple keyword search to mass delete was particularly evident when data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention was found to be missing. According to VOX, information covering everything from obesity to the bird flu was affected by the purge.

Luckily, reports VOX, "the removal elicited a swift response from public health experts who warned that without this data, the country risked being in the dark about important health trends that shape lifeand-death public health decisions made in communities across the country."

Much of the CDC data was restored, however, experts in the field say not all of the supporting papers and documents have been.

Workers' Memorial Day is April 28 OSHA Protects Workers

International Workers' Memorial Day is observed annually on April 28th. This date coincides with the anniversary of the Occupational Safety and Health Act (OSH Act) in the United States, which was enacted in 1970. The day serves as a global occasion to honor the sacrifices made by workers and to reinforce efforts to protect those at risk of injury or illness in the workplace.

As Workers' Memorial Day approaches, Republican Representative Andy Biggs (AZ) has introduced legislation to eliminate the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA). His bill, titled NOSHA—Nullify OSHA—proposes eliminating OSHA and transferring workplace safety protections to state control.

This is not the first attempt by Representative Biggs or other Republicans to dismantle the agency. In 2021, he proposed similar legislation in reaction to OSHA's enforcement of COVID-19 vaccination measures under President Biden. The 2021 proposal did not pass, and many political analysts believe the current version will also face significant obstacles. However, unforeseen outcomes are always possible.

Since its establishment, OSHA

has significantly contributed to reducing workplace fatalities and injuries. In 1970, the year of its founding, there were 14,000 work-related deaths, 2.5 million disabling injuries, and 300,000 new cases of occupational diseases. At that time, the work-related fatality rate was approximately 20 per 100,000 workers. By 1992, this rate had decreased to 5.2 fatalities per 100,000 workers, and by 2009, it had further declined to 3.5 fatalities per 100,000 full-time equivalents. Unfortunately, the rate has remained relatively stable at around 3.3 to 3.7 fatalities per 100,000 workers over the past 15 years. Maintaining current safety levels without OSHA's oversight may prove challenging.

Representative Biggs advocates for states to assume control. However, "state plans" are specifically designed to protect state and local government employees, a group outside OSHA's direct jurisdiction. Currently, 22 state plans approved by OSHA cover all eligible workers including Puerto Rico, while an additional seven plans focus solely on state and local government employees. In these situations, OSHA continues to oversee private-sector workers.

For a state to obtain OSHA approval for its plan, it must demonstrate that worker protections are "at least as effective" as OSHA's regulations, meaning that state regulations and enforcement efforts must meet or exceed OSHA's standards.

Number of fatal work injuries, 2014-23



For example, California's regulations often surpass OSHA's requirements.

The process of achieving OSHA approval is rigorous. Nevada received initial approval in 1974 but only gained final approval in 2000. Hawaii obtained final approval in 1984 but saw OSHA intervene in 2012 due to staffing and budgetary issues before regaining control. Arizona's state plan faced scrutiny in 2022, with OSHA proposing revocation due to prolonged non-compliance with effective standards.

A VARIED LANDSCAPE

Most state plans heavily rely on OSHAdeveloped regulations due to resource constraints. Without OSHA's guidance, a fragmented system of state regulations could emerge, complicating compliance for safety professionals working across multiple states. Unlike workers' compensation, which addresses incidents post-occurrence, safety standards require ongoing proactive measures.

A unified set of safety standards simplifies compliance and enhances worker protection.

WE NEED A STRONG OSHA

Workers need to be able to fully exercise their rights to a workplace free from recognized hazards, including the ability to report injuries and illnesses without retaliation, raise unsafe working conditions, be able to fully utilize stop work

> authority, come home unharmed at the end of the workday and be fully compensated when the job has injured or made them ill.

> This requires refocused national attention, energy and action on the enormous role and impact job safety and health agencies play to provide workplace oversight and prevent the disease, injuries and death that plague working people across the country. There must be new dedication and leadership to substantially increase their resources to protect workers, and address ongoing and emerging safety and health problems. Employers and elected leaders

must recognize that employment is a significant determinant of health and take leadership to make workplaces safer.

Congress continues to fund job safety at stagnant levels, allowing an OSHA budget that still only amounts to \$3.93 to protect each worker covered by the OSH Act. Existing and emerging hazards continue to grow the portfolio and responsibilities of OSHA and other job safety agencies, without increased funding, not even to match inflation. At these levels, the agencies continue to have a paltry number of staff to write standards, analyze data, conduct inspections, conduct needed research on important hazards and respond to emerging threats.

De BUY

- » Cadbury Creme Eggs & other chocolate products
- » Dum Dums

HAP

- » Gimbal's Gourmet Jelly Beans
- » Haviland Nonpareils
- » Jelly Belly
- » Laffy Taffy
- » Malted Milk Eggs (PAAS, Mighty Malts)
- » Marshmallow Peeps
- » Mike and Ike
- » Necco
- » Smarties
- » Tootsie Rolls and Pops
- » Ferrero Group (Nestle, Farley & Sathers)
- » Russell Stover Candies
- » American Licorice
- » Annabelle Candy Company
- » Almond Roca
- » Brown & Haley
- » Mountain Bars
- » Roca Bars
- » Roca Bits

- » Frankford Candy & Chocolate
- » Ghirardelli Chocolate Company Solid Milk, Milk & Caramel, Solid 60% Cacao Dark and Dark & Sea Salt Caramel & all varieties of chocolates
- » Goldenberg's Peanut Chews
- » Hershey Chocolate Bunny
- » Hershey Milk Chocolate with Almond Bars
- » Hershey Cookies N' Creme Bars
- » Hershey Kisses (Milk Chocolate, Milk Chocolate with Almonds, Special Dark, Cookies N' Crème)
- » Rolo
- » Hershey Nuggets
- » Baby Ruth
- » Butterfinger
- » BB's and Pearson's Nips
- » Nestlé Peanut Butter Cups and Minis
- » Nestlé Crunch Bars
- » Skinny Cow Candy
- » Sno Caps
- » See's

AFL-CIO NATIONAL BOYCOTTS

MAR-APR 2025

HOTELS

SUBMITTED BY UNITE HERE!

Please support the workers in these hotels by continuing to boycott the following properties:

ALASKA:

- » Hilton Anchorage
- » Marriott Anchorage Downtown
- » Homewood Suites by Hilton Anchorage
- » Hampton Inn Anchorage
- » Hilton Garden Inn

CALIFORNIA:

- » Hilton Long Beach
- » Hyatt Regency Sacramento
- » Hyatt Centric Fisherman's Wharf
- » La Meridien
- » Hilton Los Angeles Airport
- » Terranea Resort

- » Hyatt Regency Santa Clara
- » Hyatt Regency Sacramento
- » Four Seasons Beverly Hills
- » Hotel Bel Air
- » Langham Huntington MARYLAND:
- » Merriweather Lakehouse Hotel WASHINGTON, DC:
- » Hotel Zena

MASSACHUSETTS:

» Boston Marriott Copley Place

FOOD

SUBMITTED BY Bakery, Confectionery, Tobacco Workers and Grain Millers International Union (BCTGM)

» Mondelez International Snack Foods (those made in Mexico)

SUBMITTED BY UNITE HERE!

» Catapult NW



LEGAL

SUBMITTED BY American Federation of State, County & Municipal Employees

- » Gleason, Dunn, Walsh & O'Shea
- » Mcdonald, Lamond, Canzoneri and Hickernell

OTHER

SUBMITTED BY Farm Labor Organizing Committee (FLOC)

» Reynolds American, Inc., Vuse e-cigarettes

When some labor disputes with businesses cannot be resolved, the AFL-CIO supports its affiliates by endorsing their boycotts. A boycott is an act of solidarity by voluntarily abstaining from the purchase or use of a product or service.

POLICY GUIDELINE FOR ENDORSEMENT OF AFFILIATES' BOYCOTTS

The AFL-CIO Executive Council has developed policy guidelines that regulate how the federation endorses boycotts undertaken by its affiliates. To get AFL-CIO sanction, boycotts should be directed at primary employers.

THE GUIDELINES INCLUDE THESE PROVISIONS:

All requests to the national AFL-CIO for endorsement must be made by a national or international union.

Any affiliated union with a contract in force with the same primary employer will be contacted by the AFL-CIO to determine whether there is an objection to the federation's endorsement.

Affiliates will be asked to provide the AFL-CIO with background information on the dispute in a confidential information survey. Prior to endorsement of the boycott, the executive officers, or their designees, will meet with the national union's officers, or their designees, to discuss the union's strategic plan and timetable for the boycott, or other appropriate tactics, and to discuss the federation's role. The national or international union initiating the boycott is primarily responsible for all boycott activities; the AFL-CIO will provide supplemental support.

Boycotts will be carried on the AFL-CIO national boycott list for a period of one year, and the endorsement will expire automatically

at the end of that time. National and international unions may request oneyear extensions of the listings for actions where an organizing or bargaining campaign is actively in place.

(These guidelines were adopted by the AFL-CIO Executive Council in April 2011.)

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By Rich Kline, President, UL&STD

Musk's DOGE Threatens Workers' Rights Protected by Labor Department and OSHA



The so-called Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE), which is not a real department, has mounted an attack on the very real Department of Labor and the Occupational Safety and Health Administration DOGE, a contrivance of the Trump administration and billionaire Elon Musk, is aimed at government worker

and agencies that serve all Americans.

Musk-owned companies such as Space-X, Tesla and the Boring Company have many OSHA violations and complaints, past and present, on the record. Some complaints are still open, which means that Musk has a conflict of interest. Retaliation against complaining workers would be easy if Musk's DOGE gains access to confidential information about them. The Trump Administration has no interest in protecting workers. It illegally fired Gwynn Wilcox, an NLRB board member, thereby rendering the agency incapable of performing its responsibilities. As noted elsewhere in the Label Letter, she is suing Trump for his illegal action.

The rate of job-related deaths, injuries and illnesses is increasing. Workers need more protections, not less. Trump's previous administration was unresponsive to this critical need leaving many key posts at Labor and OSHA unfilled or staffed by anti-worker corporate appointees.

The excesses and illegalities of Trump and Musk call for resistance by workers, their unions, their allies and the public at large, many of whom don't yet see how their lives and rights are under threat, too.

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