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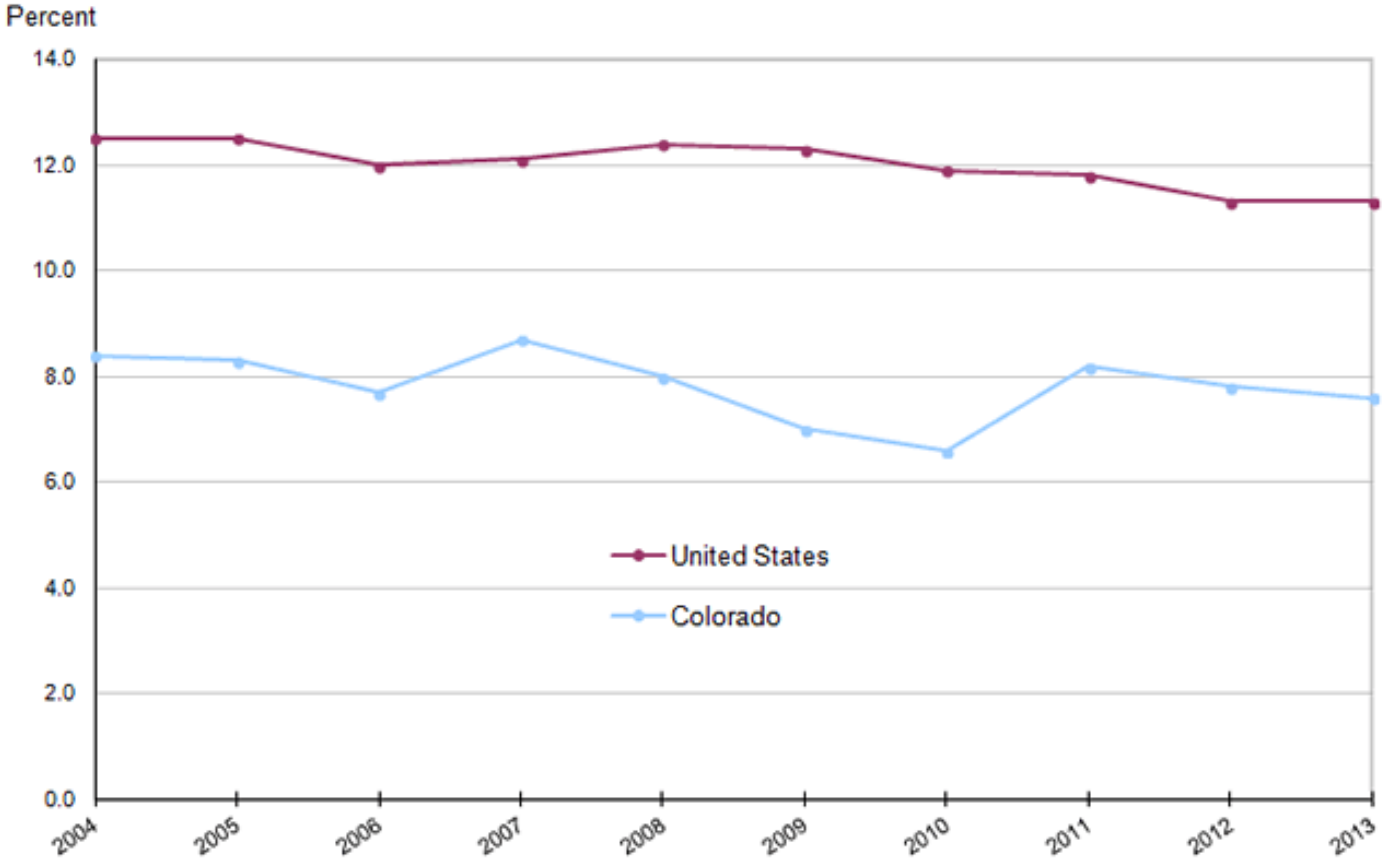
Union Membership in Colorado – 2013

In 2013, union members accounted for 7.6 percent of wage and salary workers in Colorado, compared with 7.8 percent in 2012, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reported today. (See table A.) Regional Commissioner Stanley W. Suchman noted that Colorado's union membership rate has been below the U.S. average every year since state data were first available in 1989. (See chart 1.) At its peak in 1990, the union membership rate for Colorado was 10.5 percent. Nationwide, union members accounted for 11.3 percent of employed wage and salary workers in 2013, the same rate as in 2012.

Chart 1. Members of unions as a percent of employed in the United States and Colorado, 2004–2013



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

In addition to Colorado's 171,000 wage and salary workers who were union members in 2013, another 36,000 workers were represented by a union on their main job or were covered by an employee association or contract while not being union members themselves. (See table A.) Nationwide, 14.5 million wage and salary workers were union members in 2013 and 1.5 million wage and salary workers were not affiliated with a union but had jobs covered by a union contract.

Table A. Union affiliation of employed wage and salary workers in Colorado, annual averages, 2004-2013 (Numbers in thousands)

Year	Total employed	Members of unions[1]		Represented by unions[2]	
		Total	Percent of employed	Total	Percent of employed
2004	2,050	172	8.4	191	9.3
2005	2,052	170	8.3	193	9.4
2006	2,154	165	7.7	186	8.6
2007	2,204	191	8.7	202	9.2
2008	2,254	181	8.0	208	9.2
2009	2,175	153	7.0	181	8.3
2010	2,130	140	6.6	171	8.0
2011	2,186	179	8.2	203	9.3
2012	2,165	169	7.8	190	8.8
2013	2,243	171	7.6	207	9.2

Footnotes:
(1) Data refer to members of a labor union or an employee association similar to a union.
(2) Data refer to members of a labor union or an employee association similar to a union, as well as 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 pat-time wage and salary workers. Excluded are all self-employed workers regardless of whether or not their businesses are incorporated. Updated population controls are introduced annually with the release of January data.

In 2013, 30 states and the District of Columbia had union membership rates below that of the U.S. average, 11.3 percent, while 20 states had higher rates. (See table 1.) Nine states had union membership rates above 15.0 percent. Of these states, three were located in the Northeast, four in the West, and two in the Midwest. (See chart 2.) New York had the highest rate (24.4 percent), followed by Alaska (23.1 percent) and Hawaii (22.1 percent).

Nine states had union membership rates below 5.0 percent, with North Carolina having the lowest, 3.0 percent. The next lowest rates were recorded in Arkansas (3.5 percent), Mississippi and South Carolina (3.7 percent each), and Utah (3.9 percent). Union membership rates declined over the year in 26 states (including Colorado), rose in 22 states and the District of Columbia, and were unchanged in 2 states.

Over half of the 14.5 million union members in the United States lived in just seven states (California, 2.4 million; New York, 2.0 million; Illinois, 0.9 million; Pennsylvania, 0.7 million; and Michigan, New Jersey, and Ohio, 0.6 million each), though these states accounted for only about one-third of wage and salary employment nationally.

State union membership levels depend on both the union membership rate and the employment level. For example, North Carolina and Hawaii had comparable numbers of union members (117,000 and 121,000, respectively), though North Carolina's wage and salary employment level (3.9 million) was more than seven times that of Hawaii (549,000). Similarly, Colorado and Nevada had comparable numbers of union members (171,000 and 169,000, respectively), though Colorado's wage and salary employment level (2,243,000) was almost twice that of Nevada (1,154,000).

Technical Note

The estimates in this release are obtained from the Current Population Survey (CPS), which provides the 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 households. The union membership and earnings 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.

Union membership data, particularly for levels, are not strictly comparable for earlier years because of the introduction of updated population controls used in the CPS. For technical documentation and related information, including reliability of the CPS estimates, see www.bls.gov/cps/documentation.htm#pop.

Information in this release will be made available to sensory impaired individuals upon request. Voice phone: 202-691-5200; Federal Relay Service: 1-800-877-8339.

Definitions

The principal definitions used in this release are described briefly below.

Union members. Members of a labor union or an employee association similar to a union.

Represented by unions. Union members, as well as workers who have 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, but, for the purposes of the union membership and earnings series, excludes all self-employed persons, regardless of whether or not their businesses are incorporated.

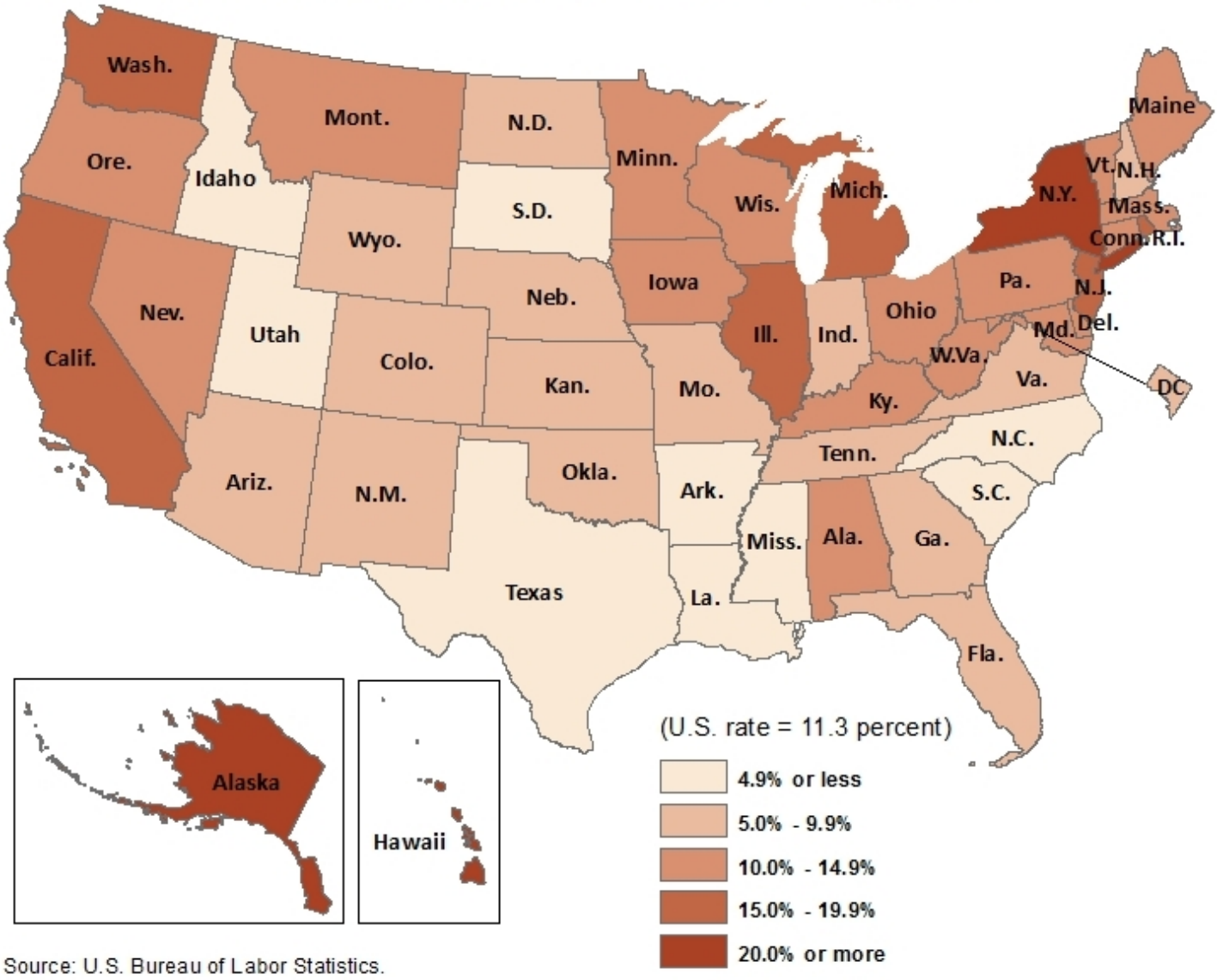
Table 1. Union affiliation of employed wage and salary workers by state, 2012 - 2013 annual averages (Numbers in thousands)

State	2012					2013				
	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	1,807	166	9.2	190	10.5	1,894	203	10.7	222	11.7
Alaska	298	67	22.4	71	23.9	306	71	23.1	75	24.5
Arizona	2,434	125	5.1	159	6.5	2,452	122	5.0	147	6.0
Arkansas	1,157	37	3.2	43	3.7	1,072	38	3.5	44	4.1
California	14,483	2,489	17.2	2,666	18.4	14,835	2,430	16.4	2,579	17.4
Colorado	2,165	169	7.8	190	8.8	2,243	171	7.6	207	9.2
Connecticut	1,541	216	14.0	232	15.1	1,535	207	13.5	220	14.3
Delaware	377	39	10.4	44	11.8	370	38	10.3	41	11.0
District of Columbia	309	27	8.6	32	10.3	308	29	9.3	34	11.0
Florida	7,602	440	5.8	555	7.3	7,655	414	5.4	529	6.9
Georgia	3,914	171	4.4	210	5.4	3,958	209	5.3	248	6.3
Hawaii	537	116	21.6	124	23.2	549	121	22.1	129	23.6
Idaho	613	29	4.8	36	5.8	617	29	4.7	36	5.8
Illinois	5,486	801	14.6	852	15.5	5,397	851	15.8	882	16.3
Indiana	2,702	246	9.1	269	10.0	2,682	249	9.3	275	10.3
Iowa	1,390	145	10.4	172	12.4	1,421	143	10.1	171	12
Kansas	1,248	85	6.8	105	8.4	1,252	94	7.5	106	8.4
Kentucky	1,742	174	10.0	198	11.4	1,735	194	11.2	226	13
Louisiana	1,733	107	6.2	130	7.5	1,728	75	4.3	95	5.5
Maine	559	64	11.5	78	13.9	574	64	11.1	75	13.1
Maryland	2,636	280	10.6	325	12.3	2,665	308	11.6	349	13.1
Massachusetts	2,896	417	14.4	470	16.2	2,940	401	13.7	430	14.6
Michigan	3,785	629	16.6	648	17.1	3,889	633	16.3	656	16.9
Minnesota	2,465	351	14.2	368	14.9	2,532	362	14.3	381	15
Mississippi	1,113	48	4.3	64	5.7	1,040	38	3.7	44	4.2
Missouri	2,507	224	8.9	253	10.1	2,537	219	8.6	264	10.4
Montana	392	54	13.9	65	16.5	403	52	13.0	60	14.8
Nebraska	864	52	6.0	70	8.1	870	63	7.3	79	9
Nevada	1,101	162	14.7	181	16.4	1,154	169	14.6	186	16.1
New Hampshire	621	65	10.5	74	12.0	623	60	9.6	67	10.7
New Jersey	3,796	611	16.1	636	16.8	3,814	611	16.0	632	16.6
New Mexico	780	50	6.5	68	8.7	751	46	6.2	55	7.3
New York	7,936	1,841	23.2	1,975	24.9	8,149	1,986	24.4	2,104	25.8
North Carolina	3,805	112	2.9	162	4.3	3,879	117	3.0	184	4.8
North Dakota	329	20	6.1	27	8.2	342	22	6.4	29	8.5
Ohio	4,800	604	12.6	665	13.9	4,786	605	12.6	674	14.1
Oklahoma	1,531	115	7.5	140	9.1	1,516	114	7.5	144	9.5
Oregon	1,526	240	15.7	250	16.4	1,504	208	13.9	223	14.8
Pennsylvania	5,452	734	13.5	787	14.4	5,501	701	12.7	754	13.7
Rhode Island	455	81	17.8	84	18.4	459	77	16.9	82	17.8
South Carolina	1,773	58	3.3	82	4.6	1,855	69	3.7	86	4.7
South Dakota	351	20	5.6	24	6.7	362	17	4.8	21	5.8
Tennessee	2,586	124	4.8	152	5.9	2,543	155	6.1	188	7.4
Texas	10,590	599	5.7	721	6.8	10,877	518	4.8	647	6
Utah	1,179	61	5.2	77	6.6	1,253	49	3.9	67	5.4
Vermont	288	31	10.7	38	13.1	285	31	10.9	38	13.2
Virginia	3,592	159	4.4	197	5.5	3,601	180	5.0	229	6.4
Washington	2,776	513	18.5	541	19.5	2,882	546	18.9	568	19.7
West Virginia	697	84	12.1	91	13.1	686	87	12.7	93	13.5
Wisconsin	2,605	293	11.2	312	12.0	2,569	317	12.3	337	13.1
Wyoming	252	17	6.7	20	8.1	259	15	5.7	17	6.4

Note: See footnotes at end of table.

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

Chart 2. Union membership rates by state, 2013 annual averages



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.