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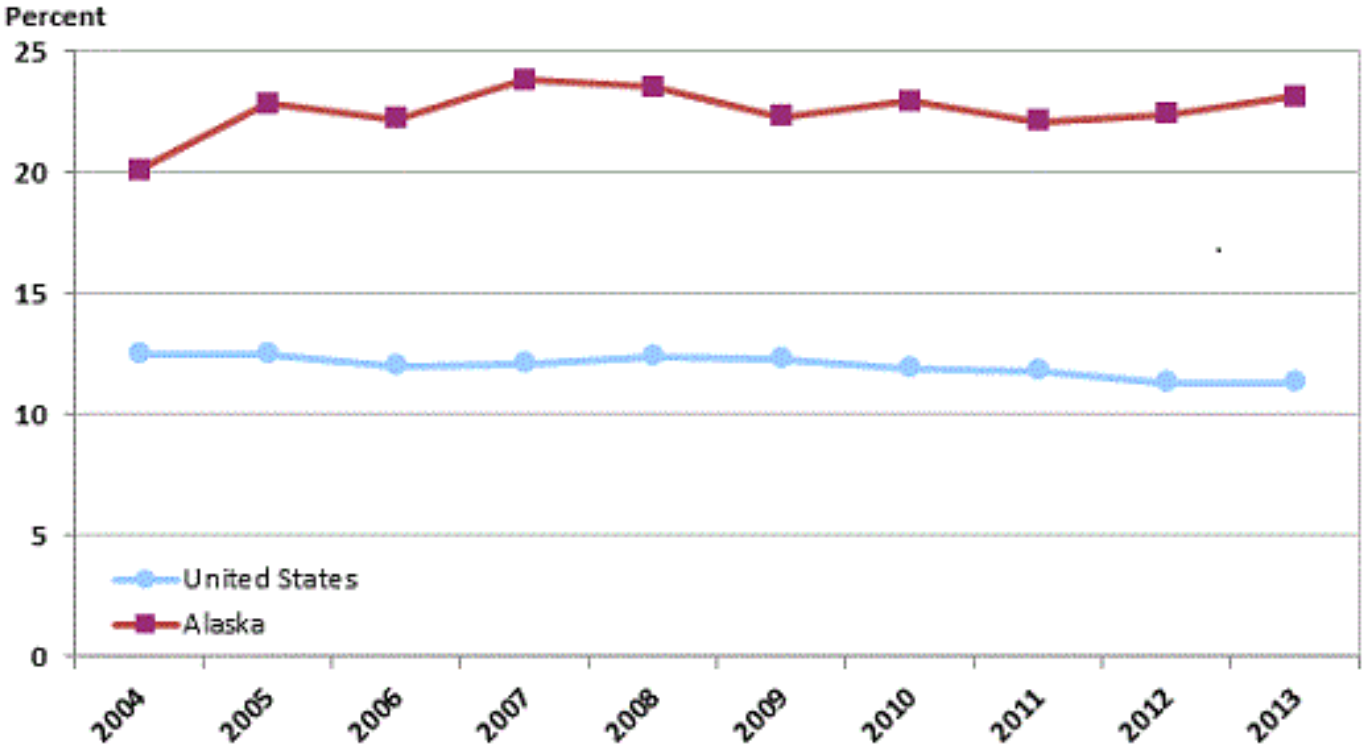
Union Membership in Alaska – 2013

In 2013, union members accounted for 23.1 percent of wage and salary workers in Alaska, compared with 22.4 percent in 2012, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reported today. (See chart 1.) Regional Commissioner Richard J. Holden noted that the union membership rate for the state was at the series high of 24.4 percent in 2002, and at the series low of 20.0 percent in both 1993 and 1997. Nationally, union members accounted for 11.3 percent of employed wage and salary workers in 2013, the same as in 2012. Since 1989, when comparable state data became available, Alaska union membership rates have exceeded the U.S. average.

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



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Alaska had 71,000 wage and salary workers who were union members in 2013. Additionally, another 4,000 workers in the state were represented by a union on their main job or 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 Alaska, 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	268	54	20.1	60	22.4
2005	275	63	22.8	66	24.1
2006	280	62	22.2	67	23.8
2007	284	68	23.8	70	24.7
2008	289	68	23.5	71	24.7
2009	293	65	22.3	69	23.6
2010	295	68	22.9	73	24.8
2011	306	68	22.1	73	23.7
2012	298	67	22.4	71	23.9
2013	306	71	23.1	75	24.5

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 employee association contract.
NOTE: Data refer to the sole or principal job of full- and part-time wage and salary workers. All self-employed workers are excluded, both those with incorporated businesses as well as those with unincorporated businesses. Updated population controls are introduced annually with the release of January data.

In 2013, 20 states had union membership rates above the U.S. average, of which 9 had rates above 15 percent. (See table 1.) Of the nine states with the highest rates, two were located in the Midwest, three in the Northeast, and the remaining four bordered the Pacific Ocean. (See chart 2.) New York had the highest rate at 24.4 percent, followed by Alaska (23.1 percent) and Hawaii (22.1 percent). In fact, New York has had the highest union membership rate in the nation for 17 of the past 19 years.

Thirty states and the District of Columbia had union membership rates below the national average of 11.3 percent in 2013. Nine of these states had union membership rates below 5.0 percent with North Carolina having the lowest at 3.0 percent. The next lowest rate was recorded in Arkansas (3.5 percent), followed by Mississippi and South Carolina (both at 3.7 percent). Among the nine states with the lowest union membership rates, six were located in the South, two in the West, and one in the Midwest.

Over half of the 14.5 million union members in the U.S. 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, despite having a similar number of wage and salary employees statewide, Alaska had more than double the number of union members as the District of Columbia (71,000 and 29,000, respectively).

Conversely, North Carolina and Hawaii had comparable numbers of union members (117,000 and 121,000, respectively), though North Carolina's wage and salary employment (3.9 million) was more than seven times that of Hawaii (549,000).

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 with data for earlier years because of the introduction of updated population controls used in the CPS. These updated controls have little or no effect on unemployment rates and other ratios, such as union membership rates. For technical documentation and related information, including reliability of the CPS estimates, see www.bls.gov/cps/documentation.htm.

Information in this release will be made available to sensory impaired individuals upon request. Voice phone: 202-691-5200, Federal Relay Service: 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	12.0
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	13.0
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	15.0
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	9.0
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	6.0
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.

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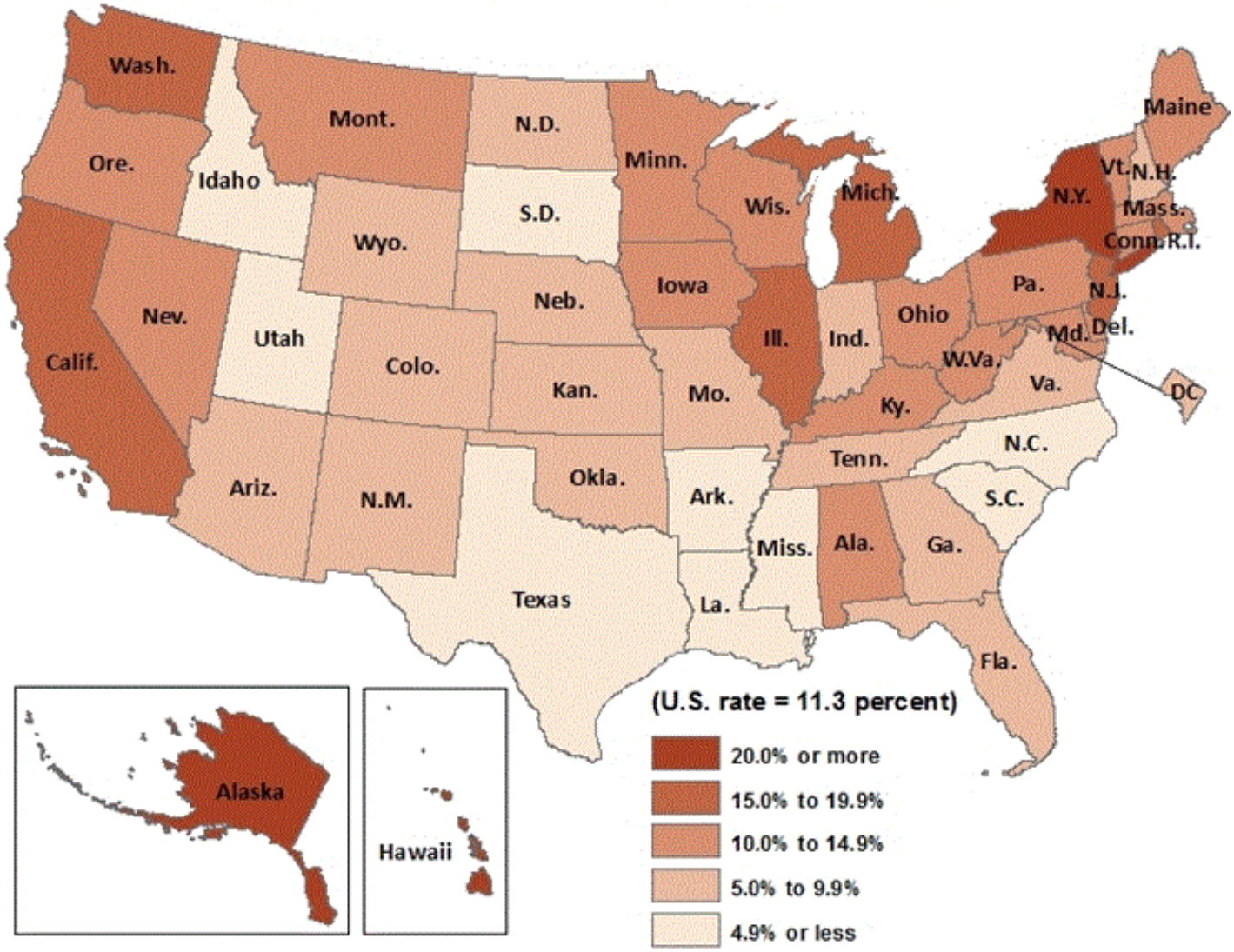
(2) Data refer to members of a labor union or an employee association similar to a union as well as workers who report no union affiliation but whose jobs are covered by a union or an employee association.
NOTE: Data refer to the sole or principal job of full- and part-time wage and salary workers. Excluded 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.

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



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.