

The United Worker

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'Strong Unions, Stronger Communities and Democracy' New Report Spells Out Numerous, Widespread Benefits of Unionization

A brief but powerful "fact sheet" from the Economic Policy Institute (EPI) enumerates many community-wide benefits of unionization.

Co-authored by Margaret Poydock and Celine McNicholas for the nonprofit, non-partisan think-tank, the report leaves no doubt that union membership helps more people than just the rank-and-file. The online version includes links to specific, individual reports supporting all of the data cited in the fact sheet.

"There is an undeniable correlation between higher levels of unionization and stronger economic, community, and democratic outcomes," the writers noted. "States with a larger share of workers represented by a union enjoy higher incomes, greater access to health insurance, and fewer voting restrictions."

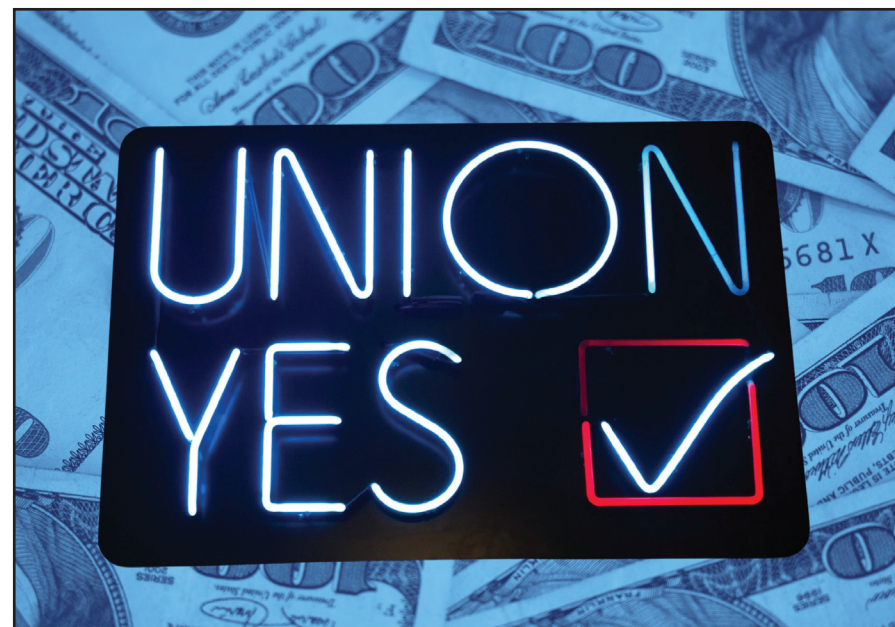
The fact sheet pointed out that union contracts provide workers with:

- **Higher wages:** Workers covered by a union contract earn, on average, 12.8% more in wages than those of nonunionized peers with comparable characteristics. When union density is high, nonunionized workers benefit too, because nonunion employers must raise wages to retain and attract workers they need.

- **Reduced racial wage gaps:** Black workers represented by a union are paid 12.6% more than their nonunionized Black peers, and Hispanic workers represented by a union are paid 16.4% more than their nonunionized Hispanic peers.

- **Higher wages for women:** Wages for women represented by a union are, on average, 9.8% higher than those of nonunionized women with comparable characteristics.

- **Reduced income inequality:** By directly raising wages for union members and indirectly lifting pay for nonunionized workers, unions play a crucial role in raising wages for working people and narrowing in-



come inequality.

- **Healthier and safer workplaces:** Union workers are more likely to have access to employer-sponsored health care and paid sick leave compared with their unrepresented counterparts. Further, unions foster safer workplaces by empowering workers to bring up unsafe working conditions without fear of retaliation.

- **Secure retirement:** Unionized workers are more likely to have access to employer-sponsored retirement plans (94% compared with 72% of nonunion workers). Further, union employers are more likely to contribute toward retirement plans compared to nonunion employers.

The report continued, "Unions do more than give workers a voice at work – high union density also shapes the strength and the health of our communities." For exam-

ple, states with high union density experience:

Higher wages and income

- **Higher minimum wages:** The average minimum wage of high-union-density states is \$13.70, compared with an average minimum wage of \$9.30 in low-union-density states.

- **Higher incomes:** Median household incomes in high-union-density states are more than \$12,000 higher, on average, than median incomes in low-union-density states.

- **Greater access to retirement security:** States with smaller declines in union density experienced smaller reductions in employer-provided retirement plans.

Healthier communities and stronger social insurances

- **Greater access to health insurance:** The share of people without any form of

health insurance was 5.7% in states with higher union densities, compared with 9% in states with lower union densities.

- **Greater access to paid sick leave:** 70.6% of states with the highest union density have enacted paid sick leave legislation, compared with just 11.8% of low-union-density states.

- **Greater access to unemployment insurance:** Unemployed workers are twice as likely to receive unemployment benefits in high-union-density states than in low-union-density states.

- **More spending on education:** States with higher rates of unionization spend \$22,777 per pupil on education, compared with \$15,568 per pupil in low-union-density states. Further, states with higher unionization rates are less likely to have universal voucher programs.

Stronger democracy

- **Fewer voting restriction laws:** Since 2021, low-union-density states have passed 44 voter restriction laws, whereas high-union-density states passed six such laws. Further, 70% of states with the highest union density had not passed any voter restrictions between 2021 and 2024, while less than a quarter of medium-union-density states and low-union-density states can claim this distinction.

The report concluded, "The evidence is clear: When unions are strong, workers have more power and communities thrive. Building union density is not just a worker or workplace issue, but it is also a mechanism to uplift families and communities. In the face of rising inequality and authoritarianism, unions organize, educate, and mobilize working people to defend voting rights, push back against disinformation, and expand civic participation. Rebuilding worker power by strengthening unions is not just good policy – it is a democratic imperative in the face of authoritarian backsliding."

AFL-CIO Congratulates WNBA Members on Historic Contract

From the AFL-CIO, to which the SIU is affiliated:

AFL-CIO President Liz Shuler issued the following statement after members of the Women's National Basketball Players Association (WNBPA) unanimously ratified a new collective bargaining agreement:

When working people fight, we win. The nearly 15 million members of the AFL-CIO—including 7 million working women across the country—are thrilled to congratulate WNBA players on winning a new contract after more than a year of negotiations.

The players made huge gains with this historic contract, a testament to the excitement they deliver on the court and their courage



and determination in fighting for women's equality off it. The WNBA has exploded in growth in recent years with record-breaking game attendance and sold-out arenas, skyrocketing TV ratings, and a \$2.2 billion TV deal. Now, WNBPA members have unanimously ratified a new contract that recognizes and compensates players for the WNBA's success, including: a meaningful share of the revenue the players generate; increased salaries and average compensation; stronger protections for housing, retirement, family planning, and family leave; and professional standards for facilities, staffing, and support.

Everything we've ever won—every contract, organizing fight and strike—was won because we stuck together. America's unions celebrate with our WNBPA sisters on this critical victory.

UIW in Long Beach, CA



From left to right are UIW Representative Lupe Murillo, SIU (UIW's parent union) Government Services Division Representative Jesse Ruth, and UIW Representative Laura Lopez.

From the President

It's Better in a Union



David Heindel

This year's report from the Bureau of Labor Statistics covering union membership in the United States felt like a much-needed jolt of good news. It is no secret that the labor movement faces a long list of challenges these days – but the BLS data shows that we still know how to fight and we still know how to win.

The fact that union membership grew in 2025 despite numerous attacks on workers' rights (most prominently in the public sector) reinforces our movement's fortitude. Not to be overlooked is the government's findings that union members typically enjoy bigger paychecks and better benefits than their unrepresented counterparts. That's consistent from year to year, but it shouldn't be taken for granted.

At the risk of preaching to the choir, so to speak, the gains are all the more remarkable when you consider that our country's basic labor law, the National Labor Relations Act, no longer fulfills its central promise to U.S. workers. The NLRA, enacted in 1935, declares it "to be the policy of the United States to encourage the practice and procedure of collective bargaining and ... protect the exercise by workers of full freedom of association, self-organization, and designation of representatives of their own choosing, for the purpose of negotiating the terms and conditions of their employment or other mutual aid or protection."

Anyone who's ever taken part in an organizing drive knows that the NLRA sounds more like a wish list than an official policy. After more than 90 years of practice and untold millions of dollars spent on union-busting, employers have nearly perfected the exercise of "persuading" employees to remain unrepresented. With all of that in mind, I think it's fair to say that we collectively beat the odds in 2025.

That's partly due to hard work and also because union membership pays off, literally and figuratively. We're at the forefront of promoting and protecting workers' rights, fair wages, safety and more. As my predecessor, the late Mike Sacco, would say from time to time, relying on employer benevolence isn't much of a bargaining strategy. Our country needs unions today just as much as at any other time in history.

Further evidence of that claim is found in the latest BLS report, which once again reveals that so-called "right-to-work" laws really should be named "right to work for less." Those laws consistently lower income rates, and workers suffer as a result.

Put it all together, and you can see why public opinion is on our side. As you may remember from the coverage of our convention that took place last September, Americans today are more likely to side with labor than at any time in the past 60 years. This shift didn't happen by accident. It happened because people gradually became more and more aware that unions deliver – not only for their members, but even for workers who aren't unionized. This isn't part of the BLS report, but plenty of other studies throughout the years have shown that union paychecks can have a positive ripple effect.

In conclusion, while I'm realistic about the tasks we face, I'm also confident in our ability to work together and to achieve real results that benefit not only our members but all of America's working families. That's the union way, that's the American way, and that's our way forward.



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Workers Win with 2026 Oregon Legislature

Editor's note: The following article was provided by the Press Associates union news service. It has been edited for local style.

Oregon lawmakers, with Democrats in the majority, on March 6 approved a stable funding source for the state's chronically underfunded labor bureau, referred a transportation funding bill to voters in the May primary, and partially disconnected Oregon from the federal income tax code to prevent the loss of hundreds of millions of dollars of state revenue. All those measures had union backing.

Labor organizations also helped defeat proposals to let loose robocars and to create a new exemption from the requirement to pay prevailing wage in construction. But labor-backed bills to set standards in home care and let teachers bargain over class size will have to try another time.

The wins, once again, prove your vote matters, and not just for the top of the federal or state ticket. Here are some of the highlights of this year's short session.

LONG-TERM FUNDING for the Bureau of Labor and Industries (BOLI), the state's labor department: Last year for the first time in decades, lawmakers gave BOLI a big increase in funding. BOLI enforces wage and hour, civil rights, and other labor laws and oversees state-registered apprenticeship programs.

But last year's increases came from a one-time transfer from the Worker Benefit Fund, which pays for programs to help injured workers. This session, HB4027 authorizes stable ongoing BOLI funding with a 0.2 cent per hour increase in the Worker Benefit Fund payroll tax--about \$4.16 per employee per year split between employee and employer.

DISCONNECT FROM THE FEDERAL TAX CODE (PARTIALLY): Last year's HRI, President Trump's "One, Big, Beautiful Bill Act," made lots of changes to the federal tax code. Because Oregon uses federal tax filings as the starting point for state income tax calculations, the federal changes were on track to reduce state revenues by hundreds of millions of dollars a year.

SB1507 claws back \$291 million for the state over the next 18 months by disconnecting from three new federal tax cuts: Tax breaks for auto loan interest, corporate equity sale profits, and accelerated depreciation for capital investments.

TRANSPORTATION FUNDING QUESTION GOES TO VOTERS IN MAY: Oregon pays for road maintenance with a 40-cents-per-gallon gas tax, but with inflation that will buy less and less over time. Last year lawmakers passed a transportation funding package that raises the tax by 6 cents and increases vehicle fees and a payroll tax that funds mass transit, but Republican opponents gathered enough signatures to put it on hold and refer it to the November 2026 ballot.

This year, SB1599 moved that vote to the May primary. Meanwhile, lawmakers approved a move by the Oregon Department of Transportation to cut \$218 million from programs like Safe Routes to School and the Connect Oregon grant program for aviation, rail and marine projects, redirecting those funds to support operations and maintenance and prevent the layoff of highway maintenance crews and DMV workers.

RESCUE LOAN FOR BAY AREA HOSPITAL: Publicly owned Bay Area Hospital in Coos Bay has come under significant financial stress in recent years. Rescuing it has been a top priority for UFCW Local 555, which represents hospital employees. HB4075 gives the hospital a \$44 million loan from the state's unclaimed property and estates fund. Education unions, including Oregon School Employees Association, opposed the bill because interest earned on money in the unclaimed property fund currently goes to schools.

REPEAL CANNABIS UNION BALLOT MEASURE: UFCW Local 555 spent heavily to pass Ballot Measure 119 in 2024. It required cannabis dispensaries to enter into labor peace agreements with unions

as a condition of getting a license to sell cannabis. So it came as a shock that Local 555 this year asked the legislature to repeal it. The reason: A federal court in Oregon struck the measure down while a federal court in California upheld a similar law. When federal courts disagree, the U.S. Supreme Court can decide an issue, and Local 555 didn't want to take its chances with the current court.

CHANGES TO CAMPAIGN FINANCE REFORM: In 2024, legislators passed a law limiting campaign contributions as a compromise with campaign finance reform activists who were prepared to take a ballot measure to voters. This session, they passed HB4018, which modifies that law, doubling spending limits and delaying the rollout of a contribution tracking system by three years to 2031.

Representatives of the Oregon AFL-CIO, Oregon AFSCME, the Fire Fighters and other unions testified in favor, saying the changes were technical fixes needed to protect the law. Campaign finance reformers opposed HB4018 and said they will try to send a measure to voters in 2028.

IMMIGRATION POLICY: Reacting to the GOP Trump administration's ramp-up in deportation, Oregon Democrats introduced a bundle of bills aiming to protect immigrants regardless of their status and limiting where Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agents can go. Passing the package was a priority for the Oregon AFL-CIO and the Service Employees.

SB1570 requires hospitals to have a plan in case ICE agents arrive and to designate areas of the hospital that are not open to the public. SB1538 requires school districts to admit students to all schools regardless of immigration status. HB4079 directs school districts and colleges to have a plan in case federal immigration agents enter school property and requires them to alert staff, students, and parents. HB4114 allows lawsuits against federal law enforcement agents if they enter private property without a warrant.

HB4138 bars law enforcement officers from wearing facial coverings and requires they visibly display their last name or badge number and agency. HB4111 bars disclosure of the immigration status of witnesses, plaintiffs, and defendants in civil trials. SB1587 bars public bodies from disclosing personally identifiable information to data brokers unless they commit that the data won't be used to enforce federal immigration law.

MAINTAINING CHILD LABOR LAWS: Oregon's Bureau of Labor and Industries enforces federal child labor law, including limits on work hours and hazardous work. What should Oregon do if those child labor laws are weakened at the federal level? HB4013, backed by unions, says Oregon would continue to enforce the law as it stood in January 2026, insulating Oregon from any effort to weaken protections at the federal level. Incredibly, this was a partisan issue, with 22 House Republicans and 11 Senate Republicans voting against it.

As in every session, some union-backed proposals didn't have enough support to pass.

SB1505 would have set up a long-term care standards board to set minimum standards for long-term care workers. HB4011 would have restored teachers' right to bargain over class size. Unionized Oregon teachers had that right until the Republican-led 2005 Oregon legislature removed it as a "mandatory subject of bargaining." Now, class size can only be a subject of negotiation in collective bargaining if school district administrators agree, and that doesn't happen.

Some bad bills were defeated. SB1566 would have exempted taxpayer-funded affordable housing and child care projects from the requirement to pay construction workers the prevailing wage. HB4085 would have permitted the use of autonomous vehicles statewide and prohibited cities and counties from making regulations or fees limiting robotaxis. Both bills were opposed by unions and didn't advance.

Perryville Passes New Six-Year Contract Agreement



UIW Representative James Bast and the UIW members of Hollywood Casino Perryville voted on and passed a new six-year agreement on January 29. Economic improvements were the primary focus of the updated agreement, which included wage increases over the first three years of the contract and the addition of two new paid holidays for the membership. Pictured in the photo on the left are (from left to right) Victoria Reiners, UIW Rep James Bast and Jennifer Hearn. Victoria and Jennifer are Guest Safety Officers at the facility; they were both hired in 2025.



Nearly Half a Million Workers Unionized in 2025

Annual U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics Report Shows Growth in Union Representation

New data released Feb. 18 by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) shows union representation grew by 463,000 in 2025, bringing the total number of workers represented by union contracts to 16.5 million. Thanks to years of sustained organizing, 11.2% of all wage and salary workers in the United States are now covered under union contracts, up from 2024 and the highest in 16 years.

“Billionaire bosses and union-busting politicians have tried to throw the kitchen sink at working people and their unions – slashing our jobs and rigging the rules to scare us out of organizing – but they are failing,” said AFL-CIO President Liz Shuler. “Working people are experiencing relentless attacks on our freedoms and our livelihoods. These numbers confirm what we’ve seen in the labor movement: Workers ... are hungry to take back their power. Workers know that the best check on a bad boss is a strong union contract. In 2026, workers will continue to organize in every corner of the country and build power to fight for the lives they deserve.”

Shuler added, “Labor is one of the last institutions in this country that working people actually trust. Nearly 70% of Americans support unions and more than 50 million more workers are eager to join one, but broken labor law still has the deck stacked against them. Too many face vicious union-busting and retaliation for organizing and punishing lay-offs even as corporate bosses rake in profits.”

“Unionization grew in 2025 despite the nation’s broken system of labor law and the most anti-union president in history,” said Heidi Shierholz, president of the labor-backed Economic Policy Institute and a former Labor Department chief economist. “And in response to the Trump administration’s aggressive attacks on federal employees and their unions, federal workers increasingly turned to collective representation. This increase is a testament to working people’s resolve and the fact that unions are



SIU President David Heindel (right) and AFL-CIO President Liz Shuler are pictured during a meeting at the federation’s headquarters, located in the nation’s capital.

recognized as critical instruments for building a fair economy.”

According to the report, there was, as usual, a big earnings gap between union members and their non-union colleagues. The median weekly earnings for all workers – the point where half the workforce is above and half below – was \$1,204 last year, a \$45 increase over 2024.

But unionists had median weekly earnings of \$1,484 and union men had median weekly earnings last year of \$1,487, almost \$200 more than non-union men. Union women had median weekly earnings of \$1,297.

The median for unrepresented workers was \$1,174 overall, up \$36 in a year. Non-union men had a median of \$1,289, up \$48 in a year, while non-union women had a median of \$1,056.

The BLS data also reflects the following:

- Years of organizing in new industries, workplaces and in so-called “right to work (for less)” states in the South have pushed nationwide union density to 10%.

- Nearly half of all union growth came from Southern states, with younger workers organizing at a rapid pace.

- The number of public sector workers represented by a union grew by 236,000, up to 36.4% of that workforce.

- Despite what has been described as the biggest act of union-busting in history, union density among federal workers grew to more than 31%, which is the largest single-year increase since 2011, as workers responded to DOGE-driven attacks aimed at stripping away collective bargaining rights and driving experts out of their jobs.

- Private-sector union representation grew to add 227,000 workers, with significant gains in health care, retail, education services and construction.

“Politicians face a clear mandate to stand up to union-busting bosses, whether they are in the corner office or the oval office,” Shuler added. “We call on Congress to pass the Protecting the Right to Organize (PRO) Act and the Public Service Freedom to Negotiate Act, and to reverse the single largest

act of union-busting in American history by passing the Protect America’s Workforce Act in the Senate.”

According to the Press Associates Union News Service, some of the state-level data should be taken with a proverbial grain of salt.

“The state samples of unionists are much smaller than the national sample BLS uses for its top-line number,” the service reported. “But though the numbers should be taken with caution, the state pattern remained the same: Union members were concentrated in the Northeast, around the Great Lakes and in the Pacific Coast states, including Alaska and Hawaii. But ... half the numerical gains last year occurred in states of the old Confederacy alone.”

Hawaii (24.8%) was the most union-dense state last year, beating New York (21.3%), though New York is catching up in density and also added 128,000 union members last year, rising to 1.734 million. Washington state was notable for big hikes in union both density and numbers. Its density rose from 16% in 2024 to 18% last year. Union numbers increased there by 84,000.

California was high in density (14.9%) and led the nation in numbers both years: 2.489 million unionists in 2025, 108,000 more than in 2024. New York was second in numbers last year, too, at 1.834 million. Illinois, which has the right to organize in its state constitution, added 24,000 union members, rising to 758,000, the BLS estimated. That kept it at 13.1% density.

Alaska was third in density, the BLS estimated, at 18.1%. Also high on the 2025 list were Connecticut and Rhode Island (16.1% each), Massachusetts (14.5%), Minnesota (14.1%), Michigan (13%), New Jersey (14.7%), Oregon (15.1%), Nevada (13%), Ohio (11.6%) and Pennsylvania (10.9%).

For the first time in decades, the two Carolinas did not vie for last in union density. South Dakota “beat” them both, falling to 2.3%. The two Carolinas finished below 3% each, though.

Happy Ho-Ho-Holidays from UIW HQ

The annual holiday party at headquarters featured a photobooth, an ice cream sundae bar, a dedicated face painter, and a host of other activities for families to enjoy. Mr. & Mrs. Claus made their usual visit to take photos with the children, but this year there was another unexpected guest, too!



AFL-CIO Hosts 2026 MLK Day Conference in Baltimore



During the weekend leading up to Martin Luther King Jr. Day, the AFL-CIO, hosted their 2026 MLK Day conference in Baltimore. In the top left photo, AFL-CIO President Liz Shuler addresses conference attendees. In the top right photo, Moderator Maya Wiley, President and CEO of The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights, speaks at the Day 2 Panel/Workshop, entitled "What's at Stake? The Dignity of Work, Economic Justice and Labor." The bottom left photo shows speakers on the "An Evening with Labor Legends" panel; from left to right are Panel Moderator Rev. Mark Thompson, Panelist and Secretary-Treasurer Emeritus of the AFT Cory McCray, Panelist, Maryland State Senator, IBEW Local 24 Member, and APWU Local 181 Member Rikki Westmoreland, Panelist, Media Host, and Political Activist Michael Mitchell, AFL-CIO President Liz Shuler, and Panelist and Former Maryland State Senator Dr. Loretta Johnson. The remaining photo shows Baltimore Mayor Brandon Scott.

New UIW Pensioners

Carmen Estrada
Save the Queen LLC
Long Beach, CA

Tukia Moala
Ruvilla Solutions
Twenty-nine Palms, CA

Stephen Jones
National Fiberstock, Inc
Philadelphia, PA

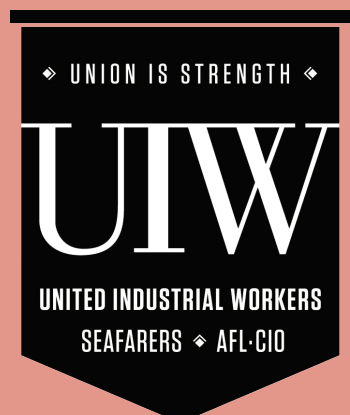
Jennifer Mulley French
Pralex Corporation
Charlotte, NC

Jerry Whiteside
Ruvilla Solutions
Twenty-nine Palms, CA

Reina Herrera
Amer. Casting and Mfg. Corp.
Hicksville, NY

Donald Jeffrey
Franklin International Inc.
Centerburg, OH

William Pollock
Armaly Brands
South Vienna, OH



Gone But Not Forgotten

OLIGARIO JUTA

Pensioner Oligario Juta, 83, passed away October 30. He was born in the Philippines. Brother Juta became a UIW member in 1993 and worked at Victory Refrigeration until he began receiving his pension in 2011. He made his residence in Dover, Delaware.

TROY PHILLIPS

Pensioner Troy Phillips, 72, passed away March 10. Brother Phillips became a member of the union in 1985. He worked at Progressive Driver Services Inc. until he retired in 2001. Brother Phillips made his residence in Barren Springs, Virginia.

DAVID BRANTIGAN

Pensioner David Brantigan, 73, passed away December 20. Brother Brantigan was born in Albany, New York. He joined the UIW in 1992 and worked at Progressive Driver Services Inc. until he retired in 2004. He resided in Saratoga, New York.

WILFRED MCQUAID

Pensioner Wilfred McQuaid, 81, passed away November 27. He was born in Camden, New Jersey. He became a member of the UIW in 1993 and worked at Victory Refrigeration until he began to receive retirement stipends in 2001. Brother McQuaid resided in Camden, New Jersey.

ELLEN KUCZYNSKI

Pensioner Ellen Kuczynski, 80, passed away November 9. Sister Kuczynski was born in Mahanoy City, Pennsylvania. She joined the UIW in 1963 and worked at A&E Products Group until she began receiving her pension in 1992. Sister Kuczynski made her residence in Zion Grove, Pennsylvania.

HARRY MCLLVAIN

Pensioner Harry Mcllvaine, 90, passed away December 23. He was born in Camden, New Jersey. He joined the UIW in 1960 and worked at Victory Refrigeration until he retired in 1978. Brother Mcllvaine made his residence in Monroe Township, New Jersey.

LUZ QUINONES

Pensioner Luz Quinones, 74, passed away November 19. Sister Quinones was born in Christiansted, St. Croix. She became a member of the union in 1987. Sister Quinones worked at Pralex Corp. until she began receiving retirement stipends in 2006. She resided in Winter Haven, Florida.

WANETTA FOSTER

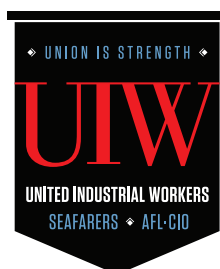
Pensioner Wanetta Foster, 73, passed away May 15. She was born in Columbus, Ohio. Sister Foster joined the UIW in 1970 and was employed at Bron-Shoe Company until she began receiving her pension in 2006. She made her residence in Columbus, Ohio.

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Employees Honored for Years of Service Awards

UIW Directory



5 years - Headquarters (left photo) - Samantha Shafer and Cherice Orzechowski. Piney Point (right photo) - Stephen Quade Jr., Joselito Magpayo, Autumn Clements, Dylan Latham, Christine Barry, LaJuene Hardin, Catalina Magpayo, Richard Deml (not pictured) and Deborah Karr (not pictured).



10 years - Headquarters (left photo) - Rebecca Johnson, Janay James, Lee Schmidt, Brittany Sharpe, Jordan R. Biscardo, Curtis Reeves, and Lance Thompson (not pictured). Piney Point (right photo) Joyce Williams, Donald Brazzerol III, Andrew Springer, Heather Murphy, and Brittany Strohmeyer.



15 years - Headquarters - Stacy Sink (not pictured). Piney Point (left photo) Heather Perry, Earl Byers (not pictured), and Terence Hall (not pictured). **20 years** - Piney Point (left center photo) - Rebecca Howe. **25 years** - Headquarters (right center photo) Engla Gray and Donna Briscoe (not pictured). Piney Point (right photo) Ginger Bagwell, and Paul Gelrud (not pictured).



30 years - Headquarters (top left photo) - William Hartnett and Curtis Dix Jr. **35 years** - Headquarters (top right photo) - Margaret Bowen, Australia Howard and Ellen Silver. Piney Point (bottom left photo) - Lisa Williams. **40 years** - Headquarters (bottom right photo) - Beverly Watkins.



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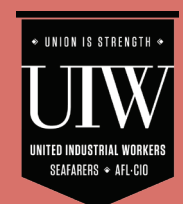
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Unions Launch U.S. Virgin Islands Area Labor Federation to Strengthen Workers' Voice Across Territory

Editor's Note: The following press release applies to United Industrial Workers union shops located in the U.S. Virgin Islands region.

At a pivotal moment for working people in the U.S. Virgin Islands, labor unions representing employees throughout the U.S. Virgin Islands have come together to launch the U.S. Virgin Islands Area Labor Federation (ALF) — a unified coalition aimed at mobilizing workers, building broad alliances with grassroots and community organizations, and ensuring that the upcoming election cycle delivers real results for working families.

With rising costs, stalled contracts, and growing frustration across the workforce, union leaders say this moment demands action — and unity. The ALF is being formed to ensure that workers are organized, engaged and prepared to hold both incumbents and challengers accountable.

“This will not be business as usual,” said U.S. Virgin Islands Area Labor Federation Executive Board President Carver Farrow. “Working people are coming together to build real power — and to elect leaders who will fight for better wages, safer workplaces, and a stronger future for our Territory.”

The newly formed federation, which represents approximately 4,000 workers, brings together a diverse coalition of unions representing educators, law enforcement, industrial workers, maritime workers, and public employees, including:

- IAM Union (International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers)
- American Federation of Teachers (AFT) Local 1825
- United Steelworkers
- Virgin Islands Police Benevolent Association
- Virgin Islands Law Enforcement Supervisors Union
- Seafarers International Union (United Industrial Workers of NA)
- American Federation of School Administrators
- American Association of University Professors –



University of the Virgin Islands

The federation was established following a joint strategy meeting where union leaders conducted a comprehensive assessment of current challenges facing workers and outlined a unified path forward in the wake of recent elections.

“Our goal is simple: bring workers together to speak with one unified, powerful voice,” said the U.S. Virgin Islands Area Labor Federation Executive Board. “For too long, working people in the Virgin Islands have faced rising costs, stalled contracts, and limited political engagement. The Area Labor Federation is going to change that.”

During the inaugural meeting, participating unions identified several urgent issues impacting workers across the territory, including:

- Widespread contract delays: Many collective bargaining agreements have expired, with workers operating under extensions that include no wage or step increases and limited enforcement mechanisms.
- Rising cost of living and low wages: Despite increases in the minimum wage, many workers continue to struggle to make ends meet.

- Workforce shortages, particularly in law enforcement and public services.
- Unsafe working conditions, including unhealthy and structurally deficient classrooms and government buildings.
- Breakdowns in labor relations infrastructure, including delays at the Public Employees Relations Board (PERB) and ongoing concerns with the Office of Collective Bargaining (OCB), such as stalled negotiations and unresolved backpay.
- Retirement system concerns, including outstanding employer contributions to the Government Employees' Retirement System (GERS).
- Lack of labor-management collaboration despite contractual requirements.
- Limited inclusion in bargaining units for certain employees.

- The U.S. Virgin Islands Area Labor Federation is launching a coordinated effort to strengthen member engagement and expand labor's influence across the territory, including:
 - Leadership and steward training seminars to mobilize rank-and-file members
 - A unified communications strategy to elevate the voice of working people
 - Increased political engagement through candidate interviews and participation in legislative budget hearings.

“The formation of this federation marks a turning point,” said the U.S. Virgin Islands Area Labor Federation Executive Board. “We are committed to mobilizing our members, holding elected officials accountable, and ensuring that working families are at the center of every major decision affecting our islands. When workers stand together, we build power. And with that power, we will secure a stronger future for working families throughout the Virgin Islands.”

Federation Backs Jones Act, U.S. Mariners

This article, sourced From the AFL-CIO, to which the SIU is affiliated, is of the utmost importance to the UIW's parent union.

AFL-CIO: Unnecessary, Ineffective Jones Act Waiver Puts Foreign Corporations Ahead of America's Workers

AFL-CIO President Liz Shuler released the following statement on the Trump administration's decision to issue an unnecessary and ineffective 60-day waiver of the Jones Act:

“As American maritime workers risk their lives in the Middle East and around the world, it is deeply concerning that the Trump administration would open U.S. waterways to non-union foreign competitors. This unnecessary and ineffective waiver is a giveaway to foreign shipping interests, dressed up as relief for America's families at the pump.

Domestic shipping costs less than 1 cent per gallon of gas. This waiver will do nothing to fix the squeeze working families are feeling when they fill up their tank while handing good union jobs to foreign corporate competitors.



The Jones Act exists to protect a strong, American-flagged maritime fleet that is essential to our economy, national security and military readiness. The Trump administration should reverse this deci-

sion and come up with solutions to reduce energy costs that actually work, without sacrificing the workers who keep our nation's waterways moving and our country secure.”