

Civil Service Personnel Association, Inc.

MAY 2021

A Message From The President

It's the U and I in
UNION
that makes us
STRONG

SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- Staying

Union Strong

- Ideas for
General
Membership
Meeting



As the days seem like months and the months seem like years, we understand that the membership is getting anxious for a decision from the arbitration. As this is a complex and large arbitration it is understandable why we don't have a decision yet. I encourage you to continue being patient and we will pass along what we hear.



Although the COVID-19 numbers are looking better across America, we still have areas of concern. So, with that in mind we will be postponing our May general membership meeting. I do expect we will be back in the swing of things soon. In the meantime, I encourage you to reach out to any of the executive board members if you have any questions.

On a similar note, an idea is to try to have a meeting via zoom. Please send me your thoughts about holding a general membership meeting via zoom.

Task Force To Promote Unions

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Harris to lead Biden task force promoting unions, labor organizing
Reuters, Nandita Bose

President Joe Biden will be signing an executive order on Monday that will create a task force to promote labor organizing, the White House said, at a time when just over 6 percent of U.S. private-sector workers belong to unions. The White House task force will be headed by Vice President Kamala Harris and Labor Secretary Marty Walsh will serve as vice chair of the group. The task force will also include over 20 heads of agencies and cabinet officials, such as Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin, the White House economic advisers Cecilia Rouse and Brian Deese, the White House climate adviser Gina McCarthy and Treasury Secretary Janet L. Yellen. "The President and Vice President believe that the decline of union membership is contributing to serious societal and economic problems in our country," the White House said in a fact sheet. "Widespread and deep economic inequality, stagnant real wages, and the shrinking of America's middle class are all associated with the declining percentage of workers represented by unions."

The White House referred to the National Labor Relations Act, which was passed in 1935, to encourage worker organizing. "In the 86 years since the Act was passed, the federal government has never fully implemented this policy. "Biden's executive order specifically directs the task force to come up with a set of recommendations within 180 days to address two key issues: How existing policies can promote labor organizing in the federal government, and looking at new policies that are needed and the associated regulatory challenges. The task force's goals include facilitating worker organizing around the country, increasing union membership and addressing challenges to labor organizing in underserved communities. Over 65 percent of Americans approve of unions, the most since 2003, according to a 2020 Gallup poll, despite the much lower membership rate.

Labor unions in the United States haven't had much good news in recent years, but this week may have provided some reasons for optimism. The rate of unionization in the U.S. increased in 2020 for the first time in over a decade, according to new data [released by the Bureau of Labor Statistics](#) on Jan. 22, the same day as President Joe Biden announced two new executive orders aimed at increasing worker protections. In 2020, 10.8% of American workers belonged to a union, up from 10.3% in 2019, the new BLS report found. Still, the picture is far from rosy. As the COVID-19 pandemic swept across the country, the total number of workers in unions across the U.S. dropped by 321,000 to reach a low of 14.3 million last year. Union membership has been declining in the U.S. for decades, and the 2020 data doesn't fully reverse that trend. But it does show that workers belonging to a union saw fewer job losses amid the pandemic than nonunion workers. This is likely due in part to unions' strong engagement amid the pandemic, labor experts say.

In industries ranging from health care to retail to food service to tech, workers [banded together and frequently demanded better working conditions](#) last year as COVID-19 devastated the economy and forced millions of businesses to close or change their strategies "Union members could hold on to their jobs because they can negotiate more creative solutions to economic challenges—furloughs or reductions in hours or even early retirement or other programs to try to avoid mass layoffs," says Rebecca Givan, a professor of labor studies and employment relations at Rutgers University. Also impacting the statistics, however, is the fact that COVID-19 hit industries with smaller union presences, such as hospitality and leisure, especially hard. About half of the increase in the unionization rate in 2020 was the result of the pandemic's concentrated impact on less-unionized job sectors, according to an analysis from the [Economic Policy Institute](#). (The other half can be attributed to union workers faring better than non-union workers in their same industries.)

Some occupations on the front lines of the COVID-19 pandemic—such as health care support workers, transportation workers and those in education—also saw more workers join unions in 2020. But far more workers typically say they [would like to join a union](#) than are able to do so, Givan notes. "Although the union membership numbers show some reasons for optimism, what they really show is how much work needs to be done," she says. "Most workers don't have straightforward access to union representation." Biden, who [promised](#) before he was elected to be "the most pro-union president you've ever seen," has already taken action toward the goal of reversing the Trump Administration's policies. In a series of moves applauded by union groups, Biden nominated Boston Mayor Marty Walsh, a former union leader, to be his Secretary of Labor and, in his first two days in the White House, Biden [fired Peter Robb](#), as well as Robb's deputy Alice Stock, after each refused to resign. The move to fire Robb before his term officially ended broke with precedent, but White House Press Secretary Jen Psaki said on Jan. 21 that Robb had not been upholding the NLRB's objectives. especially the call to pay federal employees \$15 per hour.

To read the full article see <https://time.com/5932542/union-membership-2020-pandemic-biden/>

Thanks to Heather Roush for submitting the link to this article.