

Working people want a voice at work

Fact Sheet • April 21, 2021

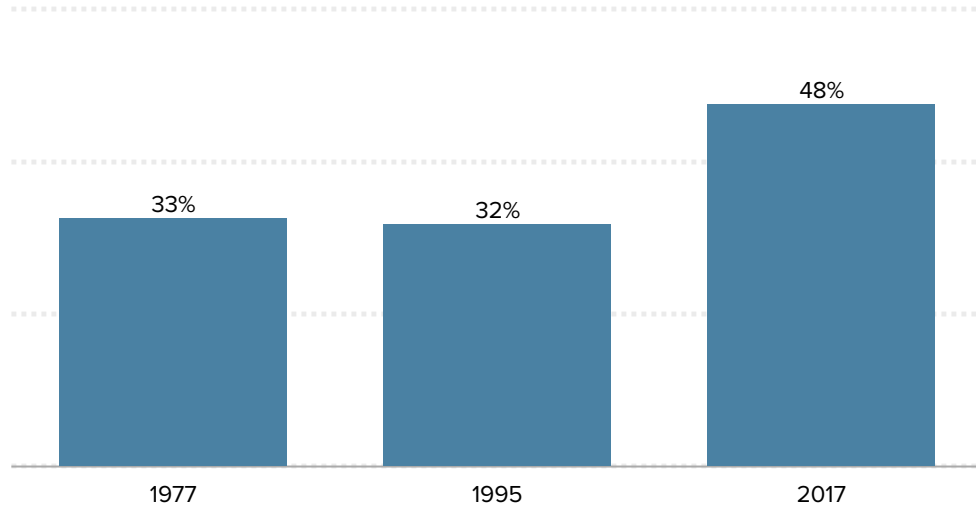
There is a huge gap between the share of workers with union representation (12.1%) and the share of workers who would like to have a union and a voice on the job. As shown in **Figure A**, almost half of nonunion workers polled in 2017 (48%) said they would join a union in their workplace tomorrow if they got the chance. That's 50% higher than in 1995, when 32% of those surveyed said they would vote for a union.

In addition, a 2020 Gallup poll finds that 65% of Americans approve of labor unions—the highest percentage in 16 years (see **Figure B**). And, as shown in **Table 1**, young adults (ages 18–34) support unions at an even higher level—71% compared with the overall average of 65%.¹

Figure A

Interest in joining unions is high

The share of U.S. workers who don't belong to a union but say they would join one if they could, selected years



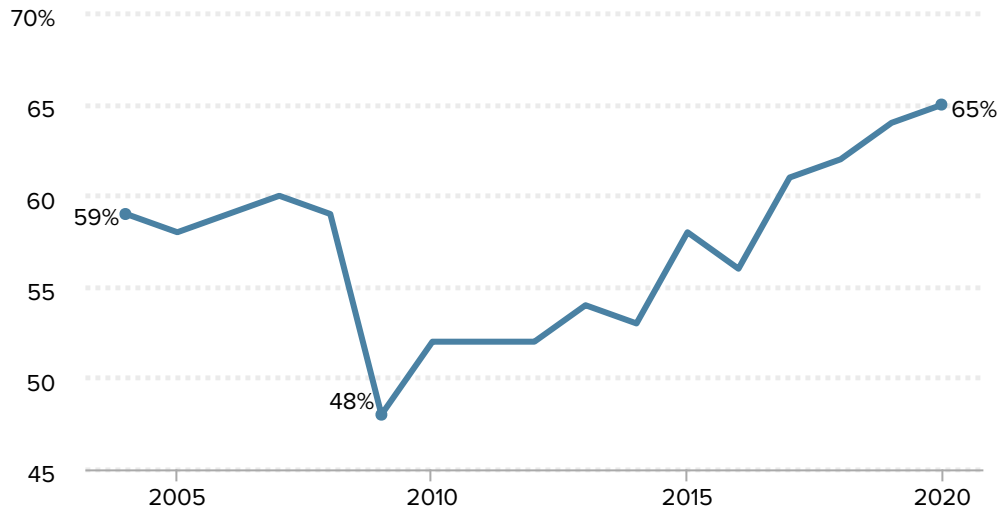
Source: Thomas A. Kochan et al., "Worker Voice in America: Is There a Gap Between What Workers Expect and What They Experience?" *ILR Review* 72, no. 1 (January 2019): 3–38, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0019793918806250>.

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Figure B

Public approval of labor unions continues to trend above 60%

Share of poll respondents who say they approve of labor unions, 2004–2020



Source: Adapted from Megan Brenan, “At 65%, Approval of Labor Unions in U.S. Remains High,” Gallup website, September 3, 2020.

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Table 1

Majorities in major U.S. subgroups approve of labor unions

Share of poll respondents who say they approve of labor unions, by gender, age, and education, 2020

	Approve	Disapprove	No opinion
U.S. adults	65%	30%	5%
Gender			
Men	63%	33%	3%
Women	67%	27%	6%
Age			
18–34	71%	25%	4%
35–54	63%	31%	6%
55 and older	63%	33%	4%
Education			
College graduate	68%	29%	3%
Some college	62%	31%	6%
No college	65%	31%	5%

Source: Adapted from Megan Brenan, “At 65%, Approval of Labor Unions in U.S. Remains High,” Gallup website, September 3, 2020.

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Note

1. Megan Brenan, “[At 65%, Approval of Labor Unions in U.S. Remains High](#),” Gallup website, September 3, 2020.