



HOW ILLINOIS' UNION MEMBERS VOTED ON THE WORKERS' RIGHTS AMENDMENT

Results from a Summer 2023 Survey

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RELATIONS
PROJECT FOR MIDDLE CLASS RENEWAL

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Executive Summary

In November 2022, Illinois voters approved the Workers' Rights Amendment, guaranteeing the fundamental right of workers to unionize and bargain collectively. The Amendment passed with 2.2 million votes, receiving 59 percent approval on the question and 53 percent yes votes among all ballots cast.

In the summer of 2023, the Project for Middle Class Renewal at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign conducted an online survey of 970 rank-and-file union members in Illinois who voted in the 2022 midterm election to assess how they voted on the Workers' Rights Amendment. The margin of error was ± 3.1 percent.

Surveyed union voters in Illinois were broadly satisfied with their unions and employment situations.

- Using a common scale of 0 to 10 (highest), the average union worker's self-assessed employment quality in Illinois was 7.6, with 37 percent rating their job quality as high (9 or 10).
- Nine-in-10 (88 percent) said they support their union's political positions at least "some of the time."
- Nine-in-10 (92 percent) said their union does a good job in representing their interests to their employer.
- 98 percent consider themselves to be working class, middle class, or upper middle class.

Union members were highly interested in and strongly supportive of the Workers Rights' Amendment.

- The average union voter said that their interest level in the Amendment was an 8.5 on a scale of 0 to 10.
- 67 percent thought that they were "extremely well" or "very well" informed about the Amendment.
- Among all ballots cast by union members, 88 percent voted yes, 9 percent voted no, and 3 percent did not vote on the question—a net yes of 82 points.

The Workers' Rights Amendment enjoyed strong bipartisan appeal among union members across Illinois.

- 97 percent of union members who voted for incumbent Governor JB Pritzker and 56 percent of union members who voted for Darren Bailey voted yes in favor of the Amendment.
- 98 percent of Democratic union members and 61 percent of Republican union members voted yes.
- 92 percent of Chicago area union members and 84 percent of Downstate union members voted yes.

Union members were motivated to vote yes to guarantee workers' rights and to promote job quality in Illinois.

- Union members overwhelmingly agreed that the Workers Rights' Amendment would guarantee the right to join a union to negotiate for pay raises, workplace safety, and a voice at work (9.0).
- Union literature, union endorsements, and conversations with other members were very influential in shaping how union members voted on the Amendment.
- Union members strongly said they think the Amendment will promote high-quality jobs, make workplaces safer, and increase worker job satisfaction now that it has passed.

Results from this survey and data from the Illinois AFL-CIO and the Illinois Education Association show that union solidarity was a contributing factor to the success of the Workers' Rights Amendment.

- Union members are 12 percentage points more likely to vote than the overall adult population in Illinois.
- An estimated 516,700 out of 956,800 union members cast ballots in 2022 (a turnout rate of 54 percent among all members), with 454,900 voting yes on the Amendment.
- Union members accounted for 393,100 net yes votes in favor of the Workers' Rights Amendment.
- Union members accounted for 12 percent of voters in 2022, but 21 percent of all Amendment yes votes.
- Downstate union members were responsible for an estimated 156,800 yes votes, which exceeds the Amendment's final win margin of just under 141,000 votes.

The success of the Workers' Rights Amendment occurred when public approval of unions reached a six-decade high. Following passage, lawmakers in other states introduced bills to allow voters to decide whether to codify workers' rights into their constitutions. The experience in Illinois proves that these efforts can be bipartisan and include a broad base of union voters.

Table of Contents

Executive Summary	i
Table of Contents	ii
About the Authors	ii
Introduction	1
Research on Unions and Voting Behavior	3
Illinois Union Member Voting Survey Approach	5
<i>Survey Participants</i>	5
Union Members' Class Identity and Alignment with Their Union	7
Union Members' Self-Assessment of Job Quality	10
How Rank-and-File Union Members Voted on the Workers' Rights Amendment	10
Influence of the Workers' Rights Amendment Campaign Claims on the Union Vote	17
Importance of Information Sources on Workers' Rights Amendment Union Vote	19
What Rank-and-File Union Members Expect Now that the Amendment Has Passed	19
How Elected Officers and Union Staff Voted on the Workers' Rights Amendment	20
Impact of Union Member Voting on the Workers' Rights Amendment's Passage	22
Conclusion	28
Sources	29
Cover Photo Credits	32

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Introduction

In November 2022, Illinois voters approved the Workers' Rights Amendment, guaranteeing the fundamental right of workers to unionize and bargain collectively in Illinois. Governor JB Pritzker signed the official proclamation announcing its passage after the certification of the election in December 2022 ([NBC5 Chicago, 2022](#)). The Amendment added Section 25 to the Illinois Constitution ([ILGA, 2023](#)). This includes the following text:

“Employees shall have the fundamental right to organize and to bargain collectively through representatives of their own choosing for the purpose of negotiating wages, hours, and working conditions, and to protect their economic welfare and safety at work. No law shall be passed that interferes with, negates, or diminishes the right of employees to organize and bargain collectively over their wages, hours, and other terms and conditions of employment and work place safety, including any law or ordinance that prohibits the execution or application of agreements between employers and labor organizations that represent employees requiring membership in an organization as a condition of employment.”

The Workers' Rights Amendment elevates Illinois as one of the most pro-union states in the nation. The Amendment effectively bans in perpetuity so-called “right-to-work” laws, which weaken unions by requiring them to provide services and representation free to workers who do not pay dues or fees. It also blocks any future legislation that would limit the items over which public sector employees can bargain, similar to Wisconsin’s Act 10, which prohibited unions representing most public sector workers from negotiating over health insurance, staffing, and working conditions and limited their wage growth to the rate of inflation ([Marley, 2021](#)). Other restrictive state union measures have resulted in significant pay cuts ([Garcia & Han, 2021](#)). The Amendment applies to any worker in an employer-employee relationship in Illinois, including those not covered by the National Labor Relations Act (NLRA) ([Sheridan, 2022](#)).

To become enshrined in the Illinois Constitution, the Workers' Rights Amendment had to meet two major benchmarks. First, in order to appear on the ballot, the Amendment needed to pass with at least a 60 percent vote in each chamber of the Illinois General Assembly. In May 2021, the Amendment passed the Illinois State Senate with 49 yes votes (83 percent) to 7 no votes and 3 not voting. The vote was bipartisan, with a majority of Senate Republicans (11 Republican State Senators) voting yes. Five days later, the Amendment passed the Illinois House of Representatives with 80 yes votes (68 percent) to 30 no votes, and another 8 abstaining, voting “present,” or not voting due to excused absences. The vote was again bipartisan, with 9 Republican State Representatives joining 71 Democratic State Representatives in support ([Ballotpedia, 2023](#)).

Second, from Illinois voters, passage of a constitutional amendment requires *either* 60 percent approval from those voting on the question *or* a majority (50 percent plus one) of all voters who cast ballots in the election. The Workers' Rights Amendment received 58.7 percent approval on the question itself and 53.4 percent yes votes among all ballots cast, passing based on the *majority of ballots cast* criterion (Figure 1). Of the 4.1 million ballots cast by all voters during the election, 3.8 million voted on the constitutional amendment specifically, representing a response rate of 91 percent. In total, more than 2.2 million Illinois residents voted yes on the Amendment compared to fewer than 1.6 million who voted no ([State Board of Elections, 2022](#)). The yes vote won by 17.4 percentage points on the question and by 15.9 percentage points among all ballots cast (Figure 1).

FIGURE 1: VOTES ON THE WORKERS' RIGHTS AMENDMENT IN ILLINOIS, SHARES OF QUESTION AND BALLOTS CAST, 2022

2022 General Election Results: Illinois	Votes on Question	Ballots Cast
Total Registered Voters	8,115,751	8,115,751
Total Votes	3,768,928	4,144,126
Turnout Rate	46.4%	51.1%
Share of Ballots Cast	90.9%	--
Yes Votes	2,212,999	2,212,999
No Votes	1,555,929	1,555,929
Yes Share	58.7%	53.4%
No Share	41.3%	37.5%
Not Voting Share	--	9.1%
Net Yes Percent	+17.4%	+15.9%

Source(s): Authors' analysis of Illinois' *Official Canvas* of the General Election on November 8, 2022 ([State Board of Elections, 2022](#)).

A February 2023 political analysis conducted by the Project for Middle Class Renewal at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and the Illinois Economic Policy Institute found that the Workers' Rights Amendment passed with bipartisan support, driven by union members, military veterans, and households with middle-class incomes ([Manzo & Bruno, 2023a](#)). The Amendment earned the most support in counties with high shares of union members, average household incomes between \$75,000 and \$99,999, and high racial and ethnic diversity. However, the Amendment most outpaced Democrats—specifically incumbent Governor JB Pritzker—in rural, Republican-leaning, and white working-class communities. Statistical analysis revealed that a higher share of votes for Governor Pritzker, a higher share of union members living in a county, a higher share of military veterans living in a county, a higher share of working-class residents, and a higher share of households with children were all positively linked with higher shares of yes votes on the Workers' Rights Amendment ([Manzo & Bruno, 2023a](#)).

This report, also conducted jointly by the Project for Middle Class Renewal (PMCR) at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and the Illinois Economic Policy Institute (ILEPI), is a follow-up to the county-level analysis released in February 2023. This present report, released on the anniversary of the Workers' Rights Amendment being added to the Illinois Constitution, is a survey analysis of how Illinois union members voted on the Amendment in 2022.¹ After discussing academic research on how unions affect voting behavior and policy preferences, the report outlines the survey approach. The report subsequently presents survey results, including how union members voted in November 2022, factors that influenced their votes on the Workers' Rights Amendment, and how they feel now that the Amendment has passed. The report then draws from other data sources—including the *Current Population Survey Voting and Registration Supplement*, the Illinois State Board of Elections, the Illinois AFL-CIO, and the Illinois Education Association—and extrapolates the findings to show the impact of union members on the success of the Workers' Rights Amendment before a concluding section recaps key findings.

¹ Governor JB Pritzker signed the official proclamation announcing the passage on December 15, 2022 ([NBC5 Chicago, 2022](#)).

Research on Unions and Voting Behavior

Modern voting theories have relied on citizens' personal attributes and attitudes as determinants of electoral turnout and vote choice. The literature on personal attributes suggests the best predictors of voting are socioeconomic resources such as education, wealth, homeownership, and occupational status (Wolfinger & Rosenstone, 1980; Leighley & Nagler, 1992; Verba, Schlozman, & Brady, 1995). Also typically examined are demographic characteristics including race, gender, and age (Oliver & Ha, 2007; Campbell, 2013). Geography is another variable that is dissected to understand elections (Pearson-Merkowitz & Lang, 2016). Furthermore, political ideology and party affiliation are well understood as explanatory variables for individual voter outcomes (Green, Palmquist, & Schickler, 2002).

Social networking and group identity have been explored to assess voter choice as well (Barreto & Francisco, 2009; Pietryka & DeBats, 2017). Friends, family, and coworkers have influenced how people decide to vote (Ryan, 2011; Sinclair, 2012; Sokhey & McClurg, 2012). Membership in a labor union is one key factor that has been examined to explain how people decide to vote (Li, Lamare, & Bruno, 2022; Bruno, 2000). Research has found that union members are more likely than nonmembers to vote in general elections (Delaney, Masters, & Schwochau, 1988; Freeman, 2003; Francia, 2012). Unions also increase voter turnout of both members and nonmembers, particularly for low-income and middle-income individuals (Leighley & Nagler, 2007). Additionally, research finds that union membership is associated with many forms of political activity, including voting, protesting, and association membership, with the largest effects on less-educated individuals who otherwise exhibit lower levels of political participation (Kerrissey & Schofer, 2013).

Unions boost voter turnout and drive political participation through various mechanisms. Union campaign efforts increase voter turnout (Delaney, Masters, & Schwochau, 1988). In particular, union canvassing increases union member turnout, even under constrained political circumstances (Li, Lamare, & Bruno, 2022). Unions donate to political campaigns, conduct "get-out-the-vote" (GOTV) campaigns, and contact voters (Feigenbaum, Hertel-Fernandez, & Williamson, 2018). Union members' personal visits and phone calls are most successful for "occasional voters" compared to frequent voters and non-voters, specifically amongst Hispanics and Latinos (Lamare, 2010). Labor unions provide educational and financial resources that enable working-class and less-educated individuals to participate politically and recruit individuals from blue-collar occupations to run for elected office (Feigenbaum, Hertel-Fernandez, & Williamson, 2018; Lambert, 2022).

The strength of labor unions matters for voter turnout, with stronger unions producing higher rates of voter participation (Radcliff, 2001). Research has found that the decline of unionization explains much of the post-1960s decline in voter turnout across the United States, including among nonmembers (Radcliff, 2001; Leighley & Nagler, 2007). Part of this decline has been the spread of so-called "right-to-work" laws, which weaken unions by requiring them to provide services and representation free to workers who do not pay dues or fees. These anti-union laws have had palpable electoral consequences, reducing turnout in federal and state elections by 2 to 3 percentage points and decreasing GOTV contact to middle-class Americans by 11 percentage points (Feigenbaum, Hertel-Fernandez, & Williamson, 2018). Furthermore, they have been found to reduce the share of national legislators who come from blue-collar occupations by between 1 and 3 percentage points. By hampering labor unions, so-called "right-to-work" laws have weakened the voice of middle class citizens (Feigenbaum, Hertel-Fernandez, & Williamson, 2018).

Unions also have a partisan influence on Democratic vote shares. Unions increase the Democratic vote share in Presidential and Congressional elections, specifically boosting the Democratic vote among

middle-class white voters (Francia, 2012). Research has found that union members were 12 percentage points more likely to vote for President Barack Obama and voters who were not members of unions but lived in households with union members were 8 percentage points more likely to vote for President Obama (Silver, 2011). In 2016, voters in union households supported Democratic candidate Hillary Clinton over Republican candidate Donald Trump by 8 percentage points, a drop in union household support for the Democratic candidate that was driven by “dampened enthusiasm among union household voters for Hillary Clinton” and not a “unique appeal” of President Trump to union members (Rosenfeld & Denice, 2017; Gillis, 2018). In 2020, President Biden won union households 56 percent to 40 percent, a difference of 16 percentage points (Edison Research, 2020). Union women were 21 percentage points more likely than nonunion women to vote for President Biden, union men were 13 percentage points more likely than nonunion men to vote for Biden, and white union voters were 18 percentage points more likely than nonunion white voters to vote for Biden (Glass, Madland, & Teixeira, 2021). On the other hand, so-called “right-to-work” laws, which reduce union membership, decrease Democratic presidential vote shares by 3 to 4 percentage points (Feigenbaum, Hertel-Fernandez, & Williamson, 2018).

In addition to voter turnout and candidate selection, union member policy preferences—including for or against the Workers’ Rights Amendment—can be affected by union education campaigns. Unions influence their members’ policy preferences by cohering workers’ voice around issues of high priority. Unions have a shaping effect on their memberships by acting as “information providers” on policy-relevant matters, becoming primary sources of learning for members through exposure to information or cues about political issues (Kim & Margalit, 2016). For example, unions have regular access to their members through meetings, mailings, and mobilization activities. The effect is that unions function as “custodians” of member interests and reliable sources of information, potentially influencing the political views of members (Iversen & Soskice, 2015). Along with this political outreach, unions can encourage rank-and-file members to invest more effort in independently acquiring policy-relevant information, thereby raising the knowledge level of their general memberships (Ahlquist & Levi, 2013).

Research on union political activity has demonstrated a capacity to influence the passage of pro-worker and middle-class supporting legislation. The need for unions to act as guardians of working-class interests is critical to sustaining a pluralistic American democracy. Studies reveal that “economic elites and organized groups representing business interests have substantial independent impacts on U.S. government policy, while average citizens and mass-based interest groups have little or no independent influence” (Gilens & Page, 2014). While interest groups, on the whole, do not align with the policy preferences of average citizens, labor unions “represent average citizens’ views reasonably well” (Gilens & Page, 2014).

A final finding from academic research on union political activism is that unions can increase the likelihood that their members will self-identify as “working class” as opposed to “middle class.” Scholars have examined how various political identities shape political action. Some contend that identifying as “working class” is more strongly linked with individual support for pro-worker candidates and policies that more genuinely promote the economic interests of workers *as workers* (Bruno, 2000; Franko & Witko, 2023).

Illinois Union Member Voting Survey Approach

The Project for Middle Class Renewal (PMCR) at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign conducted a summerlong (16-week) survey of union members in Illinois between May 5, 2023 and August 25, 2023. The 38-item survey was conducted online using Qualtrics, an “experience management” company that is the preferred web-based survey tool of the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign (Qualtrics, 2023; CITL, 2023).² The survey was emailed to 12 large labor unions and associations who agreed to forward the survey link to their members. These 12 organizations mostly represent workers employed in construction, manufacturing, public safety, educational services, building and grounds cleaning services, food services, professional services, public transportation, and public administration occupations.³ The questionnaire was also sent to a distribution list with emails of union members and workers who have enrolled in University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign Labor Education Program courses. The authors informed all participants that the survey was anonymous and voluntary, and that it would take approximately 10 to 12 minutes to complete.

Survey Participants

In total, 1,482 individuals consented to participate and completed more than half of the survey. However, while 51 respondents (3 percent) were members of unions based in Illinois, they were not Illinois residents. Another 170 union members were not registered to vote or did not vote in the November 8, 2022 election (11 percent). Both categories of respondents were filtered out. Consequently, the final sample included 1,261 responses from Illinois union members who voted in the 2022 midterm election. The median time to participate in the survey was 11 minutes.⁴

According to proprietary summary data on dues-paying union members by county of residence, there were about 956,800 union members affiliated with the Illinois AFL-CIO and the Illinois Education Association living in Illinois in 2022 (Illinois AFL-CIO, 2022; IEA-NEA, 2022). The *Current Population Survey Outgoing Rotation Groups* released by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics estimates that about 734,400 of these union members were employed workers in Illinois workforce, implying that about 222,400 union members were either retired, unemployed, or out of the labor force for another reason (EPI, 2023; BLS, 2023). This analysis primarily utilizes the information from the Illinois AFL-CIO and Illinois Education Association on the full population of dues-paying union members in the state, including those who are actively employed, retired, unemployed, and out of the labor force for any other reason. A standard poll for a population of between 700,000 and 1,000,000 people with a sample size of 1,261 produces a margin of error of ± 2.8 percent (Maple Tech International, 2023).

² Although there were 38 questions, not all are shared in this report. Some questions were for quality control and others were for background purposes only. For example, one question asked, “Are you an Illinois resident?” to narrow the sample to Illinois voters only. Other answers to demographic questions were voluntary, so not all are reported due to inconsistent sample sizes.

³ The five unions with the most responses from their memberships were the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) Council 31, the International Union of Operating Engineers (IUOE) Local 150, the Mid-America Carpenters Regional Council (MACRC), the Illinois Education Association (IEA-NEA), and the Service Employees International Union (SEIU) Local 1.

⁴ Half of all respondents in the final sample completed the survey in 7 to 16 minutes. That is, the 25th percentile response time was 7 minutes and the 75th percentile response time was 16 minutes. The 50th percentile response time was 11 minutes.

Results are further broken down in the final sample between union rank-and-file survey participants and respondents who hold union leadership posts. In total, elected union officials or union staff completed 291 of the 1,261 surveys (23 percent). Compared to rank-and-file members, these individuals were more likely to take the survey. Union leaders are typically more engaged in their organization's activities than non-leaders. However, according to *County Business Patterns* data released by the U.S. Census Bureau, there were just over 7,900 employees of Illinois' labor unions and similar organizations in 2021, the most recent year of available data (Census, 2023a; PIO, 2023). This means that union staff account for just 1 percent of all employed union members in Illinois.⁵ As a result, responses from the 970 rank-and-file union members are highlighted to most accurately reflect the overall perspective of Illinois' labor movement before those of union staff and elected officers are considered. A standard poll for a population of between 700,000 and 1,000,000 people with a sample size of 970 produces a margin of error of ±3.1 percent (Maple Tech International, 2023).

Survey participants are geographically split within the State of Illinois (Figure 2). Fully 53 percent of rank-and-file respondents lived in the Chicago area while Downstate communities accounted for 47 percent of respondents. As a result, Downstate union members are somewhat overrepresented in the survey, because 67 percent of the state's population lives in the seven-county Chicago metropolitan area, as defined by the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP), according to the official 2020 Census count. The Chicago area's share of ballots cast in the 2022 midterm election was 62 percent compared to 38 percent from Downstate jurisdictions.⁶

FIGURE 2: GEOGRAPHIC REPRESENTATION OF THE 2023 UNION SURVEY SAMPLE VS. 2020 CENSUS AND 2022 ELECTION

Area of Illinois	Union Member Survey Sample	Sample Share	2020 Census	Population Share	Ballots Cast in 2022	Ballots Share
Illinois	961	100.0%	12,812,508	100.0%	4,144,125	100.0%
Chicago Area	513	53.4%	8,577,735	66.9%	2,590,026	62.5%
Downstate	448	46.6%	4,234,773	33.1%	1,554,099	37.5%

Source(s): Authors' analysis of a May through August 2023 survey of 970 rank-and-file union members in Illinois (Qualtrics, 2023). Question N= 961 and MoE= ±3.2%. The Chicago Area is defined as the seven-county jurisdiction of the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP, 2022). Results are compared to Illinois' *Official Canvas* of the General Election on November 8, 2022 (State Board of Elections, 2022). "QuickFacts: Illinois" and "County Population Totals: 2020-2021" by the U.S. Census Bureau (Census, 2023b; Census, 2023c). **NOTE:** The U.S. Census Bureau has reported that Illinois' population was likely undercounted in the 2020 Census and was likely over 13 million people (Hill et al., 2022; Ramos & Armentrout, 2022).

Fully 81 percent of surveyed union members were employed (Figure 3). The split was 79 percent employed full-time, 2 percent employed part-time, and only 2 percent who were unemployed and looking for work. The remaining 17 percent of union members were retired. Based on data from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics—which estimates that there were about 734,400 employed union members in Illinois in 2022—and proprietary information from the Illinois AFL-CIO and the Illinois Education Association—which

⁵ According to the U.S. Census Bureau, there were 7,937 employees on the payrolls of 778 establishments in Illinois for the 813930 NAICS code "labor unions and similar organizations" in 2021 (Census, 2023a). These are all employed individuals. Similarly, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, there were an estimated 734,430 union members in Illinois in 2022 and 752,063 union members in Illinois in 2021 (EPI, 2023; BLS, 2023). These are also all employed individuals. Dividing the first number by either of the union member values—the 2022 for the election year or the 2021 for same-year consistency—shows that union staff account for approximately 1.1 percent of all union members in Illinois.

⁶ Proprietary summary data provided by the Illinois AFL-CIO and the Illinois Education Association reveal that 64 percent of the nearly 956,800 dues-paying union members who resided in Illinois in 2022 lived in the Chicago metropolitan area compared to 36 percent who lived Downstate (Illinois AFL-CIO, 2022; IEA-NEA, 2022).

counted about 956,800 total union members living in the state in 2022—about 77 percent of union members were employed (EPI, 2023; BLS, 2023; Illinois AFL-CIO, 2022; IEA-NEA, 2022).⁷

FIGURE 3: EMPLOYMENT STATUS OF RANK-AND-FILE ILLINOIS UNION MEMBERS, 2023

Employment Status	Number of Respondents	Share of Respondents
Employed Full-Time	762	78.9%
Employed Part-Time	23	2.4%
Currently Unemployed	15	1.6%
Retired	165	17.1%
Totals	965	100.0%

Source(s): Authors' analysis of a May through August 2023 survey of 970 rank-and-file union members in Illinois (Qualtrics, 2023). Question N= 965 and MoE= ±3.2%. Numbers may not sum perfectly due to rounding.

Union Members' Class Identity and Alignment with Their Union

Surveyed union members broadly consider themselves to be either working class or middle class (Figure 4). When asked if they would say they belonged in the lower class, the working class, the middle class, the upper middle class, or the upper class, 98 percent of respondents selected one of the three middle options. At 48 percent, the most common choice was middle class. About one-quarter of respondents each selected working class (28 percent) and upper middle class (23 percent).

FIGURE 4: SOCIAL CLASS TO WHICH RANK-AND-FILE ILLINOIS UNION MEMBERS SAY THEY BELONG, 2023

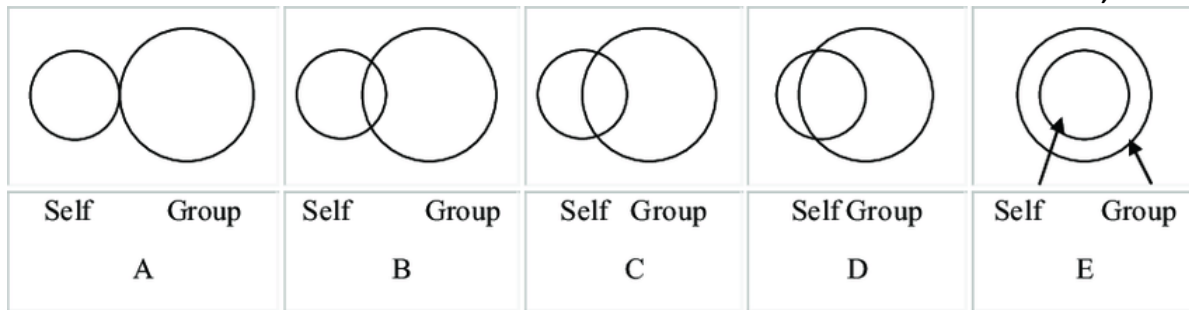
Social Class	Number of Respondents	Share of Respondents
The Lower Class	13	1.3%
The Working Class	267	27.5%
The Middle Class	465	47.9%
The Upper Middle Class	220	22.7%
The Upper Class	5	0.5%
Totals	970	100.0%

Source(s): Authors' analysis of a May through August 2023 survey of 970 rank-and-file union members in Illinois (Qualtrics, 2023). Question N= 970 and MoE= ±3.1%. Numbers may not sum perfectly due to rounding.

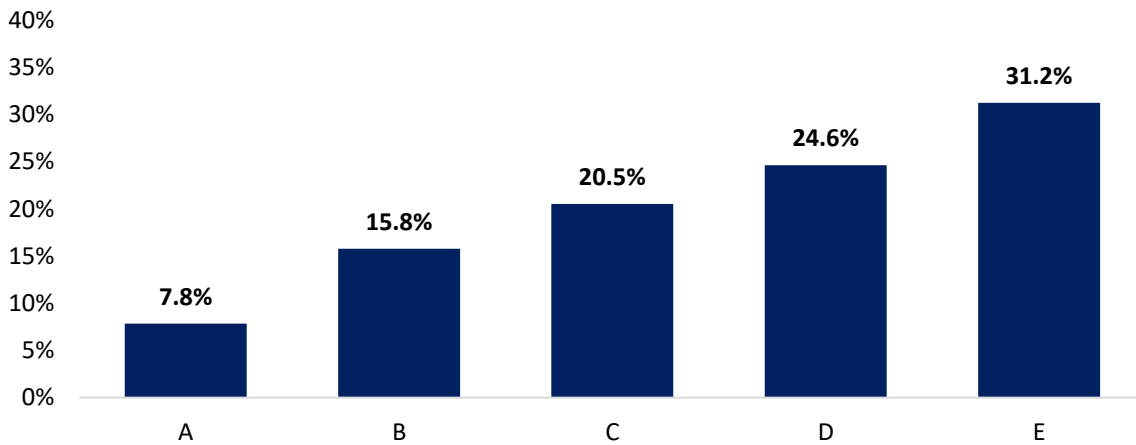
Illinois union members were asked a unique question pertaining to how they feel about the connection between themselves (the “Self”) and their union (the “Group”) in a graphic and asked to choose the letter that best approximates the closeness of their relationship (Figure 5). A majority, 56 percent, placed themselves either fully within the union, represented by section E (31 percent), or mostly within the union, represented by section D (25 percent). Only 8 percent selected section A, saying they were outside of—or separate from—their union. The remaining 36 percent had some sense of belonging, with larger shares feeling more connected to their unions than separate from their unions (Figure 5).

⁷ 63.9 percent of respondents were employed in the public sector while 36.1 percent were employed by a private-sector or not-for-profit entity.

FIGURE 5: RANK-AND-FILE ILLINOIS UNION MEMBERS' SELF-REPORTED CONNECTION TO THEIR UNIONS, 2023



**Connection to Union
from A (Completely Outside Group) to E (Fully Inside Group)**

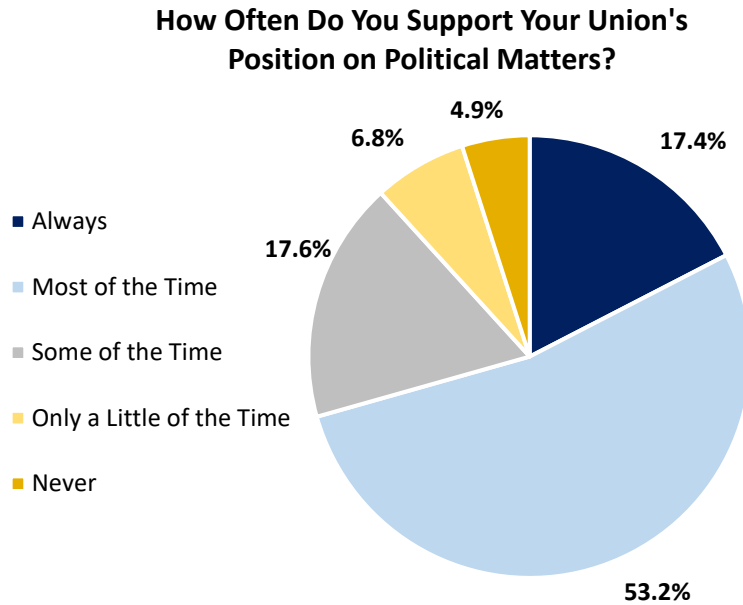


Source(s): Authors' analysis of a May through August 2023 survey of 970 rank-and-file union members in Illinois (Qualtrics, 2023). Question N= 970 and MoE= ±3.1%. Numbers may not sum perfectly due to rounding.

About nine out of every 10 members report that they support their union's position on political matters at least "some of the time" (88 percent) (Figure 6). The majority, 53 percent, say that they support their union's positions "most of the time" while another 17 percent "always" support its positions. A small fraction of union members, 12 percent, say that they "never" support their union's political positions or do so "only a little of the time" (Figure 6).

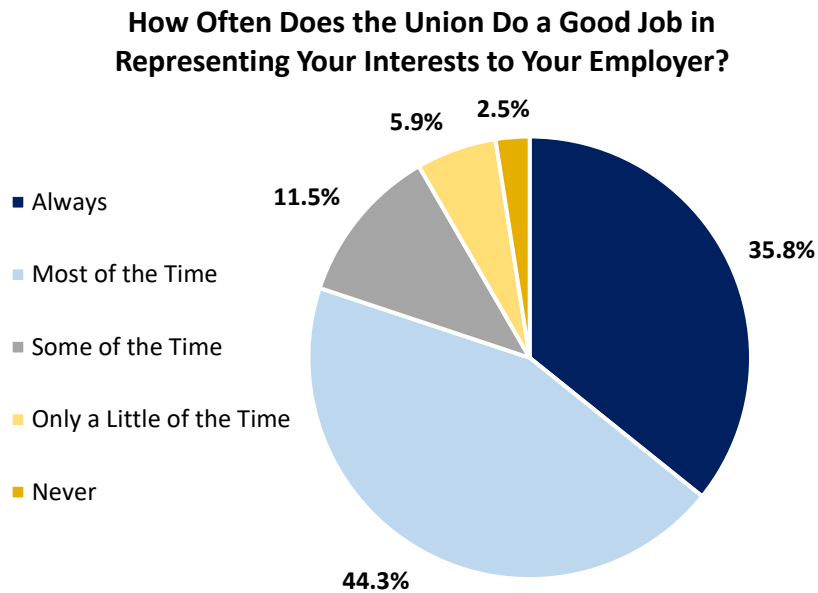
When it comes to representing their interests to employers, nine out of every 10 members report that their unions do a good job at least "some of the time" (92 percent) (Figure 7). A plurality, 44 percent, say that their union does a good job "most of the time." Another 36 percent respond that their union "always" does a good job. Only 8 percent of union members in Illinois say that their unions do a good job "only a little of the time" or "never" do a good job in representing their interests to their employers (Figure 7).

FIGURE 6: RANK-AND-FILE ILLINOIS UNION MEMBERS' AGREEMENT WITH UNION'S POLITICAL POSITIONS, 2023



Source(s): Authors' analysis of a May through August 2023 survey of 970 rank-and-file union members in Illinois ([Qualtrics, 2023](#)). Question N= 970 and MoE= ±3.1%. Numbers may not sum perfectly due to rounding.

FIGURE 7: RANK-AND-FILE ILLINOIS UNION MEMBERS' SATISFACTION WITH UNION REPRESENTATION AT WORK, 2023



Source(s): Authors' analysis of a May through August 2023 survey of 970 rank-and-file union members in Illinois ([Qualtrics, 2023](#)). Question N= 970 and MoE= ±3.1%. Numbers may not sum perfectly due to rounding.

Union Members' Self-Assessment of Job Quality

Survey participants were asked to assess their own job quality on a common scale of 0 to 10, with 10 being the highest possible employment situation. The average employed union member's self-assessed job quality in Illinois is 7.6 (Figure 8). A 2022 report by researchers at the Project for Middle Class Renewal at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, in partnership with the Illinois Future of Work Taskforce, found that the average employment quality for all Illinois workers in the fall of 2021 was 6.8 but that those covered by union contracts rated their job satisfaction at 7.5 (Bellisle et al., 2022). The present survey focuses exclusively on union members in the summer of 2023 while the Employment Quality of Illinois (EQ-IL) report explored all workers covered by a union contract, including nonmembers, in the fall of 2021 (Bellisle et al., 2022). The Conference Board, a business research firm, found that overall job satisfaction in 2022 increased to its highest level since it began surveying workers on the topic in 1987, driven by competitive pay and benefits, flexible work arrangements, and potential for future growth in new jobs (Eren et al., 2023). Of course, passage of the Workers' Rights Amendment itself may have slightly improved union members' self-assessment if they believe it will improve pay, benefits, job security, employment arrangements, and other working conditions that are associated with higher job quality (Bellisle et al., 2022). This is further explored in the next section.

FIGURE 8: SELF-RATED EMPLOYMENT QUALITY OF RANK-AND-FILE ILLINOIS UNION MEMBERS, 2023

Employment Quality Rating	Survey Value
Average Rating	7.6
<i>Share of Respondents*</i>	
Low Rating: 0-5	16.2%
Medium Rating: 6-8	47.3%
High Rating: 9-10	36.6%

Source(s): Authors' analysis of a May through August 2023 survey of 970 rank-and-file union members in Illinois (Qualtrics, 2023). Question N= 785 union members who responded to the question and reported that they were employed. MoE= ±3.5%. Numbers may not sum perfectly due to rounding. *NOTE: The "low," "medium," and "high" categories are obtained from University of Illinois researchers on the Employment Quality of Illinois (EQ-IL) report. For the overall Illinois workforce in the fall of 2021, the self-reported employment quality shares were 27 percent low, 48 percent medium, and 25 percent high (Bellisle et al., 2022).

How Rank-and-File Union Members Voted on the Workers' Rights Amendment

Illinois union members were asked, "When you vote for candidates for elected offices, what political party affiliation do you usually support?" Fully 64 percent responded that they usually support Democratic candidates compared to just 19 percent who usually support Republican candidates. Another 17 percent said either "Other" or "None" (Figure 9).⁸ When presented with a seven-point scale of political views

⁸ State-level data provided by the Illinois AFL-CIO from the Vote Choice Index (VCI) model—a predictive model built by a Washington, D.C.-based data analytics firm called Catalist that primarily provides voter information to Democratic pollsters, researchers, and campaigns—estimates that 47.5 percent of Illinois AFL-CIO's members lean Democratic, 14.3 percent lean Republican, and the remaining 38.2 percent are "in the middle," persuadable, or do not vote (Catalist, 2022). Catalist's voter file includes information regarding each individual union member's turnout records in elections dating back to the 2000s, political ideology, voter registration length, income group, age, gender, marital status, housing situation, and a proprietary vote propensity score based on responses to unique survey items covering a variety of political and social issues. Introduced in 2014, the VCI is "based on actual voting behavior, factoring in longitudinal demographics and precinct-level election results," and scores voters on a scale of 0 to 100, with those between 0 and 30 most likely to vote for Republicans and those between 70 and 100 most likely to vote for Democrats in competitive, two-party races (Catalist, 2022).

arranged from extremely liberal to extremely conservative, with a “moderate” option in the middle, 43 percent of Illinois union members shared they were at least slightly liberal, 32 percent answered they were moderate, and 26 percent said that they were at least slightly conservative (Figure 10).⁹

FIGURE 9: POLITICAL PARTY AFFILIATION OF RANK-AND-FILE ILLINOIS UNION MEMBERS, 2023

Political Party Union Member Usually Supports	Number of Respondents	Share of Respondents
Democratic	618	64.4%
Republican	183	19.1%
Other or None	159	16.6%
Totals	960	100.0%

Source(s): Authors’ analysis of a May through August 2023 survey of 713 rank-and-file union members in Illinois (Qualtrics, 2023). Question N= 960 and MoE= ±3.2%. Numbers may not sum perfectly due to rounding.

FIGURE 10: POLITICAL IDEOLOGY ON OF RANK-AND-FILE ILLINOIS UNION MEMBERS ON SEVEN-POINT SCALE, 2023

Political Ideology to Which Union Member Belongs	Left-to-Right Scale (1-7)	Share of Respondents
Extremely Liberal	1	10.4%
Liberal	2	19.3%
Slightly Liberal	3	11.8%
Moderate	4	32.0%
Slightly Conservative	5	10.7%
Conservative	6	13.1%
Extremely Conservative	7	2.6%
Total Liberal	1-3	41.6%
Moderate	4	32.0%
Total Conservative	5-7	26.4%

Source(s): Authors’ analysis of a May through August 2023 survey of 970 rank-and-file union members in Illinois (Qualtrics, 2023). Question N= 960 and MoE= ±3.2%. Numbers may not sum perfectly due to rounding.

Prior to voting, Illinois union members reported that they were both interested in and informed about the Workers’ Rights Amendment (Figure 11). On a scale of 0 to 10, with 10 representing the highest interest, the average rank-and-file union member said that their interest level was an 8.5 prior to their vote. Two-thirds of union members (64 percent) reported that their interest level was a 9 or 10. Just 11 percent of union members reported that their interest level was at 5 or below. Additionally, during the election campaign, 34 percent of union members said they thought they were “extremely well” informed about the Workers’ Rights Amendment, 33 percent thought they were “very well” informed, and 24 percent thought they were “fairly well” informed,” while 9 percent felt that they were either “only a little” or “not at all” informed (Figure 11).

⁹ Results from a proprietary internal pre-election poll of union households conducted by the Vote Yes for Workers Rights’ committee between January 4, 2022 and January 9, 2022 were shared with the researchers. In that poll, 920 current and retired union members were surveyed. Of those union members, 56 percent were Democrats, 34 percent were Republicans, and 10 percent were in other categories. Additionally, 33 percent considered themselves liberal, 34 percent considered themselves moderate, 30 percent considered themselves conservative, and 2 percent said they didn’t know. 83 percent were employed and 17 percent were out of the labor force. After hearing a series of pro and con statements, 80 percent of union members said they would vote yes on the Amendment, 12 percent said they would vote no, and 8 percent were undecided. The splits were 86 percent yes to 6 percent no for Democratic union members and 69 percent yes to 21 percent no for Republican union members, and 69 percent yes to 17 percent no for all other union members (WRA, 2023).

FIGURE 11: SELF-RATED INTEREST AND INFORMATION ABOUT AMENDMENT, RANK-AND-FILE UNION MEMBERS, 2023

Level of Interest or Information about Workers' Rights Amendment Prior to Vote	Survey Value
Average Interest Level	8.5
<i>Share of Respondents</i>	
Low Interest: 0-5	11.4%
Medium Interest: 6-8	24.6%
High Interest: 9-10	64.0%
<i>Level of Information About Amendment</i>	
Extremely Well Informed	33.9%
Very Well Informed	33.0%
Fairly Well Informed	23.7%
Only a Little Informed	8.0%
Not at All Informed	1.4%

Source(s): Authors' analysis of a May through August 2023 survey of 970 rank-and-file union members in Illinois (Qualtrics, 2023). Question N= 940 and MoE= ±3.2%. Numbers may not sum perfectly due to rounding.

Fully 97 percent of union members report that they voted on the Workers' Rights Amendment (Figure 12). The others (3 percent) skipped the question. Of those who voted on the question, 91 percent voted yes in favor of the Amendment versus 9 percent who voted against the Amendment, with yes support winning by a net of 82 points. The breakdown among all ballots cast by union voters was 88 percent yes, 9 percent no, and 3 percent not voting on the question—a net yes of 76 points (Figure 12).

FIGURE 12: RANK-AND-FILE ILLINOIS UNION MEMBERS' VOTE ON THE 2022 WORKERS' RIGHTS AMENDMENT

Rank-and-File Illinois Union Member Vote on the Workers' Rights Amendment	Share of Respondents
<i>Did You Cast a Vote on the Workers' Rights Amendment?</i>	
Yes, I Voted on the Question	96.9%
No, I Skipped the Question	3.1%
<i>How Did You Vote on the Workers' Rights Amendment?</i>	
I Voted Yes (For the Amendment)	90.9%
I Voted No (Against the Amendment)	9.1%
<i>Among All Voters: Workers' Rights Amendment Vote</i>	
Yes	88.0%
No	8.9%
Did Not Vote on the Question	3.1%
<i>Net Yes Percent</i>	
Among Union Members Voting on Question	+81.7%
Among Union Member Ballots Cast	+76.1%

Source(s): Authors' analysis of a May through August 2023 survey of 970 rank-and-file union members in Illinois (Qualtrics, 2023). Question N= 970 and MoE= ±3.1%. Numbers may not sum perfectly due to rounding.

Union members broadly supported incumbent JB Pritzker in the 2022 gubernatorial election (Figure 13). When asked whom they voted for governor, 76 percent said JB Pritzker, the Democratic candidate, compared to only 19 percent who said his Republican challenger, State Senator Darren Bailey. Another 3 percent selected "Other" and wrote in responses, such as the "Libertarian candidate," while 2 percent said they did not vote for anyone for governor.

FIGURE 13: RANK-AND-FILE ILLINOIS UNION MEMBERS' VOTE IN THE 2022 GUBERNATORIAL ELECTION

Rank-and-File Union Member Vote for Governor of Illinois	Share of Respondents
JB Pritzker	76.3%
Darren Bailey	18.6%
Other*	2.7%
Did Not Vote for Anyone	2.4%

Source(s): Authors' analysis of a May through August 2023 survey of 970 rank-and-file union members in Illinois (Qualtrics, 2023). Question N= 960 and MoE= ±3.2%. Numbers may not sum perfectly due to rounding. *NOTE: Respondents who selected "Other" could write-in responses and the most common was a variant of "confidential" or "prefer not to answer."

FIGURE 14: POLITICAL COMPOSITION OF ILLINOIS UNION MEMBERS' VOTE IN THE 2022 GUBERNATORIAL ELECTION

Union Member Vote for Governor of Illinois	JB Pritzker	Darren Bailey	Net Pritzker
<i>By Political Party Affiliation</i>			
Democratic	97.2%	1.3%	+96.0%
Republican	21.3%	73.2%	-51.9%
Other or None	58.5%	22.6%	+35.8%
<i>By Political Ideology</i>			
Liberal	98.5%	0.8%	+97.7%
Moderate	82.4%	9.4%	+73.0%
Conservative	34.3%	57.5%	-23.2%

Source(s): Authors' analysis of a May through August 2023 survey of 970 rank-and-file union members in Illinois (Qualtrics, 2023). Question N= 960 and MoE= ±3.2%. Democratic voters N= 618 and MoE= ±3.9%; Republican voters N= 183 and MoE= ±7.2%; Other or None voters N= 159 and MoE= ±7.8%; Liberal voters N= 399 and MoE= ±4.9%; Moderate voters N= 307 and MoE= ±5.6%; Conservative N= 254 and MoE= ±6.2%. Numbers may not sum perfectly due to rounding.

FIGURE 15: ILLINOIS UNION MEMBERS' VOTE ON 2022 WORKERS' RIGHTS AMENDMENT BY 2022 VOTE FOR GOVERNOR

Rank-and-File Illinois Union Member Vote on the Workers' Rights Amendment	Pritzker Voters	Bailey Voters	"Other or None" Voters
<i>Did You Cast a Vote on the Workers' Rights Amendment?</i>			
Yes, I Voted on the Question	99.1%	89.4%	92.0%
No, I Skipped the Question	0.9%	10.6%	8.0%
<i>How Did You Vote on the Workers' Rights Amendment?</i>			
I Voted Yes (For the Amendment)	97.5%	62.1%	84.8%
I Voted No (Against the Amendment)	2.5%	37.9%	15.2%
<i>Among All Voters: Workers' Rights Amendment Vote</i>			
Yes	96.6%	55.6%	78.0%
No	2.4%	33.9%	14.0%
Did Not Vote on the Question	0.9%	10.6%	8.0%
<i>Net Yes Percent</i>			
Among Union Members Voting on Question	+95.1%	+24.2%	+69.6%
Among Union Member Ballots Cast	+93.2%	+11.1%	+56.0%

Source(s): Authors' analysis of a May through August 2023 survey of 970 rank-and-file union members in Illinois (Qualtrics, 2023). Question N= 960 and MoE= ±3.2%. Numbers may not sum perfectly due to rounding. Pritzker voters N= 504 and MoE= ±4.4%; Bailey voters N= 135 and MoE= ±8.4%; "Other or None" voters N= 65 and MoE= ±12.2%.

JB Pritzker earned more crossover support among Republican and conservative union members than his challenger did among Democratic and liberal union members (Figure 14). Union members who report that they usually support Democratic candidates for office voted 97 percent for Pritzker versus 1 percent for Bailey, a net Pritzker of 96 points. By contrast, 21 percent of those who say they usually support Republican candidates for office voted for Pritzker while 73 percent voted for Bailey, a net Bailey of 52 points. Similarly, 98 percent of union members who identify as liberal voted for Pritzker versus 1 percent who voted for Bailey while 34 percent of union members who identify as at least somewhat conservative voted for Pritzker versus 57 percent who voted for Bailey. Pritzker won moderate union members 82 percent to 9 percent in 2022 (Figure 14).

While Pritzker had some crossover support, the Workers' Rights Amendment enjoyed strong bipartisan appeal among union members across Illinois (Figure 15). Rank-and-file union members who voted for JB Pritzker reported that they voted 97 percent yes in favor of the Amendment to 2 percent who voted no, with just 1 percent not voting on the question. Union members who voted for Darren Bailey broke 56 percent yes and 34 percent no, with 11 percent who did not vote on the question. Among those who voted for another candidate or did not vote for either Pritzker or Bailey, 8 percent did not vote on the question, 78 percent voted yes, and 14 percent voted no (Figure 15).

Results are similar by ideology and political party affiliation (Figure 16). Nearly all the rank-and-file union members who usually support Democratic candidates for office who participated in the survey reported that they voted for the Amendment (98 percent) with just 1 percent voting no and 1 percent not voting on the question. Rank-and-file Republican union members voted 61 percent yes to 31 percent no, with 8 percent not voting. Additionally, 82 percent of union members who are neither Democrats nor Republicans voted for the Amendment (Figure 16). By political ideology, 99 percent of the union members who consider themselves to be liberal report that they voted yes on the Amendment, 93 percent of those who say they are moderate voted yes on the Amendment, and 67 percent of conservative union members voted yes on the question.

FIGURE 16: ILLINOIS UNION MEMBERS' VOTE ON 2022 WORKERS' RIGHTS AMENDMENT BY POLITICAL LEANINGS

Rank-and-File Illinois Union Member Vote on the Workers' Rights Amendment	By Political Party Affiliation			By Political Ideology		
	Democratic Union Members	Republican Union Members	"Other or None" Members	Liberal Union Members	Moderate Union Members	Conservative Union Members
<i>Vote on Amendment</i>						
Yes (For Amendment)	99.0%	66.7%	85.0%	99.7%	94.7%	71.3%
No (Against Amendment)	1.0%	33.3%	15.0%	0.3%	5.3%	28.7%
<i>Among All Ballots Cast</i>						
Yes	98.2%	61.2%	81.8%	99.0%	92.8%	66.5%
No	1.0%	30.6%	14.5%	0.3%	5.2%	26.8%
Skipped Question	0.8%	8.2%	3.8%	0.8%	2.0%	6.7%
<i>Net Yes Percent</i>						
Among Votes on Question	+98.0%	+33.3%	+69.9%	+99.5%	+89.4%	+42.6%
Among Ballots Cast	+96.4%	+22.4%	+63.5%	+98.0%	+85.7%	+33.1%

Source(s): Authors' analysis of a May through August 2023 survey of 970 rank-and-file union members in Illinois (Qualtrics, 2023). Question N= 960 and MoE= ±3.2%. Democratic voters N= 618 and MoE= ±3.9%; Republican voters N= 183 and MoE= ±7.2%; Other or None voters N= 159 and MoE= ±7.8%; Liberal voters N= 399 and MoE= ±4.9%; Moderate voters N= 307 and MoE= ±5.6%; Conservative N= 254 and MoE= ±6.2%. Numbers may not sum perfectly due to rounding.

FIGURE 17: ILLINOIS UNION MEMBERS' VOTE SHARES FOR WORKERS' RIGHTS AMENDMENT AND GOVERNOR PRITZKER

Union Member Vote Shares in 2022	Workers' Rights Amendment Vote Share	JB Pritzker Vote Share	Workers' Rights Amendment Performance vs. Pritzker
All Union Members	88.0%	76.3%	+11.7%
<i>By Political Party Affiliation</i>			
Democratic	98.2%	97.2%	+1.0%
Republican	61.2%	21.3%	+39.9%
Other or None	81.8%	58.5%	+23.3%
<i>By Political Ideology</i>			
Liberal	99.0%	98.5%	+0.5%
Moderate	92.8%	82.4%	+10.4%
Conservative	66.5%	34.3%	+32.2%

Source(s): Authors' analysis of a May through August 2023 survey of 970 rank-and-file union members in Illinois (Qualtrics, 2023). Numbers may not sum perfectly due to rounding.

FIGURE 18: RANK-AND-FILE ILLINOIS UNION MEMBERS' VOTE ON 2022 WORKERS' RIGHTS AMENDMENT BY GEOGRAPHY

Rank-and-File Illinois Union Member Votes on the Workers' Rights Amendment and Gubernatorial Election	Chicago Area Union Members	Downstate Union Members
<i>Did You Cast a Vote on the Workers' Rights Amendment?</i>		
Yes, I Voted on the Question	98.4%	96.0%
No, I Skipped the Question	1.6%	4.0%
<i>How Did You Vote on the Workers' Rights Amendment?</i>		
I Voted Yes (For the Amendment)	93.7%	87.7%
I Voted No (Against the Amendment)	6.3%	12.3%
<i>Among All Voters: Workers' Rights Amendment Vote</i>		
Yes	92.2%	84.2%
No	6.2%	11.8%
Did Not Vote on the Question	1.6%	4.0%
<i>Net Yes Percent</i>		
Among Union Members Voting on Question	+87.3%	+75.3%
Among Union Member Ballots Cast	+84.4%	+68.3%
<i>Gubernatorial Vote</i>		
JB Pritzker	80.7%	71.4%
Darren Bailey	14.4%	23.2%
Other or Did Not Vote for Anyone	4.9%	5.4%
<i>Comparison: Amendment Performance vs. Gubernatorial Vote</i>		
Workers' Rights Amendment (Among All Voters) vs. Pritzker	+11.5%	+12.7%

Source(s): Authors' analysis of a May through August 2023 survey of 970 rank-and-file union members in Illinois (Qualtrics, 2023). Question N= 961 and MoE= ±3.2%. Numbers may not sum perfectly due to rounding. Chicago Area N= 513 and MoE= ±4.3%; Downstate N= 430 and MoE= ±4.7%.

As an indication of the bipartisan appeal of the Workers' Rights Amendment, union votes on the Amendment are compared to union votes for governor (Figure 17). The Workers' Rights Amendment outperformed incumbent Governor JB Pritzker by 12 points among union members in Illinois. However, it most outpaced Governor Pritzker among Republican and conservative-leaning union members. As an example, of union members who usually support Republican candidates, 21 percent voted for Pritzker but 61 percent voted for the Workers' Rights Amendment, a difference of 40 points. The Workers' Rights Amendment earned a 1-point higher vote share among Democratic union members than JB Pritzker. The

Amendment outperformed Pritzker by 32 points among union members who self-identify as conservative, by 10 points among those who are moderates, and by less than 1 point among those who consider themselves liberal.

The Workers' Rights Amendment also earned broad support from union members across Illinois (Figure 18). In the Chicago area, 92 percent of union members voted yes on the Amendment, 6 percent voted no, and 2 percent did not vote on the question. In Downstate communities, 84 percent voted yes, 12 percent voted no, and 4 percent did not vote on the question. In 2022, Chicago area union members voted 81 percent for Governor Pritzker compared to 71 percent of Downstate union members.

Lastly, support for the Workers' Rights Amendment among union members was strongly correlated with their sense of connection to their unions (see Figure 5). While the Amendment won a majority of all union members who voted on the question regardless of their sense of connection, it lost by 5 points among all ballots cast by those who felt no connection to their union, denoted by the letter A (Figure 19). On the opposite end, union members who placed themselves fully within their union, denoted by the letter E, voted 99 percent yes in favor of the Amendment to 1 percent no, a net yes of 98 points. In between, the net yes percent among ballots cast by union members increased every step of the way, from 37 points to 83 points to 94 points (Figure 19).¹⁰

FIGURE 19: ILLINOIS UNION MEMBERS' VOTE ON 2022 WORKERS' RIGHTS AMENDMENT BY CONNECTION TO UNION

Rank-and-File Illinois Union Member Vote on the Workers' Rights Amendment	A	B	C	D	E
<i>Did You Cast a Vote on the Workers' Rights Amendment?</i>					
Yes, I Voted on the Question	89.5%	92.8%	95.5%	99.2%	100.0%
No, I Skipped the Question	10.5%	7.2%	4.5%	0.8%	0.0%
<i>How Did You Vote on the Workers' Rights Amendment?</i>					
I Voted Yes (For the Amendment)	52.9%	73.9%	95.8%	97.5%	99.0%
I Voted No (Against the Amendment)	47.1%	26.1%	4.2%	2.5%	1.0%
<i>Among All Voters: Workers' Rights Amendment Vote</i>					
Yes	47.4%	68.6%	91.5%	96.7%	99.0%
No	42.1%	24.2%	4.0%	2.5%	1.0%
Did Not Vote on the Question	10.5%	7.2%	4.5%	0.8%	0.0%
<i>Net Yes Percent</i>					
Among Union Members Voting on Question	+5.8%	+47.8%	+91.6%	+95.0%	+98.0%
Among Union Member Ballots Cast	-5.2%	+37.2%	+83.0%	+93.8%	+98.0%

Source(s): Authors' analysis of a May through August 2023 survey of 970 rank-and-file union members in Illinois (Qualtrics, 2023). Question N= 970 and MoE= ±3.1%. Numbers may not sum perfectly due to rounding. A N= 76 and MoE= ±11.2%; B N= 153 and MoE= ±7.9%; C N= 190 and MoE =±7.1%; D N= 237 and MoE= ±6.4%; and E N= 303 and MoE =±5.6%

¹⁰ By sector of employment, public sector union members (MoE =±3.9%) voted 85.6 percent yes and 10.7 percent no, with 3.7 percent skipping the question—a net yes of 71.2 percent—while all other union members (MoE =±5.2%) voted 93.1 percent yes and 5.5 percent no, with 1.4 percent skipping the question—a net yes of 86.2 percent. Based on the sample sizes, the differences are not statistically significant.

Influence of the Workers' Rights Amendment Campaign Claims on the Union Vote

Union members who voted on the Amendment question were presented with a list of claims that were made about the Workers' Rights Amendment during the election campaign (Figure 20). The union members were asked to think about why they voted either for or against the Amendment and to indicate their level of agreement with each of the statements on a scale of 0 to 10, with 0 representing their strongest disagreement and 10 representing their highest agreement. The results indicate that union members widely agreed that the Workers' Rights Amendment would: guarantee the right to join a union to negotiate for pay raises, workplace safety, and a voice at work (9.0); protect the freedom of workers to join labor unions (8.7), prohibit laws that diminish worker wages and employment benefits (8.2), promote the development of high-quality jobs (8.1), and expand the number of workers eligible to join unions (8.1). Each of these responses scored higher than 8 out of 10 on the scale of agreement (Figure 20).

Only two other items scored higher than 5.5 out of 10, meaning union members tended to agree more with the statement than disagree with it (Figure 20). These were that the Workers' Rights Amendment would prevent the passage of a "right-to-work" law in Illinois (6.8) and remove collective bargaining rights from the discretion of legislators (5.5). This could indicate either that many union members remain skeptical that the Amendment will halt efforts by lawmakers to enact so-called "right-to-work" laws or ordinances in Illinois or simply that it was not among their top reasons for voting for or against the Amendment.

FIGURE 20: ILLINOIS UNION MEMBERS' AGREEMENT WITH WORKERS' RIGHTS AMENDMENT CAMPAIGN CLAIMS

In Thinking About Why You Voted Either For or Against the Amendment, Please Indicate on a Scale from 0 (Strongest Disagreement) to 10 (Highest Agreement) Your Agreement with Each Statement.			
Campaign Claim: Passage of the Workers' Rights Amendment Would...	All Members	Yes Voters	No Voters
Guarantee the Right to Join a Union to Negotiate for Pay Raises, Workplace Safety, and a Voice at Work	9.0	9.4	5.7
Protect the Freedom of Workers to Join Labor Unions	8.7	9.1	5.1
Prohibit Laws that Diminish Worker Wages and Employment Benefits	8.2	8.6	4.8
Promote the Development of High-Quality Jobs	8.1	8.6	3.5
Expand the Number of Workers Eligible to Join Unions	8.1	8.4	5.0
Prevent the Passage of a "Right-to-Work" Law in Illinois	6.8	6.9	5.3
Remove Collective Bargaining Rights from the Discretion of Legislators	5.5	5.6	4.8
Cause Property Taxes to Increase	2.3	1.9	6.4
Cause People and Businesses to Leave Illinois	2.0	1.5	7.2
Decrease the Growth of Jobs in Illinois	2.0	1.6	6.2
Force Workers to Join Unions	1.9	1.6	5.0
Weaken the Competitiveness of Illinois Employers	1.8	1.4	6.0
Limit Workers' Ability to Find Jobs	1.6	1.3	4.7

Source(s): Authors' analysis of a May through August 2023 survey of 970 rank-and-file union members in Illinois (Qualtrics, 2023). Question N= 940 and MoE= ±3.2%; Yes voters N= 854 and MoE= ±3.4%; No voters N= 86 and MoE= ±10.6%. Numbers may not sum perfectly due to rounding.

The three claims with the strongest disagreement among all union members were that the Workers' Rights Amendment would limit workers' ability to find jobs (1.6), weaken the competitiveness of Illinois employers (1.8), and force workers to join unions (1.9). Among the rank-and-file union members who voted no on the Amendment, the claims to which they agreed at least moderately—with a score of 6 or

of 10 or higher—were that they felt it would cause people and businesses to leave Illinois (7.2), cause property taxes to increase (6.4), decrease the growth of jobs in Illinois (6.2), and weaken the competitiveness of Illinois employers (6.0) (Figure 20).

Union members were also asked to indicate the *most important* reason for their vote on the Workers' Rights Amendment (Figure 21). Participants were presented with the same list of claims but could also write in their own response, which 4 percent of respondents opted to do. A majority of Illinois union members said that guaranteeing the right to join a union to negotiate for pay raises, workplace safety, and a voice at work was their most important reason for their vote on the Amendment (55 percent)—by far the top response. Despite its lower rank on agreement among union members, the second-most important reason selected by Illinois union members was to prevent the passage of a “right-to-work” law in Illinois, chosen by 16 percent of union members. No other response garnered more than a 10 percent share of responses. Among those who voted for the Amendment, the top three reasons were to guarantee the right to join a union (60 percent), prevent the passage of “right-to-work” (17 percent), and prohibit laws that diminish wages and benefits (9 percent). Among those who voted against the Amendment, the top three reasons were because they felt it could cause property taxes to increase (23 percent), cause people and businesses to leave the state (14 percent), and the “something else not listed here category” (22 percent).¹¹

FIGURE 21: ILLINOIS UNION MEMBERS' MOST IMPORTANT REASON FOR WORKERS' RIGHTS AMENDMENT VOTE

Please Indicate the Most Important Reason for Your Vote on the Workers' Rights Amendment			
Campaign Claim: Passage of the Workers' Rights Amendment Would...	All Members	Yes Voters	No Voters
Guarantee the Right to Join a Union to Negotiate for Pay Raises, Workplace Safety, and a Voice at Work	55.1%	59.9%	8.1%
Protect the Freedom of Workers to Join Labor Unions	2.3%	2.6%	0.0%
Prohibit Laws that Diminish Worker Wages and Employment Benefits	9.1%	9.8%	2.3%
Promote the Development of High-Quality Jobs	6.1%	6.6%	1.2%
Expand the Number of Workers Eligible to Join Unions	0.4%	0.5%	0.0%
Prevent the Passage of a “Right-to-Work” Law in Illinois	15.5%	16.6%	4.7%
Remove Collective Bargaining Rights from the Discretion of Legislators	2.1%	1.9%	4.7%
Cause Property Taxes to Increase	2.3%	0.2%	23.3%
Cause People and Businesses to Leave Illinois	1.4%	0.1%	14.0%
Decrease the Growth of Jobs in Illinois	0.5%	0.0%	5.8%
Force Workers to Join Unions	1.0%	0.0%	10.5%
Weaken the Competitiveness of Illinois Employers	0.3%	0.0%	3.5%
Limit Workers' Ability to Find Jobs	0.1%	0.0%	1.2%
Something Else Not Listed Here	3.6%	1.9%	20.9%

Source(s): Authors' analysis of a May through August 2023 survey of 970 rank-and-file union members in Illinois (Qualtrics, 2023). Question N= 940 and MoE= ±3.2%; Yes voters N= 854 and MoE= ±3.4%; No voters N= 86 and MoE= ±10.6%. Numbers may not sum perfectly due to rounding.

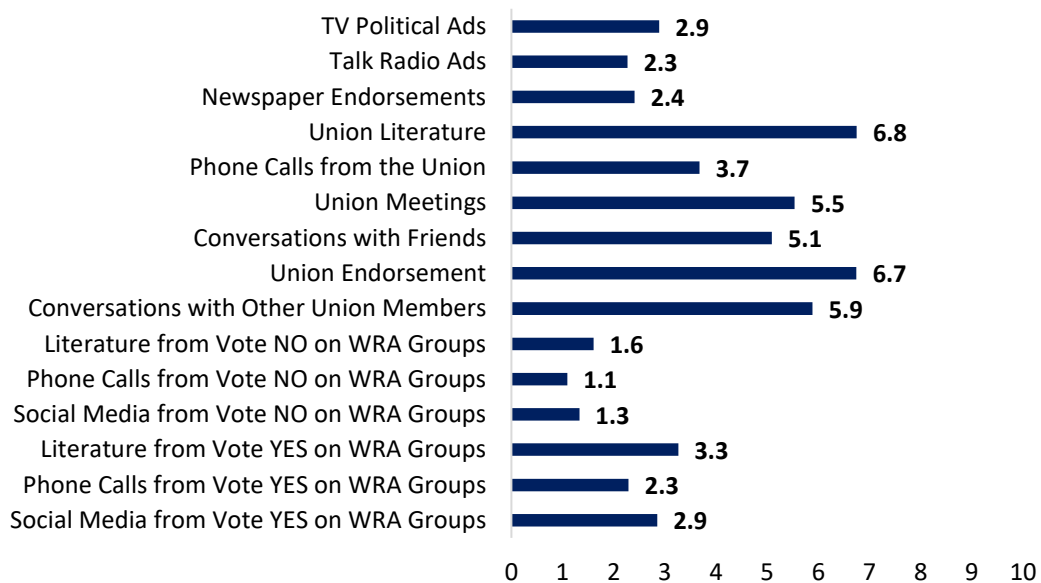
¹¹ Example write-in responses include: “With the provision that the law once passed could not be changed, it removes any chance to make changes that may be necessary in the future,” “Gave unions too much power at the cost of taxpayer expense,” and “Our labor unions already are strong in Illinois and are protected under current law and do not need any more protection. There needs to be a balance between unions and employer power structure. Illinois is heavily favored towards the union. I am aware of that as an IEA member.”

Importance of Information Sources on Workers' Rights Amendment Union Vote

Additionally, union members were asked to indicate on a scale from 0 to 10 how important specific sources of information were in determining whether they should vote yes or no on the Workers' Rights Amendment (Figure 22). On this scale, 0 meant that the source of information was not important to the respondent's decision or that the respondent was not aware of it while 10 means that it was of the highest importance or that the union member was very aware of it. Overall, three sources of information scored higher than a 5.5 out of 10 on the scale: union literature (6.8), union endorsement (6.7), and conversations with other union members (5.9). Other information sources included union meetings (5.5) and conversations with friends (5.1). Phone calls from unions (3.7), traditional media like TV ads (2.9), talk radio ads (2.3), and newspaper endorsements (2.4) were much less important. Literature (3.3), social media (2.9), and phone calls (2.3) from the Vote Yes for Workers' Rights Committee was more impactful than the same from the Vote No on Amendment 1 Committee (between 1.1 and 1.6), but were generally not very important in determining how union members voted on the Amendment in Illinois (Figure 22).

FIGURE 22: IMPORTANCE OF SOURCES OF INFORMATION ON ILLINOIS UNION MEMBERS' AMENDMENT VOTE

Importance of Sources of Information in Deciding Whether to Vote Yes or No on Workers' Rights Amendment



Source(s): Authors' analysis of a May through August 2023 survey of 970 rank-and-file union members in Illinois (Qualtrics, 2023). Question N= 940 and MoE= ±3.2%.

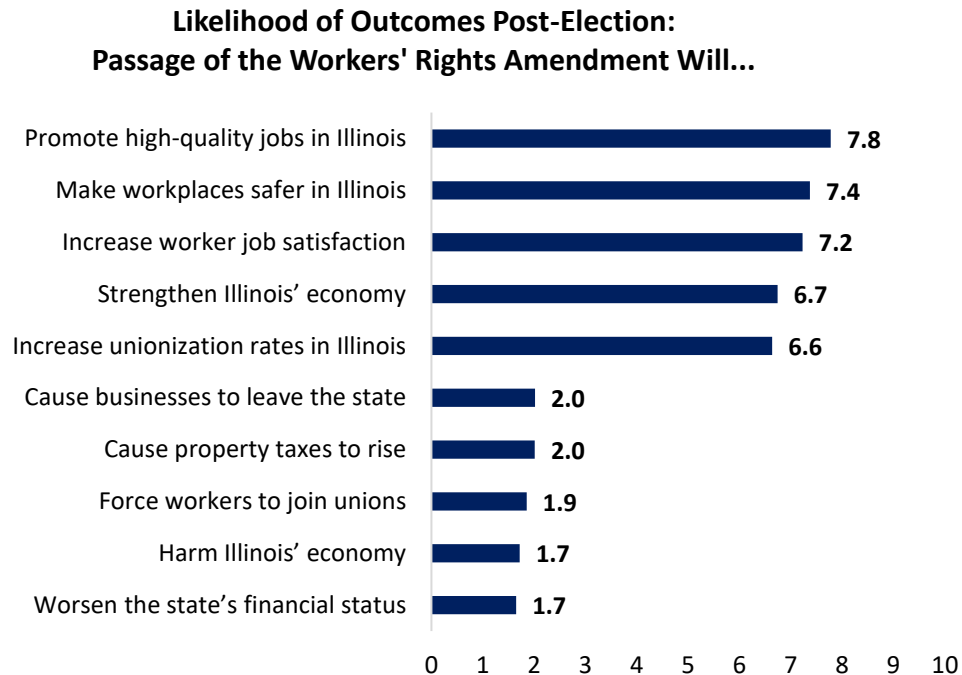
What Rank-and-File Union Members Expect Now that the Amendment Has Passed

Finally, rank-and-file union members were asked to ascribe a likelihood of outcomes for the State of Illinois now that the Workers' Rights Amendment has passed (Figure 23). The scale was once again 0 to 10, with 0 representing not likely and 10 representing very likely, and participants were asked about 10 potential outcomes. Illinois' union members felt that five of the 10 outcomes were likely to occur. In particular, they

communicated that they think the Workers' Rights Amendment will promote high-quality jobs in Illinois, such as those with high wages, health insurance, and retirement benefits (7.8). Union members also felt that passage of the Workers' Rights Amendment would make workplaces safer in Illinois (7.4), increase worker job satisfaction (7.2), strengthen Illinois' economy (6.7), and increase unionization rates in Illinois (6.6). On the other hand, union members are broadly unconvinced that the Amendment will cause businesses to leave the state (2.0), cause property taxes to rise (2.0), force workers to join unions (1.9), harm Illinois' economy (1.7), and worsen the state's financial status (1.7).

These findings generally align with national polls of 1,200 registered voters and 1,014 U.S. adults conducted in 2023 (GBAO, 2023; Saad, 2023). Nationally, 82 percent of registered voters said that unions have a positive effect on workplace safety, 78 percent said they have a positive effect on fair compensation and hours, and 76 percent said they have a positive effect on the ability to afford and access healthcare (GBAO, 2023). With respect to the impact on the economy, 63 percent of registered voters said unions have a "positive effect" compared to only 27 percent who said they have a "negative effect," and 61 percent of all adults replied that unions "mostly help" the economy (GBAO, 2023; Saad, 2023).

FIGURE 23: ILLINOIS UNION MEMBERS' VIEWS ON LIKELIHOOD OF OUTCOMES NOW THAT AMENDMENT HAS PASSED



Source(s): Authors' analysis of a May through August 2023 survey of 970 rank-and-file union members in Illinois (Qualtrics, 2023). Question N= 940 and MoE= ±3.2%.

How Elected Officers and Union Staff Voted on the Workers' Rights Amendment

Participants were asked, "Do you presently hold a local union elected or nonelected staff position?" In total, 291 union members responded "Yes," accounting for 23 percent of the total sample. While elected officers and staff at labor unions were overrepresented, this relatively high response rate allows for a comparison between union leaders and rank-and-file members. A standard poll for any population of

between 7,000 and 15,000 people with a sample size of 291 produces a margin of error of ±5.7 percent (Maple Tech International, 2023).¹²

FIGURE 24: RESPONSES OF ELECTED OFFICERS AND UNION STAFF COMPARED TO RANK-AND-FILE UNION MEMBERS

Metrics Comparing Elected Officers and Unions Staff to Rank-and-File Union Members	Union Leaders	Rank-and-File Members	Leader Difference	Statistically Significant?
Sample Size (N=)	291	970	--	--
Margin of Error (MoE)	±5.7%	±3.1%	--	±8.8%
<i><u>Information and Interest</u></i>				
Extremely Well Informed	53.5%	33.9%	+19.6%	Yes
Very Well Informed	27.8%	33.0%	-5.2%	No
Fairly Well, A Little, or Not at All Informed	18.8%	33.1%	-14.3%	Yes
Interest in Amendment (0-10)	9.2	8.5	+0.7	No
<i><u>Did You Vote on the Amendment?</u></i>				
Yes, I Voted on the Question	99.0%	96.9%	+2.1%	No
No, I Skipped the Question	1.0%	3.1%	-2.1%	No
<i><u>How Did You Vote on the Amendment?</u></i>				
I Voted Yes (For the Amendment)	98.2%	90.9%	+7.3%	No
I Voted No (Against the Amendment)	1.8%	9.1%	-7.3%	No
<i><u>Among All Voters: Overall Vote</u></i>				
Yes	96.2%	88.0%	+8.2%	No
No	2.7%	8.9%	-6.2%	No
Did Not Vote on the Question	1.0%	3.1%	-2.1%	No
<i><u>Vote in Gubernatorial Election</u></i>				
JB Pritzker	91.8%	76.3%	+15.5%	Yes
Darren Bailey	6.5%	18.6%	-12.1%	Yes
Other or Did Not Vote for Anyone	1.7%	2.7%	-1.0%	No
<i><u>Agreement with Campaign Claims (0-10)</u></i>				
Guarantee Right to Join Unions for Raises, etc.	9.2	9.0	+0.2	No
Protect Freedom to Join Unions	9.1	8.7	+0.4	No
Prohibit Laws that Diminish Wages and Benefits	8.7	8.2	+0.5	No
Promote High-Quality Jobs	8.5	8.1	+0.4	No
Expand Workers Eligible to Join Unions	8.2	8.1	+0.1	No
Prevent Passage of a "Right-to-Work" Law	8.1	6.8	+1.3	Yes
Remove Collective Bargaining Rights from Politics	5.8	5.5	+0.3	No

Source(s): Authors' analysis of a May through August 2023 survey of 1,261 total union members in Illinois (Qualtrics, 2023). Union leaders N= 291 and MoE= ±5.7%; Rank-and-file members N= 970 and MoE= ±3.1%. Numbers may not sum perfectly due to rounding.

Elected local union officers and staff were highly informed about the Workers' Rights Amendment and voted with near universal support for both the Amendment and incumbent Governor JB Pritzker, according to the survey results (Figure 24). Fully 82 percent of elected officers and union staff said that

¹² Recall that, according to the U.S. Census Bureau, there were 7,937 employees on the payrolls of 778 establishments in Illinois for the 813930 NAICS code "labor unions and similar organizations" in 2021 (Census, 2023a). There are employed individuals. There are also unpaid and voluntary elected positions in at local unions, which would increase the population above 8,000 people.

they were either “extremely well” or “very well” informed about the Amendment prior to the election. Additionally, 92 percent said they voted for Governor Pritzker. Elected officers and union staff also placed more emphasis on banning so-called “right-to-work” laws in Illinois than rank-and-file members. But there was no major difference between leadership and the rank-and-file on any other survey item, including voting yes in favor of the Amendment. While union leaders’ yes share on the Amendment was higher, the difference was not statistically significant (Figure 24).

Elected officers and union staff very intensely agreed with six claims that were made about the Workers’ Rights Amendment (Figure 24). Union leaders strongly agree that the Workers’ Rights Amendment will guarantee the right to join a union to negotiate for pay raises, workplace safety, and a voice a work (9.2), protect the freedom of workers to join labor unions (9.1), prohibit laws that diminish worker wages and employment benefits (8.7), promote the development of high-quality jobs (8.5), expand the number of workers eligible to join unions (8.2), and prevent the passage of a “right-to-work” law in Illinois (8.1). Each of these responses scored higher than an 8 out of 10. “Remove collective bargaining rights from the discretion of legislators” received a 5.8 out of 10, indicating that union leaders moderately agreed with this seventh statement. When asked the most important reason for their vote on the Workers’ Rights Amendment, the top three reasons were to guarantee the right to join a union (50 percent), prevent the passage of “right-to-work” (26 percent), and prohibit laws that diminish wages and benefits (8 percent). The responses show that elected officers and union staff placed more emphasis on outlawing “right-to-work” in Illinois than rank-and-file members.

Impact of Union Member Voting on the Workers’ Rights Amendment’s Passage

This section incorporates results from the survey of Illinois union members along with two additional data sources to estimate the impact of the labor movement on the success of the Workers’ Rights Amendment. The first is “Voter Turnout History” information from the Illinois State Board of Elections over the past six general elections ([State Board of Elections, 2023](#)). The second is data from the *Current Population Survey Voting and Registration Supplement* (CPS Voter Supplement), a supplemental questionnaire to the monthly survey carried out by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics that is conducted biennially in November for every Congressional and Presidential election year ([Flood et al., 2023](#)). The CPS Voter Supplement includes information about whether an individual voted and can be broken down by state, but does not include questions regarding party affiliation or ideological preference. While CPS Voter Supplement data was only available through the 2020 election, it allows for an analysis of voting behaviors by union membership status.

Figure 25 displays *turnout rates* for Illinois voters in the last six general elections, including three Presidential election years and three midterms in which Illinois elected a Governor for a four-year term. Note that voter *turnout rates* equal the number of ballots cast by voters divided by the total number of registered voters in the state. In general, turnout rates exceed 70 percent in Presidential election years and tend to be around 50 percent in midterm elections in Illinois. In 2022, the 51 percent turnout rate was higher than 2014 (49 percent) but lower than 2018 (57 percent) (Figure 25).

The State of Illinois turnout data is not broken down by voters who are union members and voters who are not union members. To estimate the impact of union members, *Current Population Survey Voting and Registration Supplement* data can be utilized and introduced. However, the CPS Voter Supplement does not have an analogous “turnout rate” metric. As a result, Figure 26 shows an entirely different type of voter participation metric in Illinois.

FIGURE 25: REGISTERED VOTERS, BALLOTS CAST, AND OFFICIAL TURNOUT RATE IN ILLINOIS ELECTIONS, 2012-2022

Election Year	Type of General Election	Registered Voters	Ballots Cast	Turnout Rate
2012	Presidential	7,520,722	5,279,752	70.2%
2014	Midterm/Gubernatorial	7,483,031	3,680,417	49.2%
2016	Presidential	8,029,847	5,666,118	70.6%
2018	Midterm/Gubernatorial	8,099,372	4,635,541	57.2%
2020	Presidential	8,364,099	6,098,729	72.9%
2022	Midterm/Gubernatorial	8,115,751	4,144,125	51.1%

Source(s): Authors' analysis of "Voter Turnout History" for the 2012-2022 general elections from the Illinois State Board of Elections ([State Board of Elections, 2023](#)).

Figure 26 uses 2012 through 2020 CPS Voter Supplement data and calculates the *voter share of the total population aged 18 years old or older*. The total population includes those who are not registered, either by choice or because they are not eligible (for example, foreign-born noncitizens). The highest voter share of the total population (63 percent) occurred in the 2020 Presidential election year and the highest midterm voter share of the total population (49 percent) occurred in 2018. The voter share of the total population divided by the official turnout rate of registered voters ranged from 78 percent to 86 percent of the turnout rate between 2012 and 2020, with an average of 82 percent. Applying this average voter share-to-turnout rate ratio to 2022 would mean that approximately 42 percent of adult residents living in Illinois voted in the 2022 midterm election (Figure 26). This corroborates an alternative approach using data from the U.S. Census Bureau, which also finds that about 42 percent of all adults who lived in Illinois voted in 2022.¹³

FIGURE 26: SHARE OF THE POPULATION AGED 18 OR OLDER WHO VOTED VS. OFFICIAL TURNOUT RATE, 2012-2020

Election Year	Type of General Election	Voter Share of Total Population Aged 18+ (CPS)	Turnout Rate of Registered Voters (Official)	Voter Share (CPS) ÷ Turnout Rate (Official)
2012	Presidential	56.2%	70.2%	80.1%
2014	Midterm/Gubernatorial	38.3%	49.2%	77.8%
2016	Presidential	58.8%	70.6%	83.4%
2018	Midterm/Gubernatorial	48.7%	57.2%	85.1%
2020	Presidential	62.7%	72.9%	86.0%
2012-2020	Weighted Average*	52.9%	64.2%	82.4%
2022	<i>Estimated Voter Share of Population Aged 18+ in 2022</i>	42.1%	51.1%	82.4%

Source(s): Authors' analysis of 2012-2020 *Current Population Survey Voting and Registration Supplement* data for Illinois, adjusted using population weights provided by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics and U.S. Census Bureau ([Flood et al., 2023](#)); Authors' analysis of "Voter Turnout History" for the 2012-2022 general elections from the Illinois State Board of Elections ([State Board of Elections, 2023](#)). *NOTE: The weighted average is the sum of all individuals ages 18 years or older who said they voted in general elections from 2012 through 2020 divided by the sum of all individuals ages 18 years or older who said they lived in Illinois from 2012 through 2020 for the voting rate and the weighted average is the sum of all ballots cast in general elections from 2012 through 2020 divided by the sum of all registered voters from 2012 through 2020 for the turnout rate.

¹³ Here is the alternative data: The U.S. Census Bureau estimates that 12,582,032 million people lived in Illinois in 2022, of which 22.1 percent were under 18 years old and 77.9 percent were 18 years old or older ([Census, 2023b](#)). There were 4,144,126 total ballots cast in the 2022 election, according to the Illinois State Board of Elections ([State Board of Elections, 2022](#)). Mathematically, 4,144,126 voters ÷ (12,582,032 people x 77.9 percent adult share) = 42.3 percent of adults voting.

Data from the CPS Voter Supplement reveal that union members have higher voter participation rates than the rest of the adult Illinois population (Figure 27). In the five general elections between 2012 and 2020, nearly 66 percent of employed union members voted on average, 13 points higher than the average voter participation of the overall Illinois adult population (53 percent). In comparison, 52 percent of nonunion workers and 39 percent of adults without jobs but who were not yet retired voted in elections, on average. The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics does not ask retirees if they are or were union members, but retirees have a voting share of their total population (65 percent) that is similar to the comparable rate for actively employed union members (66 percent) (Figure 27).

The data further show that employed union members ages 18 years old and older had higher levels of voter participation than the overall adult population in Illinois in every election reviewed (Figure 28). Between 2012 and 2020, the share of union members in Illinois who voted exceeded the overall adult population who voted by between 6 and 18 percentage points, with a median of 12 percentage points. The average, as shown in Figure 27, was just under 13 percentage points. Figure 28 uses the median difference between union workers and the total adult population to conservatively estimate that 54 percent of all union members in Illinois, including both active and retired members, cast ballots in the 2022 midterm election.¹⁴

FIGURE 27: SHARE OF ADULTS WHO VOTED BY EMPLOYMENT, EDUCATION, AND GEOGRAPHIC VARIABLES, 2012-2020

Population Ages 18 Years and Older (CPS)	2012-2020 Voter Share of Total Population (of Group)	Difference vs. All Illinois Adults
Illinois Adult Population	52.9%	--
<i>By Employment and Union Status</i>		
All Adult Workers	54.1%	+1.2%
Union Members (Employed)	65.5%	+12.6%
Nonunion Workers (Employed)	51.7%	-1.2%
Not Employed, Non-Retirees	39.2%	-13.7%
Retirees	65.3%	+12.3%

Source(s): Authors' analysis of 2012-2020 *Current Population Survey Voting and Registration Supplement* data for Illinois, adjusted using population weights provided by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics and U.S. Census Bureau (Flood et al., 2023).

FIGURE 28: SHARES OF ADULTS AND UNION WORKERS WHO VOTED IN 2012-2020 ELECTIONS, WITH 2022 ESTIMATES

Voter Share of Total Population by Election Year	Total Adult Population	Union Workers	Union Difference
2012	56.2%	68.2%	+11.9%
2014	38.3%	56.5%	+18.2%
2016	58.8%	66.8%	+8.0%
2018	48.7%	54.8%	+6.1%
2020	62.7%	80.9%	+18.2%
2022 Estimate	42.1%	54.0%	+11.9%

Source(s): Authors' analysis of 2012-2020 *Current Population Survey Voting and Registration Supplement* data for Illinois, adjusted using population weights provided by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics and U.S. Census Bureau (Flood et al., 2023). 2022 estimate derived from turnout rate analysis using "Voter Turnout History" for the 2012-2022 general elections from the Illinois State Board of Elections (State Board of Elections, 2023). See Figure 26 and Figure 27 for more information.

¹⁴ The median difference of 11.9 percentage points is used to provide a *conservative* estimate since the average difference was 12.6 percent among employed union members and 12.3 percent among retirees, who are also included in the sample.

According to proprietary summary data on dues-paying union members by county of residence, there were about 956,800 union members affiliated with the Illinois AFL-CIO and the Illinois Education Association living in Illinois in 2022 (Figure 29). Assuming 54 percent of all union members voted in the election, then an estimated 516,700 union members cast ballots in 2022. Based on the results of this survey, an estimated 454,900 union members cast yes votes in favor of the Workers' Rights Amendment versus 61,800 who either voted no or did not vote on the question—an overall net yes of 393,100 ballots. The minimum estimate, consistent with survey findings and the margin of error of $\pm 3.2\%$, would be 364,000 net yes votes in favor of the Workers' Rights Amendment from union members alone (Figure 29).

The Workers' Rights Amendment needed 2.07 million yes votes to pass, because there were 4.14 million ballots cast in the election (Figure 30). It earned 2.21 million yes votes, enough to clear the win threshold by about 141,000 votes. This means that the estimated 393,100 vote net yes margin among union members meaningfully contributed to and likely was one of the largest voting blocs responsible for the success of the Workers' Rights Amendment. While union members accounted for an estimated 12 percent of all voters in the 2022 midterms in Illinois, they were responsible for 21 percent of all the yes votes on the Amendment, based on the results of this survey and previously mentioned assumptions (Figure 30).

FIGURE 29: ESTIMATING THE VOTE TOTALS OF ILLINOIS UNION MEMBERS ON THE WORKERS' RIGHTS AMENDMENT, 2022

Estimating Union Members Votes on the Workers' Rights Amendment	Estimated Value
Total Union Members	956,837
Total Union Voters (54.0% Voter Share)	516,692
Yes Voters (88.0% from Survey)	454,902
No Voters or Not Voting (12.0% from Survey)	-61,790
Estimated Net Yes Votes	+393,112
<u>Lowest Number of Yes Votes</u>	
Margin of Error (MoE)	$\pm 3.2\%$
Yes Voters (84.8% from Survey)	440,345
No Voters or Not Voting (15.2% from Survey)	-76,347
Minimum Number of Net Yes Votes	+363,998

Source(s): Authors' analysis of a May through August 2023 survey of 970 rank-and-file union members in Illinois (Question N= 960 and MoE= $\pm 3.2\%$) and 2012-2020 *Current Population Survey Voting and Registration Supplement* data for Illinois, with 2022 estimate derived from turnout rate analysis using "Voter Turnout History" for the 2012-2022 general elections (Qualtrics, 2023; Flood et al., 2023; State Board of Elections, 2023). See Figures 12, 26, 27, and 28 for more information.

FIGURE 30: ILLINOIS UNION MEMBERS' SHARES OF BALLOTS CAST AND YES VOTES ON THE AMENDMENT, 2022

Metrics on Ballots Cast, Yes Votes, and the Workers' Rights Amendment Win Margin	Official Results	Estimated Union Member Results	Estimated Union Member Share
Majority Threshold (50% + 1 of Ballots Cast)	2,072,063	--	--
Total Ballots Cast	4,144,125	516,692	12.5%
Actual (Estimated) Yes Votes	2,212,999	454,902	20.6%
Amendment Win Margin vs. Net Yes Votes	+140,937	+393,112	2.8x

Source(s): Authors' analysis of Illinois' *Official Canvas* of the General Election on November 8, 2022, a May through August 2023 survey of 970 rank-and-file union members in Illinois (Question N= 960 and MoE= $\pm 3.2\%$), and 2012-2020 *Current Population Survey Voting and Registration Supplement* data for Illinois, with 2022 estimate derived from turnout rate analysis using "Voter Turnout History" for the 2012-2022 general elections (State Board of Elections, 2022; Qualtrics, 2023; Flood et al., 2023; State Board of Elections, 2023). See Figures 1, 12, 26, 27, and 28 for more information.

Figure 31 shows a series of hypothetical situations in which the Workers' Rights Amendment would not have been successful if union members were not as broadly supportive. Suppose, for example, that only half of all union members voted in favor of the Amendment. In that scenario, the Amendment would have received an estimated 258,300 yes votes from union members, down from about 473,300. Instead of 2.21 million yes votes, the total number of yes votes across the state would have fallen by nearly 197,000 to 2.02 million yes votes. This would have been shy of the 2.07 million votes needed to pass, and the Workers' Rights Amendment would have lost. Similarly, if 60 percent of union members backed the Amendment, it would have received 4,000 votes below the 2.07 million-vote majority threshold necessary for passage. The data reveal that Workers' Rights Amendment required approval from about two-thirds of all union voters to become enshrined in the Illinois Constitution, which was well above the level of support provided by Illinois voters overall (53 percent among all ballots cast and 59 percent among those answering the question). In the end, union members delivered with overwhelming and broad-based support (Figure 31).

FIGURE 31: THE IMPACT OF ILLINOIS UNION MEMBERS ON PASSAGE OF THE WORKERS' RIGHTS AMENDMENT, 2022

Estimating the Impact of Union Members on the Passage of the Workers' Rights Amendment	Illinois Union Members
Total Union Members	956,837
Total Union Voters (54.0% Voter Share)	516,692
Yes Share	88.0%
No or Not Voting Share	12.0%
Estimated Yes Votes	454,902
Estimated No Votes or Nonvoters	-61,790
Net Yes Votes	+393,112
Exceeds Win Margin of 140,937?	Yes
<u>Hypothetical: What If Support Was 50% Yes?</u>	
Hypothetical Yes Votes from Union Members	258,346
Hypothetical New Total Yes Votes	2,016,443
Majority Threshold Needed to Pass	2,072,063
<i>Amendment Outcome</i>	<i>Loss</i>
<u>Hypothetical: What If Support Was 60% Yes?</u>	
Hypothetical Yes Votes from Union Members	310,015
Hypothetical New Total Yes Votes	2,068,112
Majority Threshold Needed to Pass	2,072,063
<i>Amendment Outcome</i>	<i>Loss</i>
<u>Hypothetical: What If Support Was ⅔ Yes?</u>	
Hypothetical Yes Votes from Union Members	344,461
Hypothetical New Total Yes Votes	2,102,558
Majority Threshold Needed to Pass	2,072,063
<i>Amendment Outcome</i>	<i>Win</i>

Source(s): Authors' analysis of a May through August 2023 survey of 970 rank-and-file union members in Illinois (Question N= 960 and MoE= ±3.2%), Illinois' *Official Canvas* of the General Election on November 8, 2022, and 2012-2020 *Current Population Survey Voting and Registration Supplement* data for Illinois, with 2022 estimate derived from turnout rate analysis using "Voter Turnout History" for the 2012-2022 general elections (Qualtrics, 2023; State Board of Elections, 2023; Flood et al., 2023; State Board of Elections, 2023). See Figures 1, 12, 26, 27, and 28 for more information.

FIGURE 32: THE IMPACT OF ILLINOIS UNION MEMBERS ON PASSAGE OF THE AMENDMENT BY GEOGRAPHY, 2022

Estimating the Impact of Union Members on the Workers' Rights Amendment By Geography	Chicago Area Members	Downstate Members
Total Union Members	612,001	344,836
Total Union Voters (54.0% Voter Share)	330,481	186,211
Yes Share	92.2%	84.2%
No or Not Voting Share	7.8%	15.8%
Estimated Yes Votes	304,703	156,790
Estimated No Votes or Nonvoters	-25,778	-29,421
Net Yes Votes	+278,926	+127,368
Hypothetical: What If Support Was 50% Yes?		
Hypothetical Yes Votes from Union Members	165,240	93,105
Hypothetical New Total Yes Votes	2,073,536	2,149,314
Majority Threshold Needed to Pass	2,072,063	2,072,063
<i>Amendment Outcome</i>	<i>Win</i>	<i>Win</i>

Source(s): Authors' analysis of a May through August 2023 survey of 970 rank-and-file union members in Illinois (Chicago Area N= 513 and MoE= ±4.3%; Downstate N= 430 and MoE= ±4.7%), Illinois' *Official Canvas* of the General Election on November 8, 2022, and 2012-2020 *Current Population Survey Voting and Registration Supplement* data for Illinois, with 2022 estimate derived from turnout rate analysis using "Voter Turnout History" for the 2012-2022 general elections (Qualtrics, 2023; State Board of Elections, 2023; Flood et al., 2023; State Board of Elections, 2023). See Figures 1, 18, 26, 27, and 28 for more information.

FIGURE 33: THE IMPACT OF ILLINOIS UNION MEMBERS ON PASSAGE OF THE WORKERS' RIGHTS AMENDMENT, 2022

Estimating the Impact of Moderate and Conservative Members on the Amendment	Moderate Members	Conservative Members	Both Moderate and Conservative Members
Total Union Members	956,837	956,837	956,837
Share of Sample	32.0%	26.5%	58.4%
Estimated Union Members	305,988	253,163	559,152
Total Union Voters (54.0% Voter Share)	165,234	136,708	301,942
Yes Share	92.8%	66.5%	80.9%
No or Not Voting Share	7.2%	33.5%	19.1%
Estimated Yes Votes	153,393	90,959	244,352
Estimated No Votes or Nonvoters	-11,841	-45,749	-57,590
Net Yes Votes	+141,552	+45,211	+186,763
Hypothetical: What If Support Was 1/3 Yes?			
Hypothetical Yes Votes from Union Members	55,078	45,569	100,647
Hypothetical New Total Yes Votes	2,114,684	2,167,609	2,069,294
Majority Threshold Needed to Pass	2,072,063	2,072,063	2,072,063
<i>Amendment Outcome</i>	<i>Win</i>	<i>Win</i>	<i>Loss</i>

Source(s): Authors' analysis of a May through August 2023 survey of 970 rank-and-file union members in Illinois (Liberal voters N= 399 and MoE= ±4.9%; Moderate voters N= 307 and MoE= ±5.6%; Conservative N= 254 and MoE= ±6.2%), Illinois' *Official Canvas* of the General Election on November 8, 2022, and 2012-2020 *Current Population Survey Voting and Registration Supplement* data for Illinois, with 2022 estimate derived from turnout rate analysis using "Voter Turnout History" for the 2012-2022 general elections (Qualtrics, 2023; State Board of Elections, 2023; Flood et al., 2023; State Board of Elections, 2023). See Figures 1, 16, 26, 27, and 28 for more information.

The impact of union members on the Workers' Rights Amendment's passage can be further explored by region and ideological preference. For example, Figure 32 shows that Chicago area union members were

responsible for an estimated 304,700 yes votes versus 25,800 no votes and ballots that skipped the question, for a net yes of 278,900 ballots in favor. Similarly, Downstate union members were responsible for an estimated 156,800 yes votes versus about 29,400 no votes and ballots that skipped the question, for a net yes of just under 127,400 ballots in favor of the Workers' Rights Amendment. Either way, the success of the Workers' Rights Amendment could be attributed to union members either Downstate or in the Chicago area, both of whom delivered enough yes votes to get the Amendment over the majority threshold necessary for passage (Figure 32).

Similarly, moderate and conservative union members could also be considered responsible for the Amendment's victory (Figure 33). These members delivered a combined 186,800 net yes votes—which exceeded the final win margin of just under 141,000. When separated out, moderate union members were key drivers of the Amendment's success, producing 141,600 net yes votes. However, conservative union members still added an estimated 45,200 net yes votes. Furthermore, taken together, if only one-third of both moderate and conservative union members had voted in favor of the Amendment, then the number of yes votes from these union members would have decreased from about 244,400 to 100,700, or by 143,700 votes, and the Amendment would have been narrowly defeated (Figure 33).

Conclusion

The data reveal that the union voting bloc was a strong contributing factor to the success of Illinois' Workers' Rights Amendment in the 2022 midterm election. Nine-in-10 union members voted in favor of the Amendment, including more than 8-in-10 in Downstate communities and more than 6-in-10 conservative-leaning and Republican union members. Union endorsements and literature were influential in shaping how Illinois union members voted on the Workers' Rights Amendment, as were conversations they had with their fellow union members. Union members were motivated to vote yes to guarantee workers' rights to join unions and to promote good middle-class jobs, safer workplaces, higher levels of worker job satisfaction, and a stronger overall economy for Illinois.

Passage of the Workers' Rights Amendment occurred at a time when public approval of labor unions reached its highest level in six decades, with seven-in-10 Americans approving of labor unions—including majorities of Democrats, Republicans, and independents (McCarthy, 2022). Public opinion polls in 2023 continue to show that over two-thirds of all Americans and 71 percent of registered voters approve of unions (Saad, 2023; GBAO, 2023). Following passage of the Workers' Rights Amendment in Illinois, Michigan became the first state in 58 years to repeal a "right-to-work" statute, with the new law going into effect in February 2024 (Cappelletti, 2023; Pecor, 2023). Additionally, lawmakers in Pennsylvania and California introduced bills in 2023 to allow voters to decide whether to add Workers' Rights Amendments to their respective state constitutions (AP, 2023; LegiScan, 2023). With public approval of labor unions remaining at a six-decade high, additional states may consider codifying collective bargaining rights into their constitutions. The experience in Illinois proves that these efforts can be bipartisan and include support from a broad base of union voters.

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