National Worker Survey

Conducted August 8-18, 2026

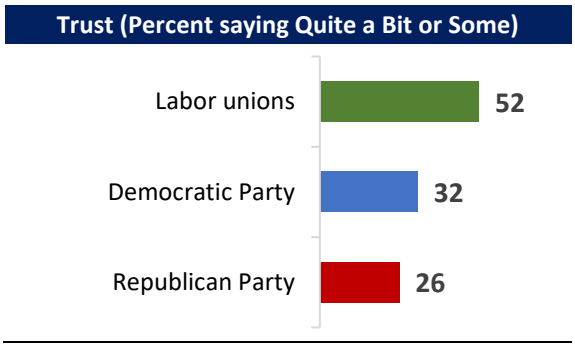
David Binder Research

Summary

1. Workers trust labor unions far more than they trust either political party.

Seven in ten workers (voters working or looking for work) say things in the country are off on the wrong track, while just 24% say things are headed in the right direction.

In this environment, where opinion on the direction of the country is negative and trust in institutions is also low, most workers trust labor unions (52%). Trust in unions exceeds trust in the Democratic Party by 20 points (52% to 32%), and workers are twice as likely to trust unions than to trust the Republican Party (52% to 26%).



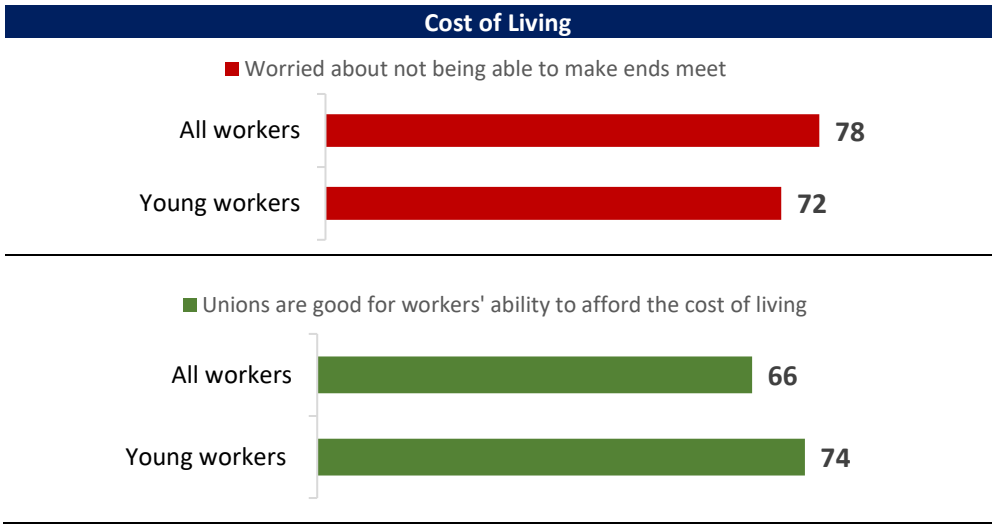
Young workers (age 18-30) trust labor unions (61%) more than twice as much as they trust the Democratic Party (28%) or the Republican Party (22%). Among young men, the trust gap is 40 points between unions and Democrats (63% to 23%) and 43 points between unions and Republicans (63% to 20%).

Along with trust in unions, workers' trust in their own neighbors stands out, with 75% saying they trust their neighbors.

2. While cost of living remains a dominant concern for workers, most see unions as good for affordability.

Over three in four employed workers—78%—say they are worried about not being able to make ends meet. Concern about retirement is also very high, with 82% of workers saying they are worried about it.

At the same time, most see unions as good for affordability. Asked whether unions are good or bad for workers across a range of issues, two in three workers (66%) say unions are good for workers' ability to afford the cost of living. That includes three in four young workers (74%).

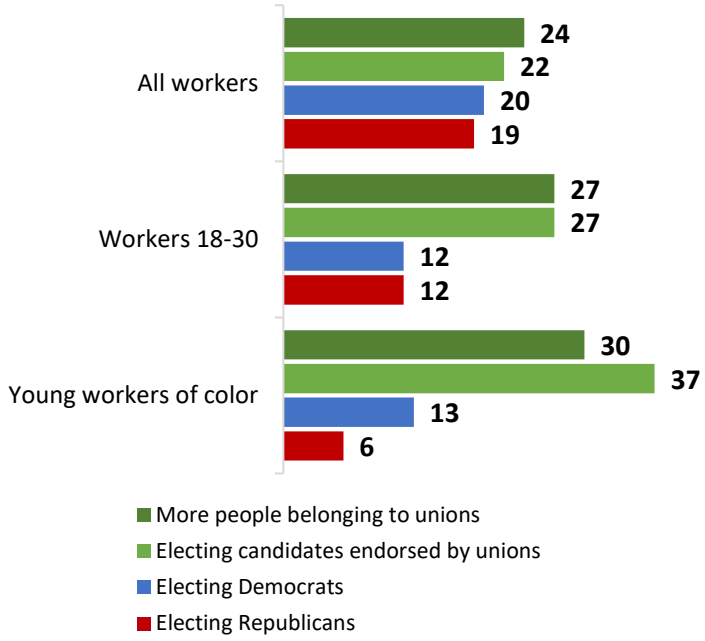


3. Asked the best path to higher wages, workers choose unions over either party.

Workers were given choices of the best way for most people to get higher wages, and they were allowed to choose one or two options. Workers are more likely to say the path to higher wages is through more people belonging to unions (24%) or electing candidates endorsed by unions (22%) than through electing Democrats (20%) or Republicans (19%).

Young workers are even more likely to say increased union membership (27%) or electing union-endorsed candidates (27%) than to say electing either Democrats (12%) or Republicans (12%). Among young workers of color, 37% say union candidates and 30% say union membership are the best way to higher wages, while 13% say electing Democrats and 6% say electing Republicans.

Best way for most people to get wage increases



4. Workers say unions are needed now more than ever.

Asked whether unions are more needed or less needed today to help workers get the pay, benefits, and respect they deserve, six in ten (59%) say unions are more needed today than in the past. This includes two in three young workers (67%) and eight in ten young workers of color (81%).

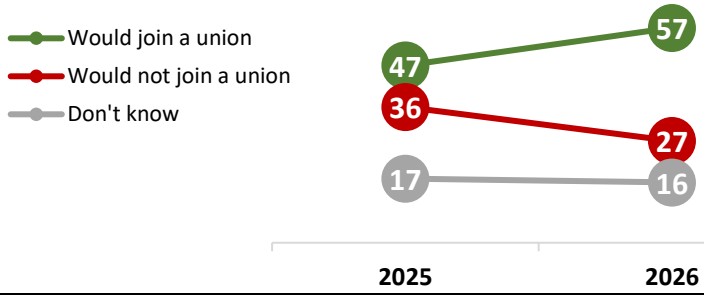
Most young workers want a union they don't have: 57% of young workers who aren't in a union say they'd join one at their most recent workplace if they had the option. That is a 10-point increase among young workers compared to a year ago.

Do you think labor unions are more or less needed today to help workers get the pay, benefits, and respect they deserve than in the past?

	More Needed	Less Needed	Don't know
All workers	**59**	**27**	**14**
Workers 18-30	**67**	**24**	**8**
Young workers of color	**81**	**14**	**4**

If you had the option to join a union in your most recent place of employment, would you join or not join?

Among Young Workers Not in a Union



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Methodology

In partnership with the AFL-CIO, David Binder Research conducted a survey of 1,500 registered voters from voter files, including an oversample of 300 voters age 18 to 30, and 900 union members drawn from union lists. Results for workers are based on the 1,512 respondents who are working, looking for work, or a current union member. Interviews were conducted by phone, including cell and landlines, and online with respondents recruited by text message. Interviews were offered in English and Spanish. The margin of error for workers is ±2.5%, for union members it is ±3.1%, and it is larger for subgroups.