

New Strategies for an Evolving Workforce

National Council of State Legislatures
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Economic Policy Institute
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Greetings from EPI - the Economic Policy Institute

Core research and policy areas:

- Jobs and employment
- Inequality
- Race and ethnicity in labor markets
- Unions and collective bargaining
- Budget, taxes, and public investment

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[Teacher Shortage](#) [Domestic Workers](#) [Older Americans](#) [CEO Pay](#) ▶

Pandemic exacerbated the teacher shortage

The teacher shortage is a long-standing, widespread problem, but the pandemic made it worse. Solutions must address root causes by raising teacher pay and improving working conditions. [Read the report](#)

RELATED

The teacher pay penalty has hit a new high

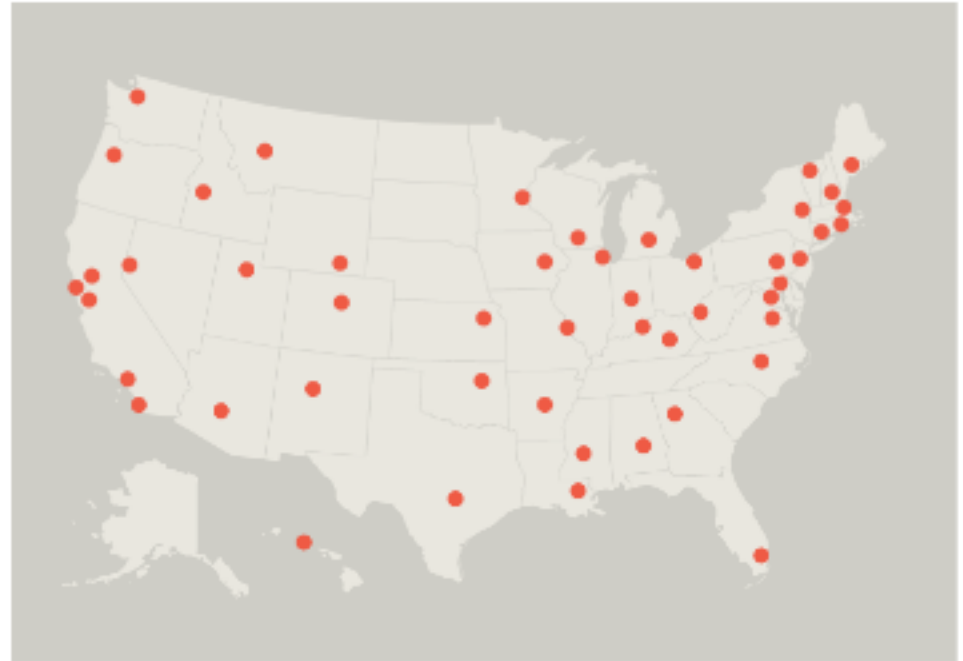
Teachers' unions reduce teacher stress. Anti-union laws significantly increase it.



Network of 56 state
and local groups in 45
states and DC

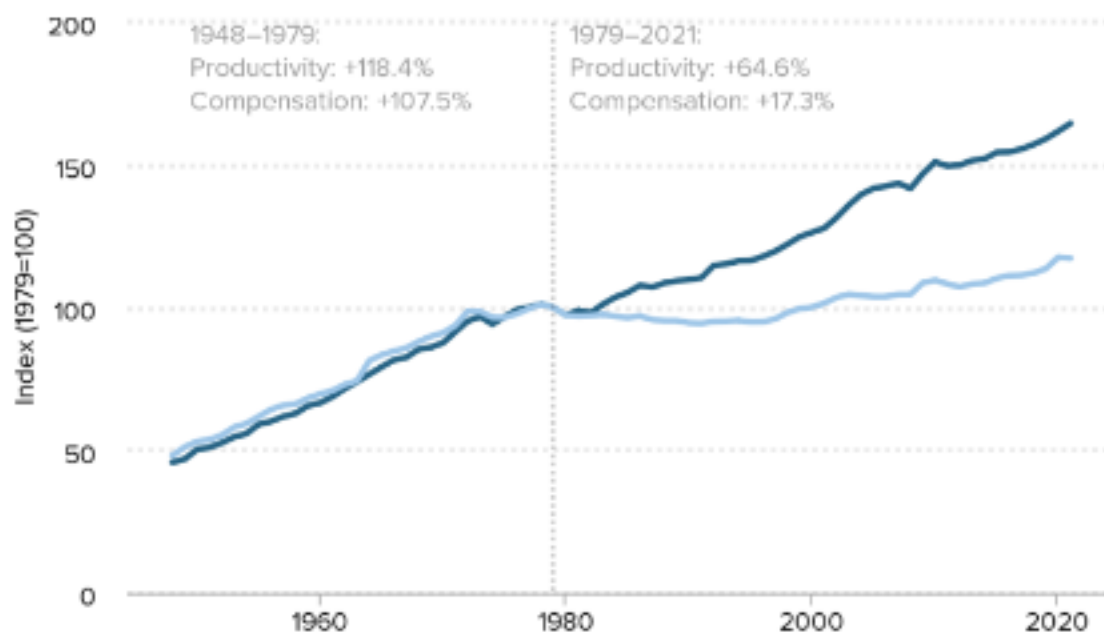
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The gap between productivity and a typical worker's compensation has increased dramatically since 1979

Productivity growth and hourly compensation growth, 1948–2021



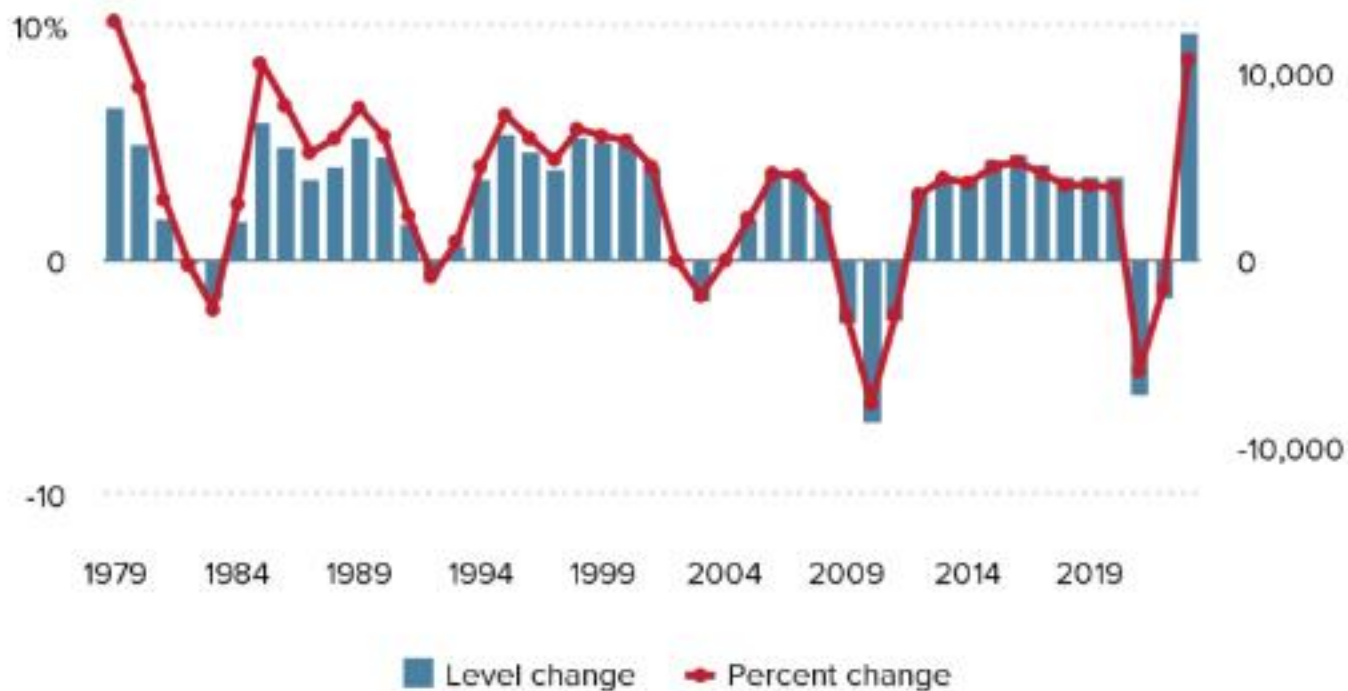
Notes: Data are for compensation (wages and benefits) of production/nonsupervisory workers in the private sector and net productivity of the total economy. "Net productivity" is the growth of output of goods and services less depreciation per hour worked.

Source: EPI analysis of unpublished Total Economy Productivity data from Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) Labor Productivity and Costs program, wage data from the BLS Current Employment Statistics, BLS Employment Cost Trends, BLS Consumer Price Index, and Bureau of Economic Analysis National Income and Product Accounts.

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Policy investments meant the best two-year stretch of job creation since 1979

Level and percent change in two-year job growth, January over January, 1979–2023

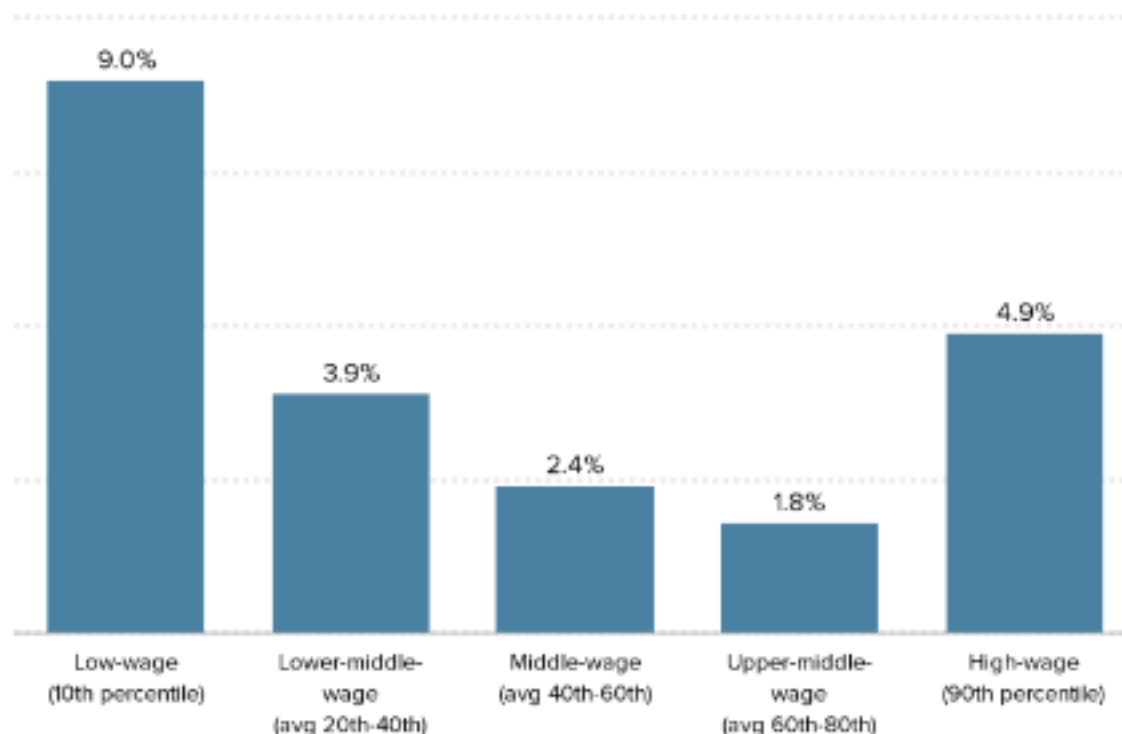


Source: EPI analysis of Bureau of Labor Statistics' Current Employment Statistics public data series.

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The lowest-wage workers had the strongest wage growth during the pandemic

Real wage growth across the wage distribution, 2019–2022



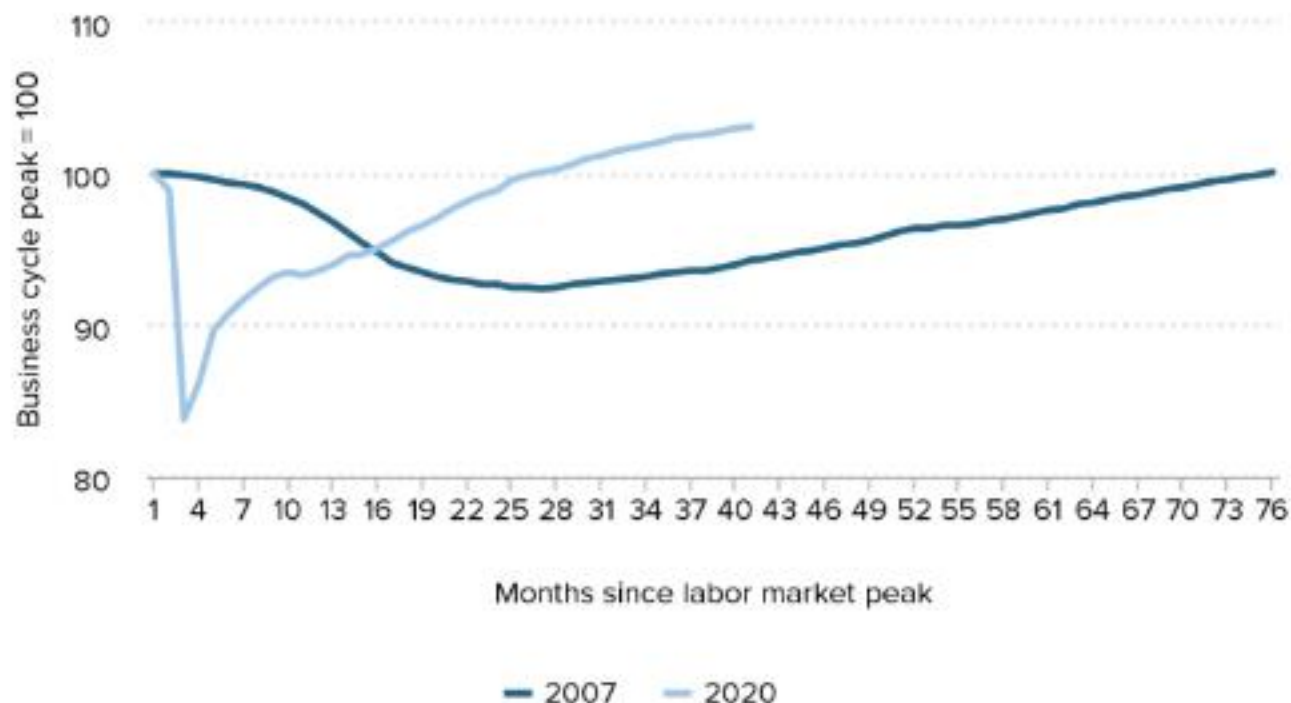
Notes: Low-wage is represented by the 10th percentile and high-wage is represented by the 90th percentile. The lower-middle, middle, and upper-middle-wages are the averages of the 20th–40th percentiles, the 40th–60th percentiles, and the 60th–80th percentiles, respectively.

Source: EPI analysis of the Current Population Survey Outgoing Rotation Group microdata, EPI Current Population Survey Extracts, Version 1.0.37 (2023), <https://microdata.epi.org>.

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Federal fiscal relief at the scale of the problem led to a faster recovery from the pandemic recession

Private-sector employment change since business cycle peak, December 2007 and February 2020



Source: EPI analysis of Bureau of Labor Statistics' Current Employment Statistics public data series.

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Prime-Age Employment-to-Population Ratio: It took 3.5 times longer to recover the pre-recession peak following the Great Recession than following the Covid Recession



Employment-to-population ratio of workers ages 25–54, by gender, 1989–2023

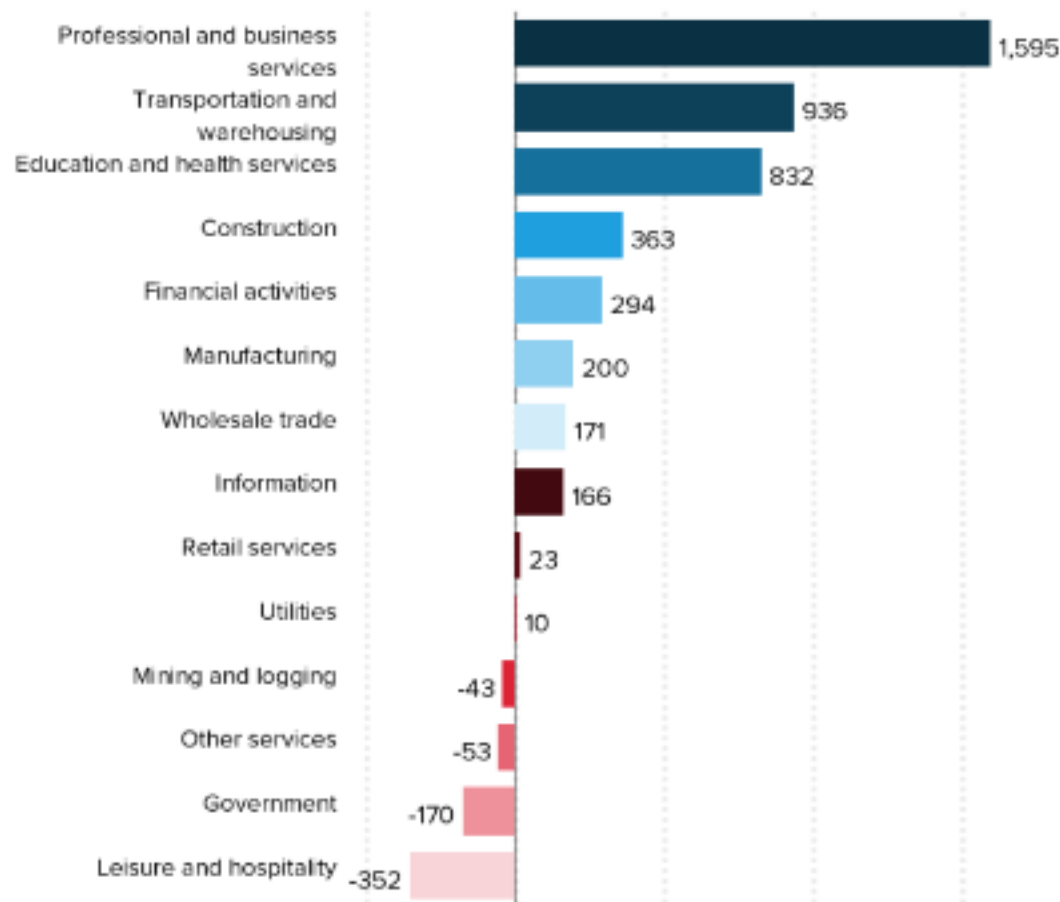


Source: EPI analysis of Bureau of Labor Statistics' Current Population Survey public data.

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Employment change by industry since February 2020

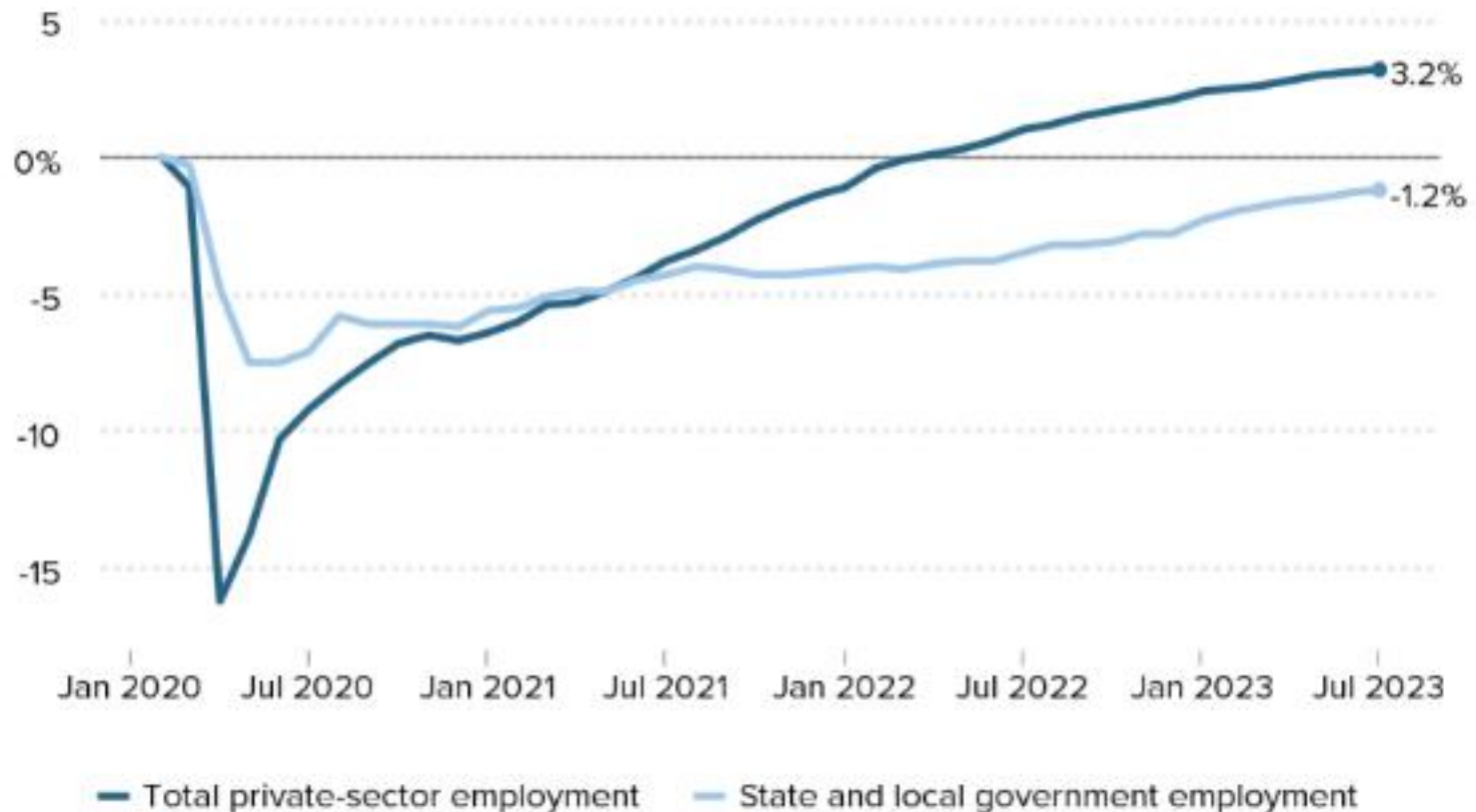
All employees (thousands), seasonally adjusted, July 2023



Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics' (BLS) Current Employment Statistics, Establishment Survey (CES) public data series.

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Percent change in payrolls since February 2020, for all private and state and local government employment

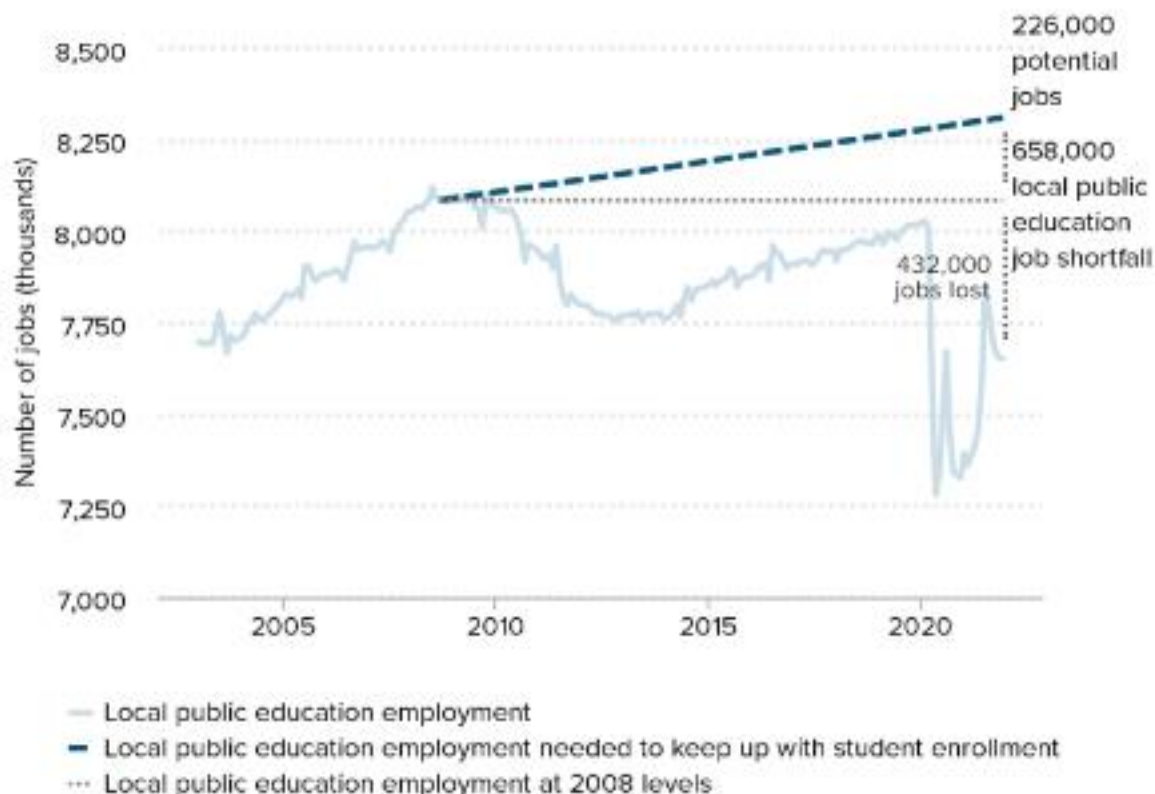


Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics' (BLS) Current Employment Statistics, Establishment Survey (CES) public data series.

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Public K–12 education employment has collapsed

Local public education employment and employment needed to keep up with enrollment, 2003–2021



Source: Reproduced from Gould 2020, "Public Education Job Losses in April Are Already Greater Than in All of the Great Recession." EPI analysis of data from the Current Employment Statistics public data series and U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics.

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State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds, 10 lowest-spending and highest-spending states

	States	Average share of SLFRF spent	Change in state government employment, Feb 2020–May 2023
Lowest-spending states	Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, Missouri, Mississippi, South Dakota, Florida, Nebraska, Montana, Alabama	8.4%	-3.6%
Highest-spending states	Minnesota, Alaska, Maryland, Hawaii, Pennsylvania, California, Illinois, Washington, Oregon, Texas	74.5%	-1.8%

Source: EPI analysis of [U.S. Treasury Department SLFRF](#) spending data, Bureau of Labor Statistics' (BLS) Current Employment Statistics, Establishment Survey (CES) public data series.

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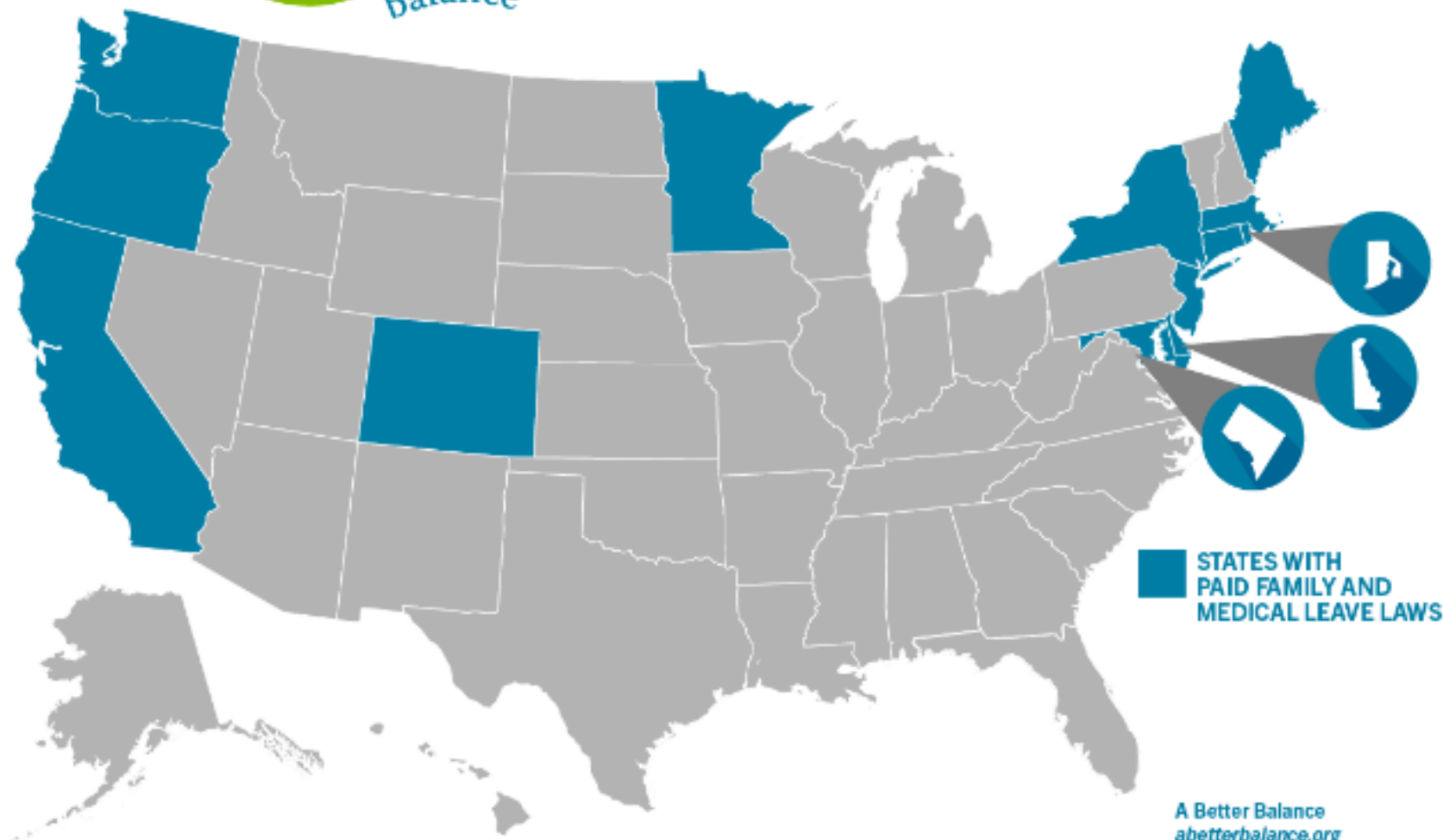
State Hospital Staffing Laws



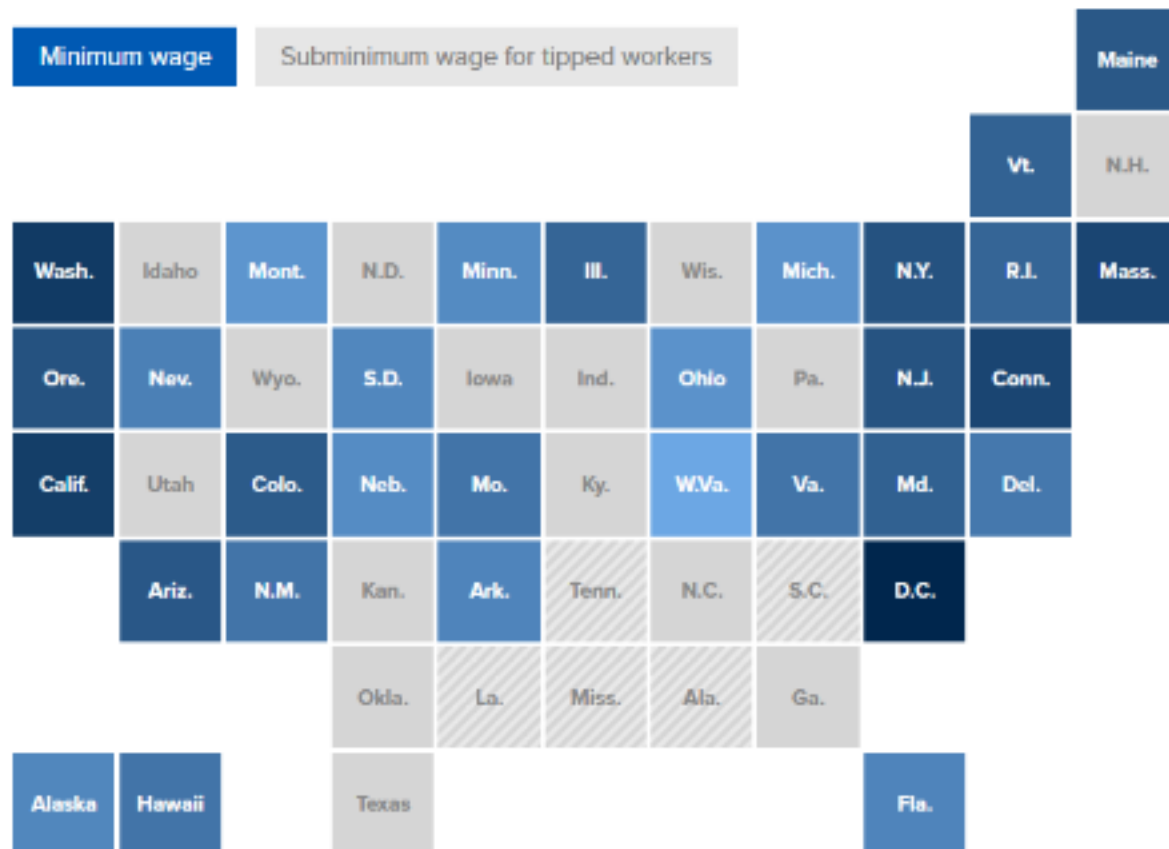
13 states + DC have Paid Family & Medical Leave Laws

*a better
balance*

MAP OF PAID FAMILY & MEDICAL LEAVE LAWS



30 states + DC have minimum wage higher than federal level



Federal

Minimum wage: **\$7.25**
 Tipped wage: **\$2.13**

Most recent increase
 \$6.55 to \$7.25, effective July 24, 2009

Most recent major change to minimum wage law
 2007

Upcoming increases
 n/a

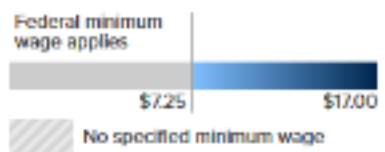
Indexing
 n/a

Notes
 The Fair Labor Standards Act excludes any business with gross annual revenue less than \$500,000 whose employees do not engage in "interstate commerce." It also contains a variety of smaller occupational exclusions, such as those for telephone switchboard operators, private investigators, and babysitters.

Filter states

Minimum wage or equal to

Increased the minimum wage in the last



Workers in states paying only the federal minimum wage are much more likely to be paid less than \$15 per hour

	Share of workers paid less than \$15	Number of workers paid less than \$15
<i>States (and DC) that have a minimum wage higher than \$7.25</i>	13%	11,345,000
<i>States where the minimum wage is \$7.25</i>	19%	9,768,000

Source: Authors' [analysis](#) of EPI Current Population Survey microdata [extracts](#), December 2021–November 2022 Current Population Survey.

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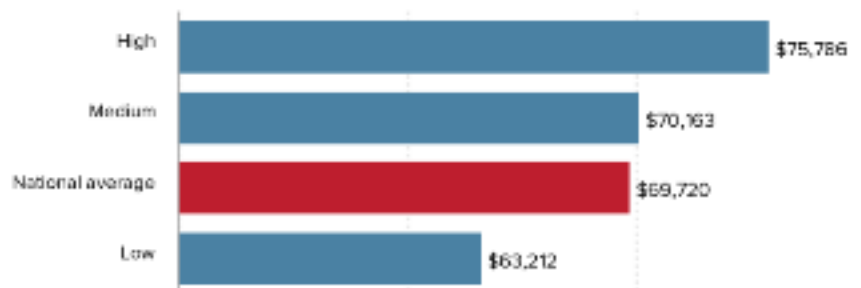
Years of EPI research shows unions improve quality of life & reduce inequality *in and beyond individual workplaces*

Unions have positive, measurable impact on...

- Union members *and* workers without unions
- Wages, benefits, standards within occupations and across economy
- Racial and gender equity, closing income gaps
- Democracy, voter participation, civic engagement

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

Average median household income (2019) in high-, medium-, and low-union-density states



Maximizing opportunities presented by federal BIL, IRA, CHIPS Act investments

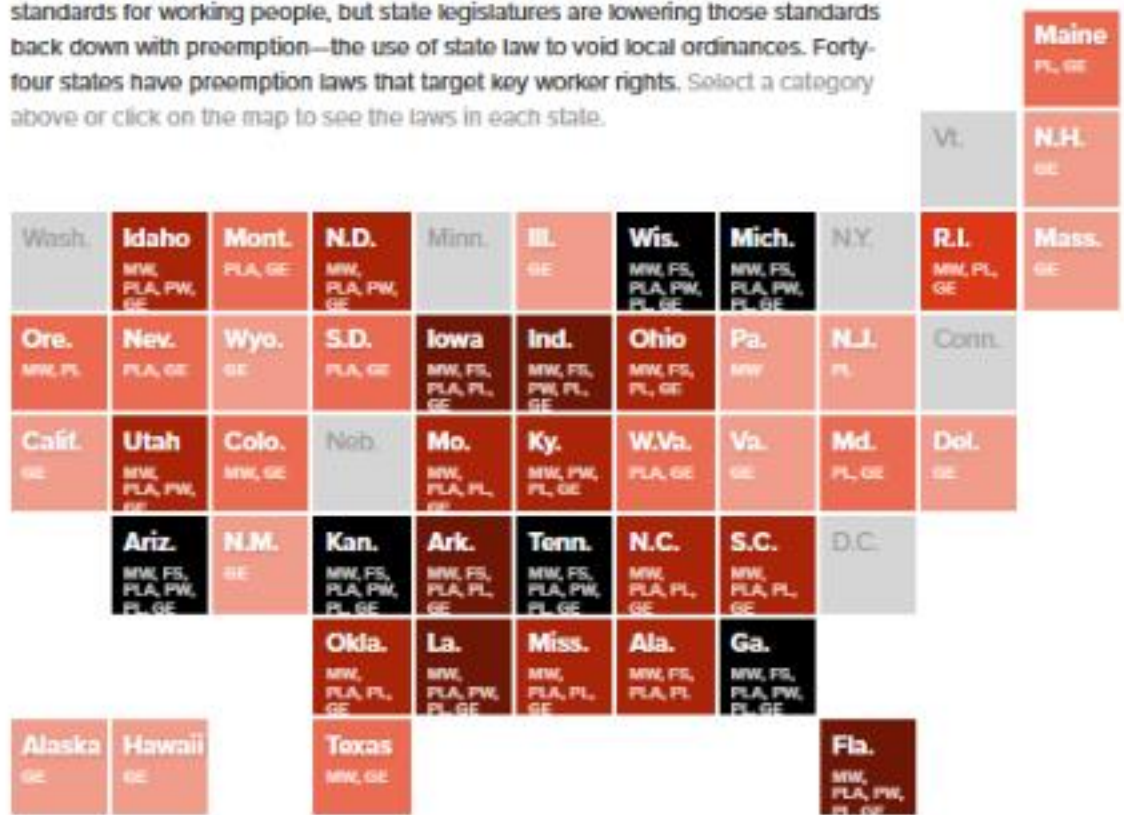
Key state/local labor policy tools to shape job quality, equity outcomes of clean energy, infrastructure investments

- Prevailing wage
- Apprentice utilization
- Project labor agreements or community benefits agreements
- Local/targeted hire, equity programs, pre-apprenticeship, workforce wrap-around services
- Responsible bidder laws, contractor compliance with fed and state labor laws, “labor peace” agreements, etc.

For states: Ensuring local control is one key to maximizing impact of federal investments

- Overview
- Minimum wage (MW)
- Fair scheduling (FS)
- Project labor agreements (PLA)
- Prevailing wage (PW)
- Paid leave (PL)
- Gig economy (GE)

Cities, counties, and other local governments are enacting policies that raise standards for working people, but state legislatures are lowering those standards back down with preemption—the use of state law to void local ordinances. Forty-four states have preemption laws that target key worker rights. Select a category above or click on the map to see the laws in each state.



Alabama

Alabama has preemption laws for:

- Minimum wage (2016)
- Fair scheduling (2016)
- Project labor agreements (2016)
- Paid leave (2014)

Registered Apprenticeship & Pre-Apprenticeship

'We're building our streets' Building Futures program opens doors to construction industry

by Kate Siefert | Fri, March 3rd 2023, 10:22 AM EST



Building Futures is a 12-week training program that equips members of underserved communities with the basic construction skills they need for a building trades apprenticeship. After graduating, participants are placed into an apprenticeship program with a local union. 1/15/23



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APPRENTICESHIP RESOURCES**

Building equity into workforce development systems



[Pre-Apprenticeship Program](#) →

Learn about a career in the trades with 200+ hours of hands-on and classroom training. Building Pathways will provide you with the knowledge and skills you need to enter and succeed in a registered union apprenticeship program.



[Northeast Center for Tradeswomen Equity](#) →

Our "Build a Life" program is dedicated to educating women about careers in the skilled construction trades. Tradeswomen Tuesday happens at 5pm on the first Tuesday of each month.



[Care That Works](#) →

A coalition of grassroots community groups and labor unions working to create a more equitable and accessible child care system.



[RISE Up](#) →

A Respectful Workplace Program providing tools and support to create and maintain safe, inclusive and productive work sites for everyone.

News



SEIU Healthcare NW Training Partnership SpotLight

NJ Healthcare Employers
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Stay in touch!

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