



Private Sector Bargaining Update

Welcome!

- Please put your name, title and local/council in the chat.
- Slides and recording will be made available on the AFSCME Staff Portal. <https://afscmestaff.org/>
- Zoom Poll



Private Sector Bargaining Update

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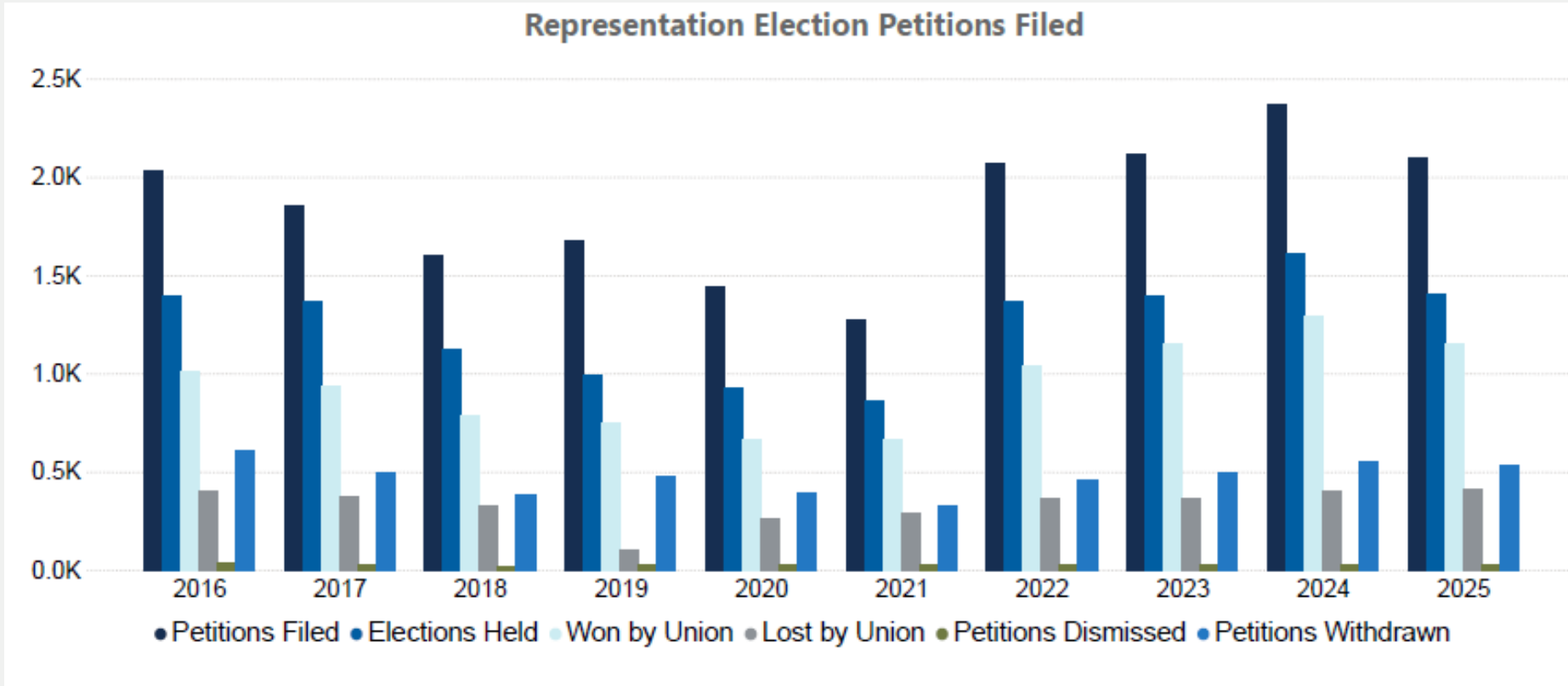
Agenda

- Private sector bargaining landscape
- Advantages and challenges of private sector bargaining
- Key differences and similarities
- RCBS Resources



Private Sector Bargaining Landscape

2025 Private Sector Organizing



2025 Private Sector Union Density

The union membership rate in the private sector, at 5.9%, was unchanged over the year.



NLRB Developments

- NLRB vacancies and delay in decisions
- Biden era improvements likely will be overturned
- June 2026 - House passes bill to shorten first contract timeline (Faster Labor Contracts Act HR 5408)



What Ends When Contract Expires



- Management rights clause
- Grievance arbitration (or interest arbitration if in CBA).
- No strike/no lockout
- Agency fee provisions (but dues checkoff survives for now)
- NLRB deferral of disputes to (now inactive) grievance procedure

Wage Settlement Trends

First Year Increases

	Lump Sums Not Factored					
	Year-to-date 2026			Year-to-date 2025		
	Wgt. Avg.	Average	Median	Wgt. Avg.	Average	Median
All settlements ...	5.1%	4.8%	4.0%	6.1%	5.5%	4.5%
All settlements, excluding construction & state and local government ...	5.5%	5.0%	4.6%	6.7%	6.3%	5.0%
Manufacturing ...	4.6%	5.1%	5.0%	8.4%	7.0%	5.5%
Nonmanufacturing, excluding construction ...	5.7%	5.0%	4.5%	6.6%	6.2%	5.0%
Construction ...	(¹)	(¹)	(¹)	(¹)	(¹)	(¹)
State and local government ...	3.4%	4.3%	3.5%	3.8%	3.9%	4.0%

	Lump Sums Factored					
	Year-to-date 2026			Year-to-date 2025		
	Wgt. Avg.	Average	Median	Wgt. Avg.	Average	Median
All settlements ...	5.8%	5.2%	4.7%	6.4%	5.7%	4.8%
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Manufacturing ...	6.8%	6.3%	5.8%	8.4%	7.2%	6.0%
Nonmanufacturing, excluding construction ...	6.4%	5.6%	5.0%	6.9%	6.4%	5.2%
Construction ...	(¹)	(¹)	(¹)	(¹)	(¹)	(¹)
State and local government ...	3.5%	4.4%	3.9%	3.8%	4.0%	4.0%

¹ Insufficient data

Source: As of June 3, 2026. Bloomberg Law



2026 AFSCME Unit Highlights



2026 AFSCME Unit Highlights

- February- Kaiser
- April- Museum of Contemporary Art first contract
- June- Denver Art Museum first contract
- Please share your wins! 

Large Group Discussion:

What are the challenges of private sector bargaining right now?



Challenges

- Less transparency (e.g. financial statements)
- Prevalence of union-busting firms and consultants
- Union Rights will be a fight (e.g. just cause is not a given)
- Changing ownership and/or closures
- Outsourcing threat
- NLRB enforcement slow and limited

Large Group Discussion:

What are some advantages of private sector bargaining vs. public sector bargaining?



Advantages

- Leverage of striking
- Targeting profits
- Flexibility with management rights and permissive subjects
- Less red tape!

Key Differences

- NLRA regulates
- Decision-makers
- Transparency (financials, closed meetings etc.)
- OSHA
- What else?

Key Similarities

- Same fundamentals and processes
- ULPs are similar
- Contract language is usually transferable
- Same need to escalate outside the table
- What else?

RCBS resources

→ Financial analysis

→ Wage data

→ [Contracts Database](https://afscmeseaearch.contentdm.oclc.org/)

[<https://afscmeseaearch.contentdm.oclc.org/>]

→ Health and safety expertise



RCBS resources

→ Research@AFSCME.org

→ Gary Storrs: Gstorrs@AFSCME.org

→ Nichelle McGirt: Nmcgirt@AFSCME.org

→ AFSCME STAFF PORTAL:

<https://afscmestaff.org/>

