

## UNION REPRESENTATION ELECTIONS WIN RATE UP IN 2008

Unions won 66.8 percent of representation elections conducted by the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) in 2008, up from 60.4 percent the year before. The number of resolved representation elections also increased from 2007 levels, the first increase since 1998. The union win rate is the highest since 1955 when unions won 67.6 percent of the elections. Unions have won more than half of all representation elections in each of the past 12 years. Unions won 1,054 of the 1,579 elections held in 2008, compared to 918 wins in 1,519 elections the year before.

The number of voters eligible to participate in the elections also increased from 102,494 in 2007 to 108,587 in 2008. In 2008, unions organized 70,511 workers through NLRB elections, up from 58,260 the year before. The NLRB statistics do not reflect the full extent of organizing being conducted by unions as many unions organize through neutrality and card-check recognition agreements and other methods.

The union win rate in decertification elections continued to increase. Unions prevailed in 134 of 279 resolved decertification elections, or 48 percent in 2008, up from 122 of 331 decertification elections, or 36.9 percent, in 2007.

Unions affiliated with the AFL-CIO won 417 of 647 representation elections in 2008, or 64.5 percent, compared with 59.5 percent in 2007, when they won 421 of 707 elections. Unions in the Change to Win federation won 446 elections, or 61.3 percent of the 728 elections they participated in last year. In 2007, they won 355 of 677 elections, or 52.4 percent of those in which they participated.

Of the 10 most active unions, the International Brotherhood of Teamsters again led all other unions by participating in 394 representation elections in 2008. Although this number was down from 412 elections held in 2007, the win rate increased from 48.8 percent to 58.6 percent in 2008. The Service Employees International Union (SEIU) ranked a distant second by participating in 157 elections, winning 113 or 72 percent in 2008.

Unions participating in the next highest number of elections, in order, were the United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) with 116 elections, the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers with 114 elections, the International Union of Operating Engineers (IUOE) with 97 elections, and the International Association of Machinists (IAM) with 85 elections. The IAM was the most successful of the 10 most active unions, winning 76.5 percent of the elections in which it participated. The SEIU ranked second with 72 percent, followed by the Laborers International Union (70.3 percent), the IUOE (67 percent), and the United Auto Workers (61.9 percent).

For the second year in a row, the Teamsters organized the most workers, 13,815, followed by the SEIU with 10,928, and the UFCW with 9,243. Independent unions won 75.1 percent of the 257 elections in which they participated in 2008, compared with 68.8 percent of 205 elections in 2007.

By bargaining unit size, unions had the greatest organizing success among very small and very large units. Unions won 69.3 percent of 1,070 elections in units of fewer than 50 employees, and 64 percent of 25 elections in units of more than 500.

By industry, finance, insurance, and real estate had the highest percentage of wins with 89.7 percent, followed by health care with 74.3 percent.

New York with 210 elections up from 163 in 2007, and California with 177 elections increasing from 150 in 2007, had the most elections among the states.

The report is available for \$105 per copy from BNA PLUS by calling 800-372-1033 or emailing at [bnaplus@bna.com](mailto:bnaplus@bna.com).

(Source: BNA, *Daily Labor Report*, No. 84, May 5, 2009, pp. B1-B6.)

Industrial Relations Center, University of Hawaii at Manoa  
2425 Campus Road, Sinclair 301 • Honolulu, HI 96822

Telephone: (808) 956-8132 • Facsimile: (808) 956-3609 • Email: [uhirc@hawaii.edu](mailto:uhirc@hawaii.edu) • Website: [www.manoa.hawaii.edu/irc](http://www.manoa.hawaii.edu/irc)