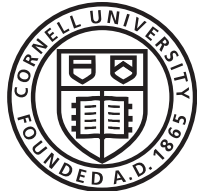


LABOR ACTION TRACKER

Annual Report 2022

Johnnie Kallas, PhD Candidate, Cornell University ILR School
 Kathryn Ritchie, BSILR '24, Cornell University ILR School
 Eli Friedman, Associate Professor of International & Comparative Labor, Cornell University ILR School



ANNUAL REPORT 2022

Introduction

2022 was yet another important year for the US labor movement, with organizing victories at major private employers and an increase in strikes across the country from the prior year. We are pleased to release the second [Cornell-ILR Labor Action Tracker](#) Annual Report, which presents key findings from our data on work stoppages in 2022. We have created a comprehensive database of strikes across the United States because official data sources only record a small fraction of this activity. Since [funding cuts](#) by the Reagan administration in the early-1980s, the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) excludes work stoppages of less than 1,000 workers from its database. As this report demonstrates, only recording very large work stoppages excludes the vast majority of strike activity and leaves practitioners, policymakers, and scholars misinformed about the true level of workplace conflict. Strikes remain an important source of labor activism and, at least in comparison to 2021, have increased in salience. In this report, we follow the lead of the BLS and document work stoppages, which include both strikes and lockouts. You can follow our project and view our monthly reports of strike activity on Twitter [@ILRLaborAction](#).

Methodology

This report is based on data we collected on strikes and lockouts in 2022. Detailed information on our project's methodology can be found [here](#). Further details specific to the methodology for this report can be found throughout this document. We generate all our data on strikes from several public sources, including existing work stoppage databases, news articles, and social media posts. We follow rigorous verification protocols to ensure that a strike did in fact occur and to collect data on several related variables, including, but not limited to, the size, duration, industry, and demands of a strike. We link to the sources used to generate data on each strike on our site's interactive map. We also collect data on labor protests, but only provide summaries of work stoppages in this report because our count of protests is less comprehensive. In light of our rigorous protocols, we may underestimate the total amount of work stoppages as we cannot include events that do not have adequate verifiable information.

Updated 2021 Findings

Because we occasionally find information about work stoppages months after the event occurred, we have updated work stoppage data for last year's report. We have found 14 additional work stoppages (all strikes) in 2021 since we issued our 2021 report, so we have updated the total number of work stoppages for that year from 265 to 279. The vast majority of these events (13 out of 14) occurred in the accommodation and food services industry and were relatively small scale (all involved fewer than 50 workers). All 14 new strikes involved nonunion workers, which means that nonunion workers organized ~36% of all work stoppages in 2021. Additional updates to our 2021 data are reflected in the figures below. We do not plan on further updating data from 2021.

Key Findings from 2022

We documented 424 work stoppages (417 strikes and seven lockouts) involving approximately 224,000 workers in 2022. These 424 work stoppages resulted in approximately 4,447,588 strike days this past year. Several important findings emerge from our 2022 data. First, the total number of work stoppages increased by ~52% (279 to 424) and the total number of approximate workers involved in work stoppages increased by ~60% (~140,000 to ~224,000) from 2021 to 2022. Second, workers in the accommodation and food services industry organized more work stoppages in 2022 (144) than any other industry, accounting for over one-third of all events. However, these work stoppages involved approximately 7,000 workers, or ~3% of the total workers involved in work stoppages in 2022. The vast majority (131, or ~91%) of work stoppages in the accommodation and food services industry were led by either Starbucks workers organizing with the Starbucks Workers United campaign or fast-food workers organizing with the Fight for \$15 campaign. Third, the majority of all workers involved in work stoppages came from the educational services industry (~135,380, or ~60%). Fourth, nonunion workers continued to organize a high proportion of strikes (~32%) in 2022, though these strikes were considerably smaller than work stoppages by unionized workers. Fifth, most work stoppages in 2022 were relatively short in duration, with ~46% lasting one day or less and two-thirds lasting fewer than five days.



Finally, while we documented an uptick in strikes and approximate number of workers on strike in 2022 as compared with 2021, the level of strike activity is lower than earlier historical eras. The number of work stoppages and approximate number of workers involved in work stoppage is considerably less than the most recent [comprehensive BLS data from the 1970s](#), and the approximate number of workers involved in work stoppages falls behind recent increases documented by the BLS in [2018](#) and [2019](#). More research is needed to make meaningful historical comparisons that account for the immense challenges facing striking workers and the labor movement more broadly.

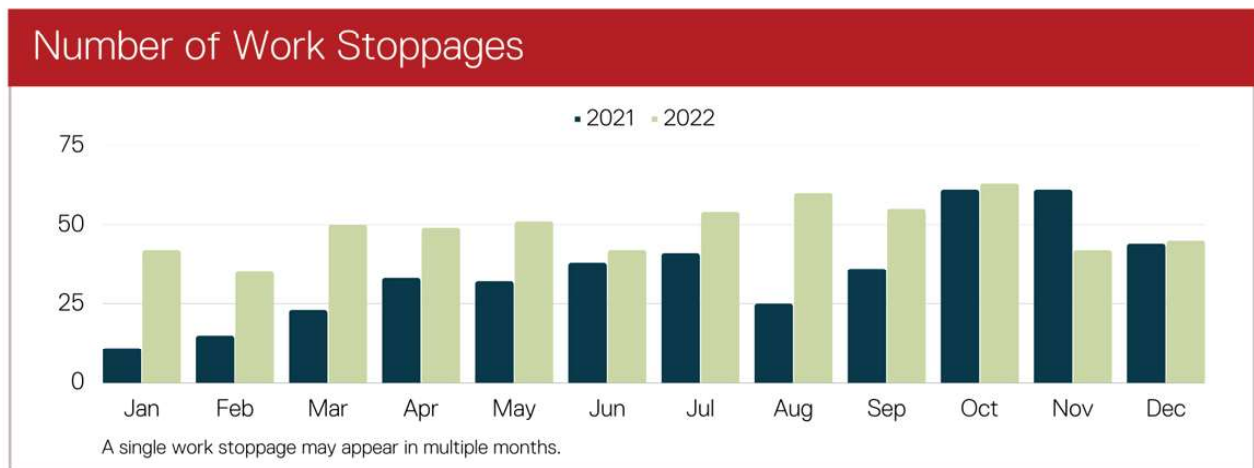
Acknowledgments

A special thanks goes to the Cornell-ILR School for funding our project and the entire [Cornell-ILR Labor Action research team](#) for putting in the hours to document strike activity. We thank the staff at Cornell-ILR's Worker Institute, who have continued to support and promote our project since our public launch in May 2021. We would also like to thank David Yantorno and Betsy Wiggers of Cornell-ILR's marketing team, Mary Catt of Cornell-ILR's communications team, and David DeMello of Cornell-ILR's web development team for their excellent design and promotion of our report. We also thank the Washington Center for Equitable Growth for funding that has helped support and inform our project over the past six months.

FINDINGS

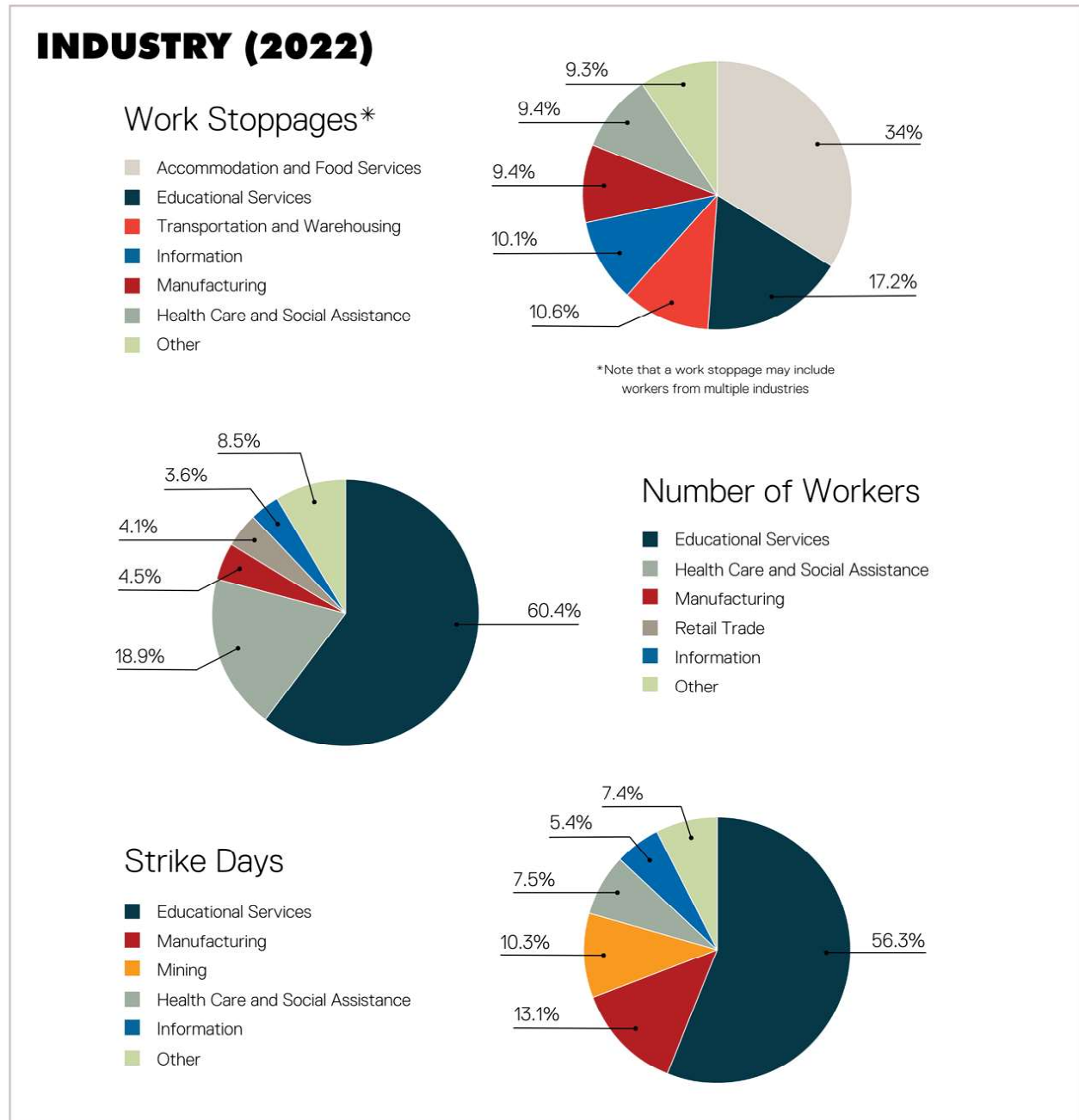
Number of work stoppages and approximate number of workers involved in stoppages per month

In 2022, approximately 224,000 workers were involved in 424 work stoppages (417 strikes and seven lockouts), for a total of 4,447,588 strike days. The number of work stoppages each month stayed relatively consistent, except for a slight increase in stoppage activity between July 2022 and October 2022. In comparison to 2021, which had a total of 279 work stoppages, with approximately 140,000 workers on strike for 3,269,186 strike days, there were 145 more work stoppages with approximately 84,000 more workers on the picket line.



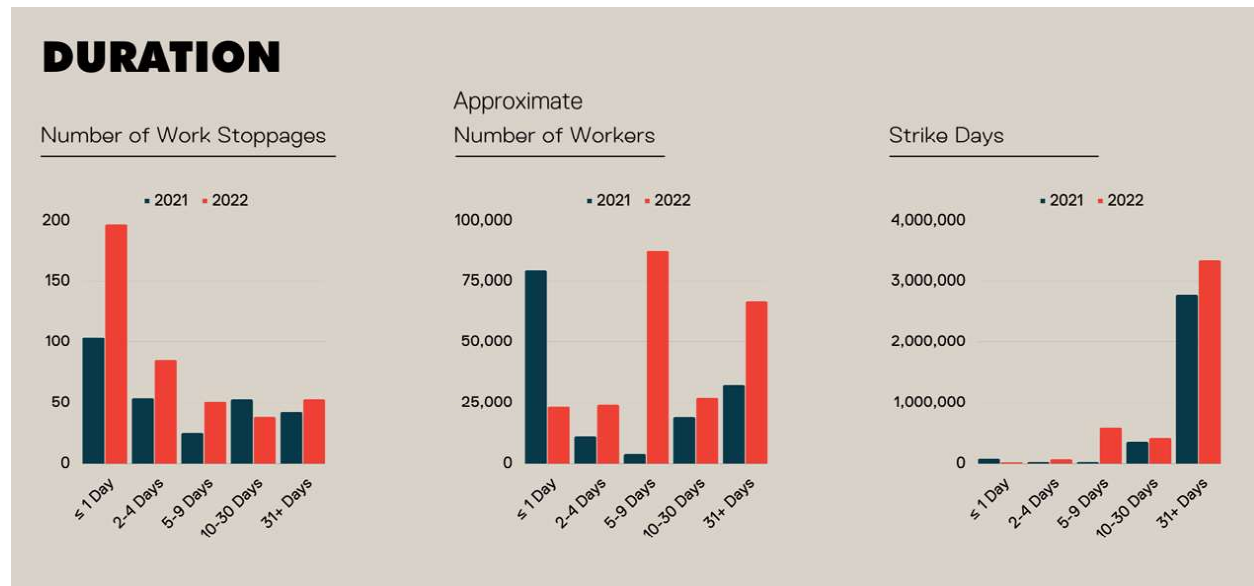
Labor action by industry

More work stoppages occurred in the accommodation and food services sector than any other industry in 2022 (34% of all work stoppages). The majority of workers on the picket line in 2022 were in the educational services industry, accounting for 60.4% of all workers involved in work stoppages. The educational services sector also made up the majority of strike days, accounting for 56.3%.



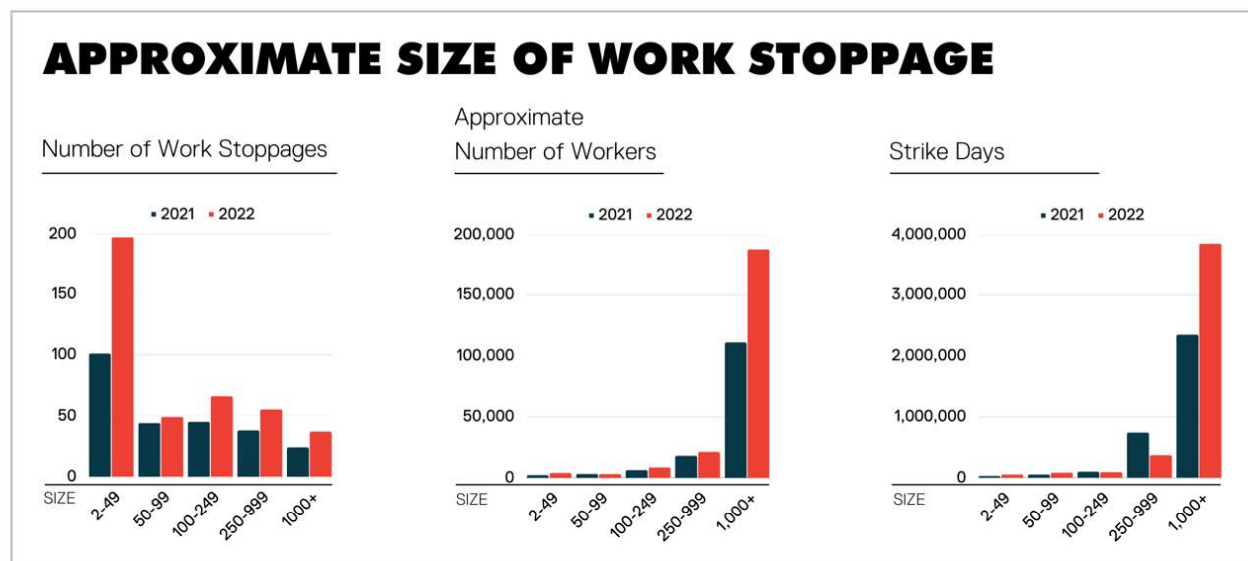
Labor action by duration

Approximately two-thirds of work stoppages in 2022 lasted less than five days. However, the most workers were involved in work stoppages that lasted between five and nine days, while the overwhelming majority of strike days were from strikes that lasted over a month. Similarly, in 2021, work stoppages lasting less than five days made up the majority of stoppages and work stoppages lasting over a month made up the majority of strike days.



Labor action by size


Almost half of all work stoppages in 2022 involved less than 50 workers, while in 2021, almost half of all work stoppages involved less than 100 workers. Of the approximately 224,000 workers involved in work stoppages, the vast majority in 2022 were part of stoppages involving over 1,000 workers.



Labor action by demands

The most common demands of work stoppages in 2022 involved better pay, improved health and safety, and more staffing. In 2022, an end to anti-union retaliation and reinstate terminated union activist became more common demands among work stoppages.

Work stoppages occurred for a variety of reasons in 2022

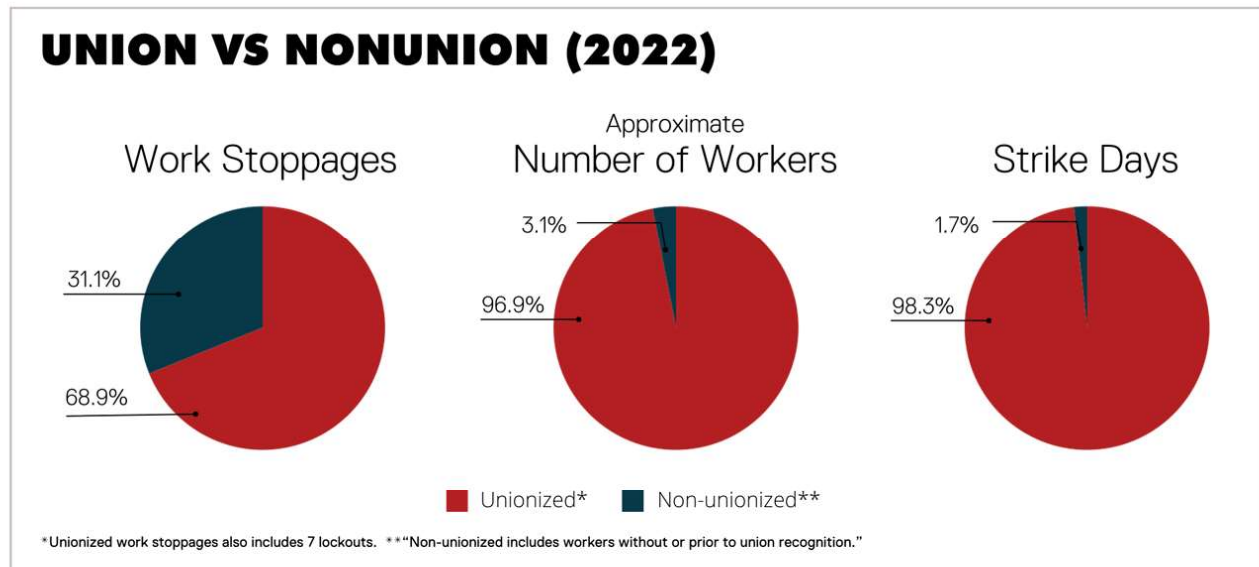


* A single work stoppage may have multiple demands. This list is not exhaustive.

DEMAND	Work Stoppages*	Approximate Workers Involved	Strike Days
Pay	234	169,080	3,845,159.5
Health Care	77	46,691	1,263,464
COVID-19 Protocols	30	46,075	298,467
Health and Safety	107	38,978	336,364.5
First Contract	35	7,323	45,904
Racial Justice	22	8,172	121,565
Staffing	86	56,370	513,499
Job Security	30	6,012	119,805.5
Retirement Benefits	29	30,324	758,769
Union Recognition	31	8,701	77,796
End to Sexual Harassment	6	123	8,063
Scheduling	54	4,214	71,329.5
End to Anti-Union Retaliation	60	3,618	13,000
Reinstate Terminated Union Activist	29	711	10,984.5

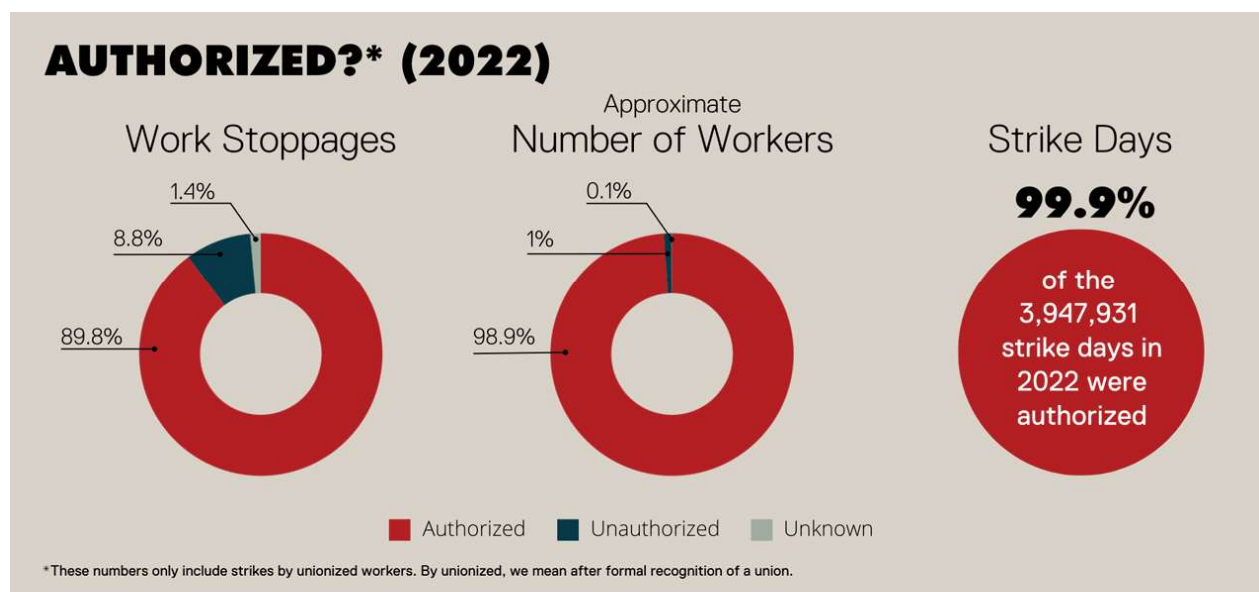
Labor action by unionization status

Just over two-thirds (68.9%) of all work stoppages in 2022 involved unionized workers, while just under one-third (31.1%) of all work stoppages were led by non-union workers. Unionized workers comprised the vast majority of approximate workers involved in work stoppages, accounting for 96.9%. They also accounted for 98.3% of all strike days.



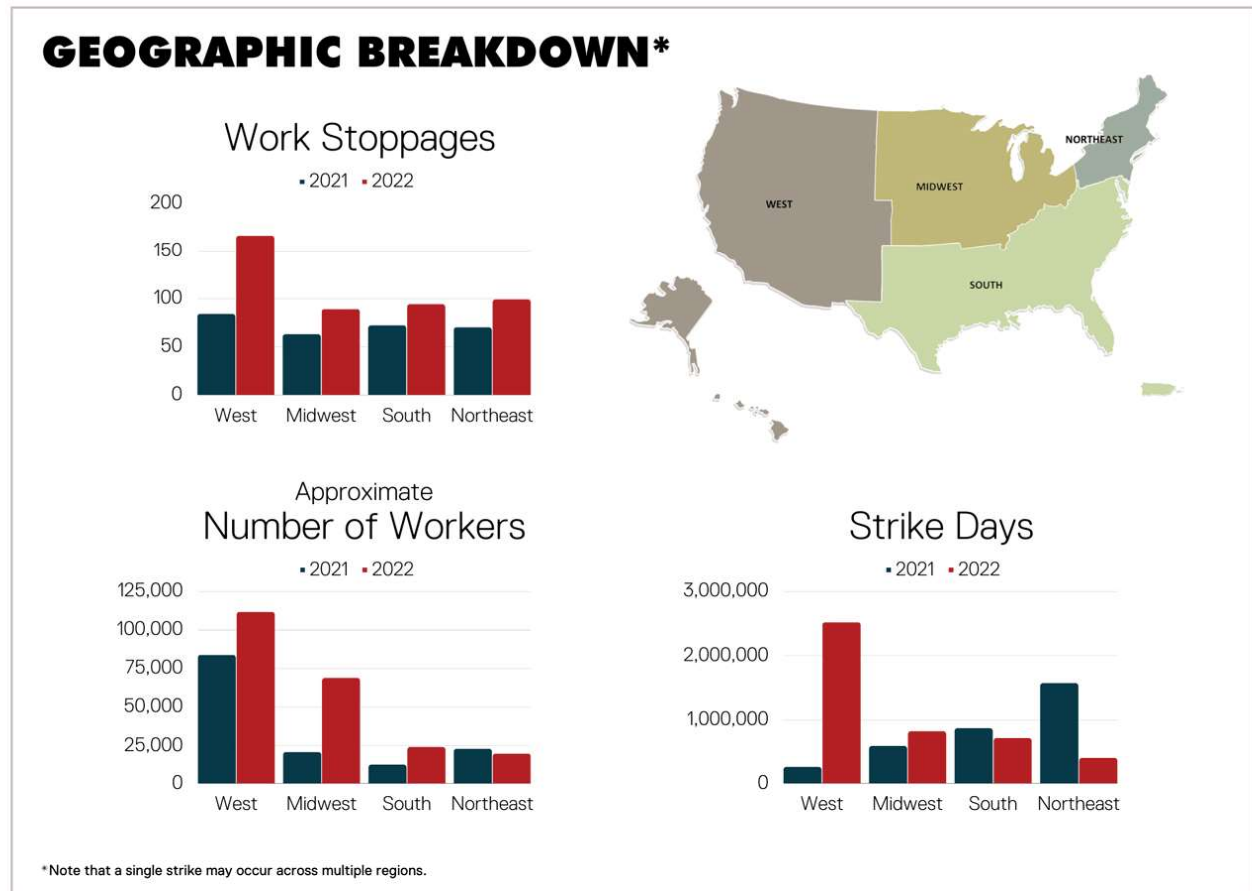
Labor action by authorization status

89.9% of all unionized strikes were authorized by a union, compared to 8.8% that were unauthorized and 1.4% that were unknown. Authorized strikes comprised an even higher percentage of approximate number of workers and strike days, accounting for 98.9% and 99.9% respectively.



Labor action by geographic region

Work stoppages were more evenly distributed across all regions in 2021. In 2022, more work stoppages occurred in the West than any other region. The other three regions - the Midwest, South, and Northeast, all had similar distribution of stoppages with each other in 2022.



DATA

Table 1

Monthly Work Stoppages and Approximate Number of Workers Involved in Work Stoppages

NOTE: A single work stoppage may appear in multiple months.

	Work Stoppages		Approximate Number of Workers	
	2021	2022	2021	2022
January	11	42	5,107	53,067
February	15	35	3,134	24,089
March	23	50	9,253	18,741
April	33	49	15,905	28,657
May	32	51	12,512	14,248
June	38	42	13,417	7,571
July	41	54	15,070	8,576
August	25	60	7,546	16,516
September	36	55	12,379	33,590
October	61	63	32,313	13,555
November *Two one-day sympathy strikes made up 62,000 of 90,561 approximate workers in 2021	61	42	90,561*	58,321
December	44	45	21,794	59,649

Table 2

Industry of Work Stoppages 2022

Industry	Work Stoppages NOTE: A work stoppage may include workers from multiple industries.	Approximate Number of Workers	Strike Days
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing & Hunting	4	230	1,250
Mining	4	2,020	456,200
Utilities	1	24	8,760
Construction	4	1,060	38,560
Manufacturing	40	10,108	583,078
Wholesale Trade	12	2,868	49,604
Retail Trade	9	9,152	94,738
Transportation and Warehousing	45	6,023	50,440
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	5	702	1,002
Professional, Scientific and Technical Services	4	350	550
Management of Companies and Enterprises	0	0	0
Educational Services	73	135,380	2,503,443
Information	43	8,012	242,253
Finance and Insurance	0	0	0
Health Care and Social Assistance	40	42,304	333,795
Arts, Entertainment and Recreation	11	1,752	107,996
Accommodation and Food Services	144	6,971	22,648
Public Administration	14	1,140	22,509
Administrative and Support and Waste Management	8	897	11,681
Other Services (except Public Administration)	3	183	3,587

Table 3**Duration of Work Stoppages**

Interval	Work Stoppages		Approximate Number of Workers		Strike Days	
	2021	2022	2021	2022	2021	2022
Less than or equal to 1 Day	104	197	79,774	23,226	79,559	22,734
2 to 4 Days	54	85	11,078	23,924	28,723	70,105
5 to 9 Days	25	51	3,968	87,698	29,151	583,452
10 to 30 Days	53	38	18,920	27,126	353,252	416,675
31 plus Days	42	53	32,369	66,792	2,777,621	3,354,622

Table 4**Approximate Size of Work Stoppages**

Number of Workers/ Stoppage	Work Stoppages		Approximate Number of Workers		Strike Days	
	2021	2022	2021	2022	2021	2022
2 to 49	101	197	2,101	3,775	30,547	52,417
50 to 99	44	49	3,067	2,993	54,133	81,566
100 to 249	45	66	6,221	8,366	96,318	89,962
250 to 999	38	55	17,933	21,018	740,688	369,243
1,000 plus	24	37	110,950	188,000	2,347,500	3,854,400

Table 5**Demands of Work Stoppages 2022**

NOTE: A single work stoppage may have multiple demands. This list is not exhaustive.

Demand	Work Stoppages	Approximate Number of Workers	Strike Days
Pay	234	169,080	3,845,159.5
Health Care	77	46,691	1,263,464
COVID-19 Protocols	30	46,075	298,467
Health and Safety	107	38,978	336,364.5
First Contract	35	7,323	45,904
Racial Justice	22	8,172	121,565
Staffing	86	56,370	513,499
Job Security	30	6,012	119,805.5
Retirement Benefits	29	30,324	758,769
Union Recognition	31	8,701	77,796
End to Sexual Harassment	6	123	8,063
Scheduling	54	4,214	71,329.5
End to Anti-Union Retaliation	60	3,618	13,000
Reinstate Terminated Union Activist	29	711	10,984.5

Table 6**Union Versus Nonunion Work Stoppages**

NOTE: By unionized, we mean after formal recognition of a union.

Unionization Status	Work Stoppages		Approximate Number of Workers		Strike Days	
	2021	2022	2021	2022	2021	2022
Unionized	178	292	135,405	217,278	3,017,400	4,370,681
Non-unionized	101	132	4,937	6,874	251,786	76,907

Table 7**Authorized Versus Unauthorized Work Stoppages**

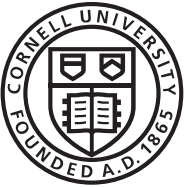
NOTE: This only includes strikes by unionized workers. By unionized, we mean after formal recognition of a union.

Interval	Work Stoppages		Approximate Number of Workers		Strike Days	
	2021	2022	2021	2022	2021	2022
Authorized	143	256	125,971	179,742	2,962,798	3,945,121
Unauthorized	19	25	2,032	1,856	3,451	2,640
Unknown	11	4	5,317	130	51,151	170

Table 8**Geographic Breakdown of Work Stoppages**

Region	Work Stoppages		Approximate Number of Workers		Strike Days	
	2021	2022	2021	2022	2021	2022
Northeast	70	99	22,888	19,688	1,569,124	394,522
Midwest	63	89	20,900	68,788	592,754	821,108
South	72	94	12,104	24,073	869,018	714,873.5
West	84	166	83,752	111,603	254,695	2,517,084.5

ILR Worker Institute



[ILR Labor Action Tracker Annual Report 2022](#)

