



## Labor Relations Week™

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**25 LRW 811**

### *Representation Elections*

### **Number of NLRB Elections Held in 2010 Increased Substantially From Previous Year**

The number of resolved representation elections conducted by the National Labor Relations Board in 2010 increased substantially from the previous year, according to NLRB data analyzed by BNA PLUS, BNA's research division.

At the same time, the number of elections won by unions also increased, while the percentage of union wins decreased somewhat.

According to preliminary data, NLRB conducted 1,666 elections in 2010, up from 1,321 elections in 2009. Unions won 1,126 of those elections in 2010, an increase from 908 wins the previous year.

The union win rate of 67.6 percent in 2010 is down slightly from 68.7 percent the year before. Unions have won more than half of all representation elections in each of the past 14 years.

The number of workers eligible to vote in the elections also increased to 108,312 in 2010, up from 73,902 in 2009. Unions organized 70,333 workers through NLRB elections in 2010, up from 50,131 in 2009.

The NLRB statistics do not reflect the full extent of organizing being conducted by unions since many unions organize through neutrality and card-check recognition agreements and other methods.

The union win rate in decertification elections continued to decline in 2010, with unions prevailing in 93 of 239 resolved decertification elections, or 38.9 percent, down from 104 of 255 decertification elections, or 40.8 percent in 2009. This is the second consecutive year that the number of decertification elections and the union win rate declined.

### **Elections by Union Affiliation**

Unions affiliated with the AFL-CIO won 517 of 741 representation elections held in 2010, or 69.8 percent, compared with 66.7 percent in 2009, when they won 363 of 544 elections.

Unions in the Change to Win federation, which was formed in mid-2005, won 441 NLRB elections, or 60.7 percent of the 726 elections they participated in last year. In 2009, they won 371 of 605 elections, or 61.3 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 431 elections in 2010, up from 373 elections in 2009. The union won 251 elections in 2010, up from 231 the previous year, but the win rate decreased to 58.2 percent in 2010 from 61.9 percent in 2009.

The Service Employees International Union ranked a distant second by participating in 157 elections, winning 106 or 67.5 percent in 2010. SEIU participated in 99 elections in 2009, winning 70 or 70.7 percent. SEIU has consistently participated in the second largest number of elections each year after IBT, except for 2009.

The United Food and Commercial Workers ranked third in 2010, participating in 106 elections, winning 56 or 52.8 percent. In 2009, UFCW participated in 109 elections, winning 60 or 55 percent.

Unions participating in the next highest number of elections, in order, were the International Association of Machinists with 101 elections, the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers with 92 elections, and the International Union of Operating Engineers with 77 elections.

The Laborers' International Union was the most successful of the 10 most active unions, winning 84.4 percent of the NLRB elections in which it participated. The Machinists ranked second, winning 73.3 percent of its elections, followed by the United Steelworkers (70.2 percent), SEIU and the Operating Engineers (67.5 percent), the Teamsters (58.2 percent), and the United Auto Workers (57.7 percent).

### **SEIU Organized the Most Workers**

For the first time since 2006, SEIU organized the most workers—14,343, followed by IBT with 11,919, and UFCW with 3,267. Also, for the first time since 2007, IBT did not organize the most workers out of the top five active unions.

Independent unions won 63.9 percent of the 266 elections in which they participated last year, compared with 74.9 percent of 235 elections in 2009.

By bargaining unit size, unions had the greatest organizing successes among very small and very large units. Unions won 70.6 percent of the 1,116 elections held in units of fewer than 50 workers, and 76.2 percent of 21 elections held in units of 500 workers or more.

Unions won 50 percent or more of the elections held in all industries in 2010, except communications only (47.8 percent) and wholesale (48.1 percent). The industry with the highest number of wins was construction (80.9

percent), followed by finance, insurance, and real estate (76.9 percent), mining (76.2 percent), health care services only (71 percent), services (70.6 percent), retail (64 percent), transportation, communications, and utilities (62.7 percent), and manufacturing (55.0 percent).

The number of elections increased in the two states that held the most elections in 2010. Unions participated in 221 elections in New York in 2010, up from 201 in 2009, while in California workers participated in 192 elections, up from 122 the year before.

*By Michelle Amber*

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*The full report is available for \$115 per copy from BNA PLUS by calling 800-372-1033, option 5, then option 3 or may be ordered on the BNA PLUS Web site at <http://bnaplus.bna.com/LaborReports.aspx>. Detailed election statistics also are available by calling or e-mailing BNA PLUS at [bnaplus@bna.com](mailto:bnaplus@bna.com).*

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