

# ISSUE BRIEF

## Public Attitudes Toward the Workplace and Union Organizing

**According to a recent survey conducted by Peter D. Hart Research Associates, most workers in America feel improvements are needed in their job situations.** Workers support rights to protect economic security, equal opportunity and reasonable working conditions. They say they should be able to earn a decent wage and work free from discrimination, harassment and health and safety hazards. With increasing intensity, workers say they want ways to protect their rights at work and hold employers accountable. More than two-thirds of working Americans—68 percent—say workplace rights need more protection today.

For nearly two-thirds of today's workers, employers inspire little or no trust that they will treat workers fairly, as shown by the Hart survey. This research also indicates that workers say corporations are more concerned with profits than people and have too much power.

**Workers express acute, widespread dissatisfaction with workplace injustice and employer behavior.** The Hart survey also shows that one-third to one-half of workers give employers mediocre to failing grades on key worker protections. These findings about the way workers in America perceive their jobs and their employers are congruent with current trends and attitudes regarding unions.

**Nearly two-thirds of Americans feel positive or neutral towards unions.** Many Americans who once had a negative view towards unions have shed that view. Since 1993, there has been a 4-point rise in Americans' positive attitudes toward unions, and an 8-point drop in negative attitudes, according to Hart research from 1993 to 2001.

**Nearly three times as many young adults ages 18 to 34 feel more positive towards unions than negative.** And their attitudes have improved significantly since 1990, according to the Hart data.

**More Americans would vote for a union today than in the mid-1990s.** When Americans who do not have a union are asked how they would vote if a union election were held in their workplace tomorrow, 42 percent definitely or probably would vote for a union. The percentage of nonunion, nonsupervisory workers (those eligible for union membership) who would vote against a union has dropped dramatically, according to the Hart research and a 1984 Louis Harris survey.