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analysis of data released by the Bureau of Labor Statistics

Isaac M. O'Bannon • Mar. 18, 2024



More than 458,000 workers were involved in major strikes in 2023, according to an [EPI analysis](#) of data released by the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS). This marks a 280% increase compared with 2022, returning to levels last seen prior to the COVID-19 pandemic.

These strikes included workers across the country—from auto workers to Hollywood writers and actors, nurses, and public school teachers. Roughly 75% of major work stoppages in 2023 took place in the private sector—with over half occurring in a

health care setting, including the largest recorded health care strike in U.S. history

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Workers to nurses across the country, these strikes provided critical leverage to workers to secure better wages and working conditions,” said a statement by Margaret Poydock, EPI senior policy analyst.

However, the fact remains that current labor law fails to adequately protect workers’ fundamental right to strike. To strengthen the right to strike, Congress should pass the Protecting the Right to Organize (PRO) Act and the Striking Workers Healthcare Protection Act, among other key policies. The report also urges state lawmakers to protect the right to strike for public-sector, agricultural, and domestic workers who are otherwise excluded from federal labor law.

“The increase in major strike activity in 2023 occurred despite our weak and outdated labor law failing to protect workers’ right to strike. Federal and state action is needed to ensure the right to strike,” said Jennifer Sherer, EPI director of the State Worker Power Initiative.

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