

Regina Leader-Post

**Proposed Labour Law
Changes: Perception
of Key Issues**

Survey Report

April 2008

Introduction

This document reports the results of a survey conducted by Sigma Analytics in late April, 2008.

Interviewing was done by telephone with a total of 510 respondents aged 18 or older, stratified by ten regions across the province. This sample produces a general margin of error of plus or minus 4.38%, 19 times out of 20.

Cautions

Interpreting the results in this report should be done with the following considerations in mind:

- Sample surveys provide estimates of the prevalence of the measured factors in the total population from which the sample is drawn. The estimates are statistically reliable within the ranges indicated, at the 95% level of confidence. This means that the actual prevalence of the factor could be greater or lesser than the estimate, by the amount of the margin of error. It also means that 5% of the time, the estimate can be expected to differ from reality by more than the margin of error.
- Results for sub-sets of the sample will have a larger margin of error because they are based on smaller numbers. They should be treated with more caution.

Response sets

The survey instrument used symmetrical, verbally-anchored five-point scales to capture response on most questions. A mean was calculated to summarize the overall level of response.

The most strongly held opinions are represented by either a 1 on the “negative” side or by a 5 on the “positive” side of the scale. Mean response levels above 3.00 suggest a “positive” general response while those below 3.00 suggest a “negative” general response.

Highlights

- ◆ **Just under half are aware of an issue in labour law:** A large minority of respondents (46.6%) reports having heard or seen something about proposed changes to Saskatchewan labour laws in the last two months.
 - The most prominent recollection is of something related to essential services (20.5% of those indicating awareness).
 - Awareness is higher in Regina and Saskatoon: Almost six in ten respondents in these two regions indicate awareness.

- ◆ **Key aspects of both bills win support:** Six major elements of the two bills were tested, all received overall support ranging from moderate (3.22) to exceptionally strong (4.08). Respondents favouring changes outnumber those opposed by ratios ranging from 3:2 to over 6:1.

Opinion on Key Concepts in Bills 5 & 6			
<i>Issue</i>	<i>Support</i>	<i>Oppose</i>	<i>Avg on 1-5 Scale</i>
Negotiate jobs to maintain	69.7%	13.1%	3.93
Mgmt picks, union appeals	46.6%	30.2%	3.22
Secret ballot	74.5%	15.4%	4.08
Negotiable max term	70.3%	10.9%	3.93
Communicate	61.5%	18.7%	3.69
45% vote threshold	58.4%	26.1%	3.50
An average response level above 3.00 on the 1-5 scale indicates overall support.			

The table shows the average level of response on the 1-5 scale (3.0 is the mid-point, so a score below 3.0 indicates overall opposition, a score greater indicates overall support).

The Support column shows the percentage of respondents giving either a 4 or 5 response, and the Oppose column shows the percentage of respondents giving a 2 or 1 response.

Findings

Have you heard or seen anything in the last two months about changes to Saskatchewan labour laws?

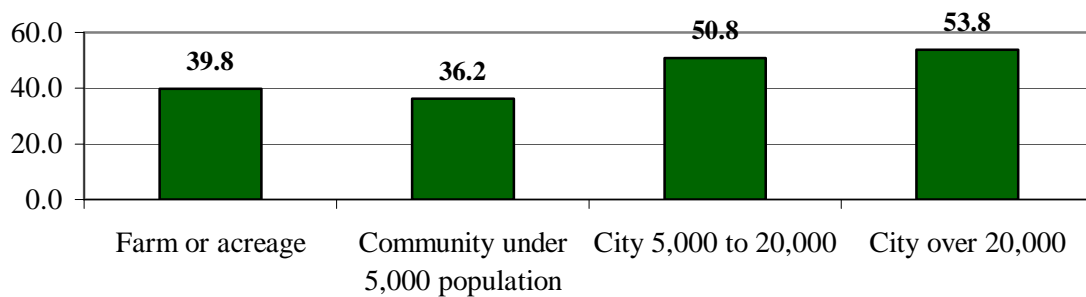
Just under half of respondents (47%) say they have seen or heard something about changes to Saskatchewan labour laws.

Statistically Significant

Residence Location

Those living in a city are more likely to report having heard something.

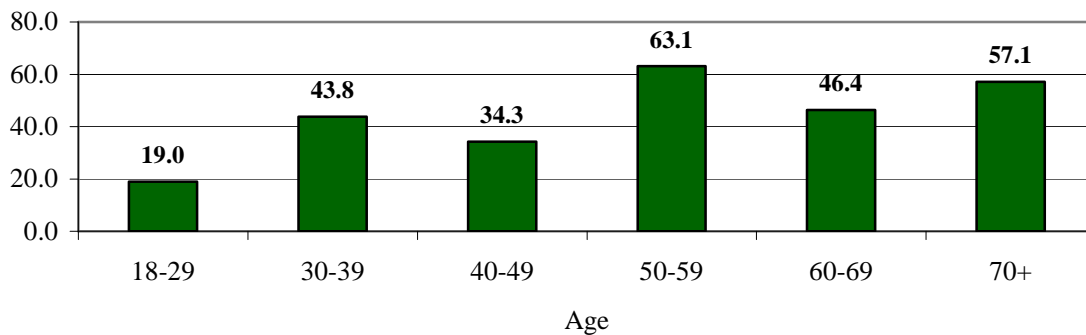
A1. Have you heard or seen anything in the last two months about changes to Saskatchewan's labour laws?
% saying 'Yes'



Age

While there are significant differences between various age segments, no pattern is clear.

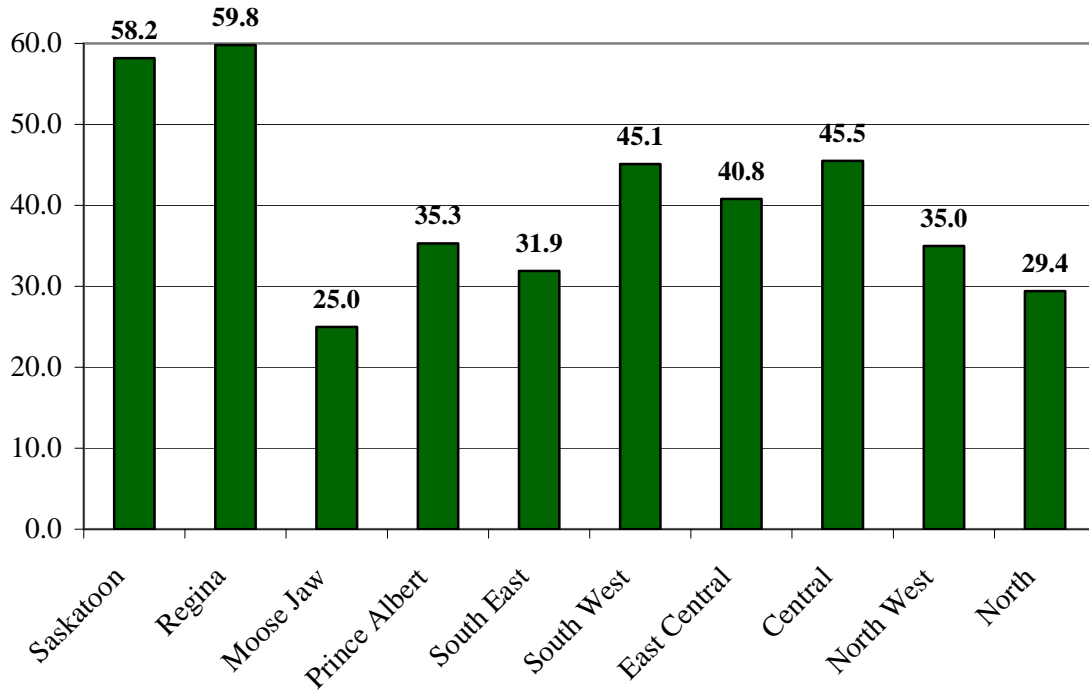
A1. Have you heard or seen anything in the last two months about changes to Saskatchewan's labour laws?
% saying 'Yes'



Region

Respondents living in Regina and Saskatoon are considerably more likely to have heard of changes, while other regions show a scattered pattern of awareness.

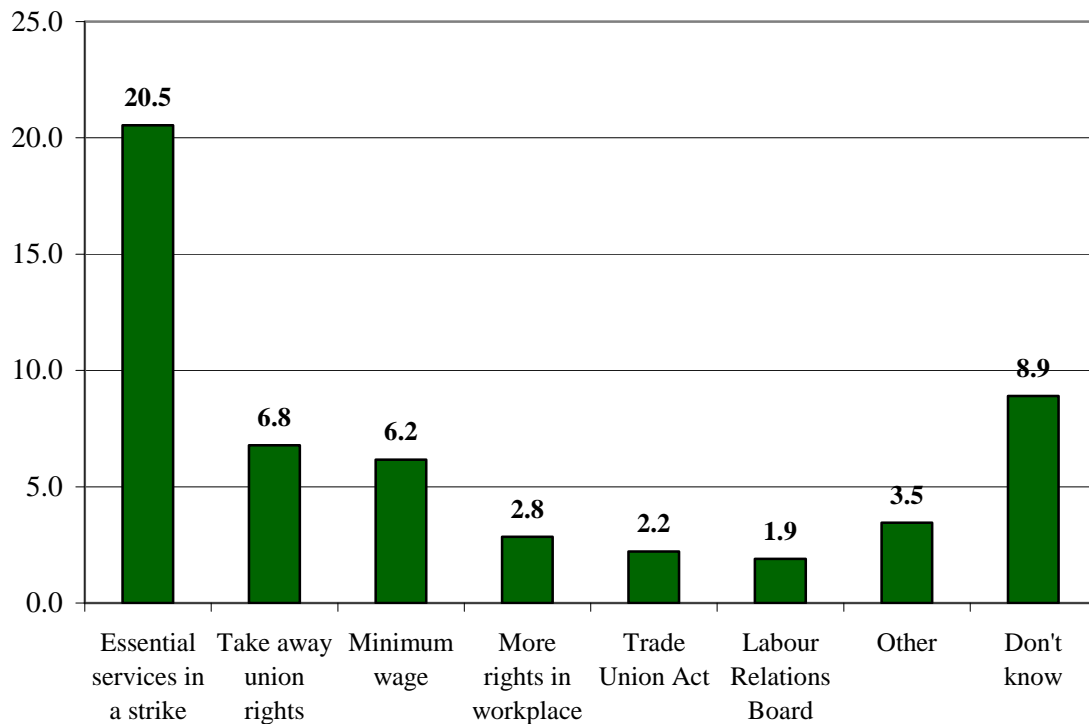
A1. Have you heard or seen anything in the last two months about changes to Saskatchewan's labour laws?
% saying 'Yes'



Based on what you saw or heard, what would you say the changes are about?

On this test of unaided recall, of those who have heard of a change, one in five respondents (21%) recalled a change in the area of essential services. About one in eleven (9%) could not recall the particular, and about equal numbers felt the change was about diminishing union rights, or to do with the minimum wage.

Based on what you saw or heard, what would you say the changes are about?



Statistically Significant

More rights in the workplace

Union household

Respondents from households where a union member is present (2.3%) are less likely than those without a union member (8.8%) to say they have heard of changes that would give employees more rights in the workplace.

Gender

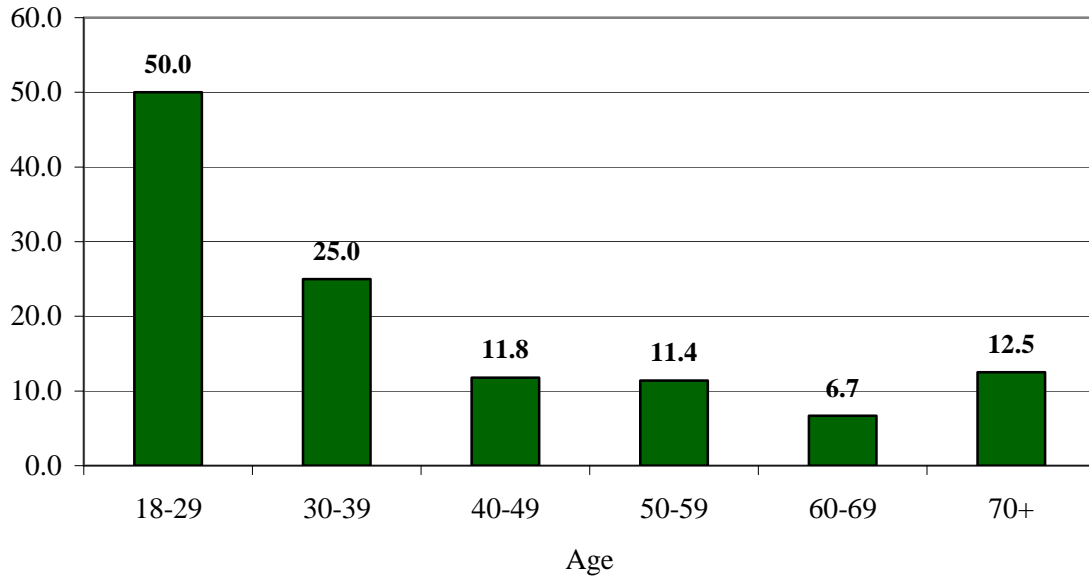
Males (9.8%) are more likely than females (2.9%) to have the impression that changes would give employees more rights in the workplace.

Minimum wage

Age

Those under the age of 40 are more likely than others to identify the minimum wage as the change they had heard of.

A2f. Minimum wage
% identifying

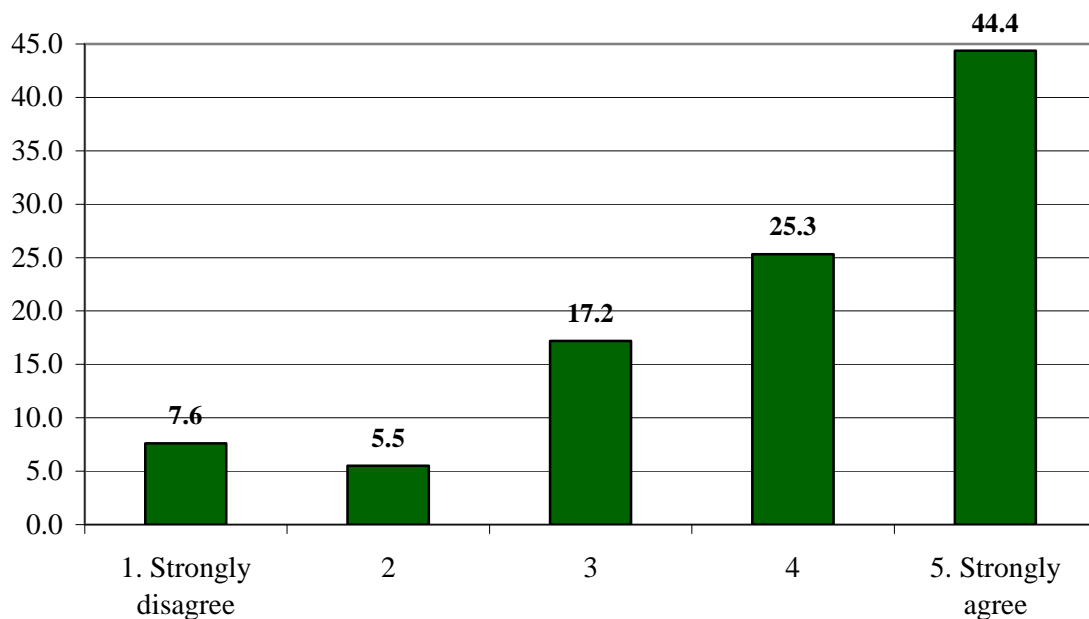


The provincial government has introduced two bills to amend parts of Saskatchewan labour law.

One of these bills deals with providing certain services if a strike occurs. On a 1-5 scale, where 1 is “Disagree strongly” and 5 is “Agree strongly”, what is your opinion on the following:

When asked about the provision that management and union be required to negotiate in advance which jobs are to be maintained in a strike, the overall response was strongly favourable, averaging 3.93, with a sizeable majority (70%) agreeing. A plurality (47%) supports the provision that if there is no agreement, management specifies the jobs to be maintained, and the union may appeal for a final decision.

Requiring management and unions to negotiate which jobs are to be maintained if there is a strike.
Mean response level = 3.93



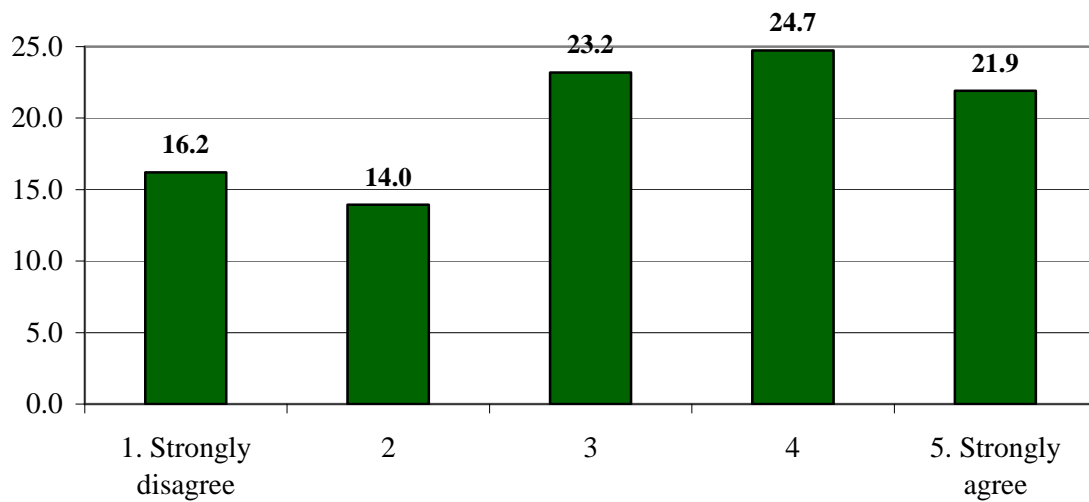
Statistically Significant

Union household

Those without a union member in the household are more likely on average to agree (4.05) with this statement than those with union members in the household (3.72).

If there is no agreement, allowing management to choose the jobs to be maintained -- and then, allowing the union to appeal for a final decision to an outside body.

Meanr response level = 3.22



Statistically Significant

Union household

In households where a union member is present, the response is a saw-off (3.04), while in households with no union member present, average response is more favourable (3.34).

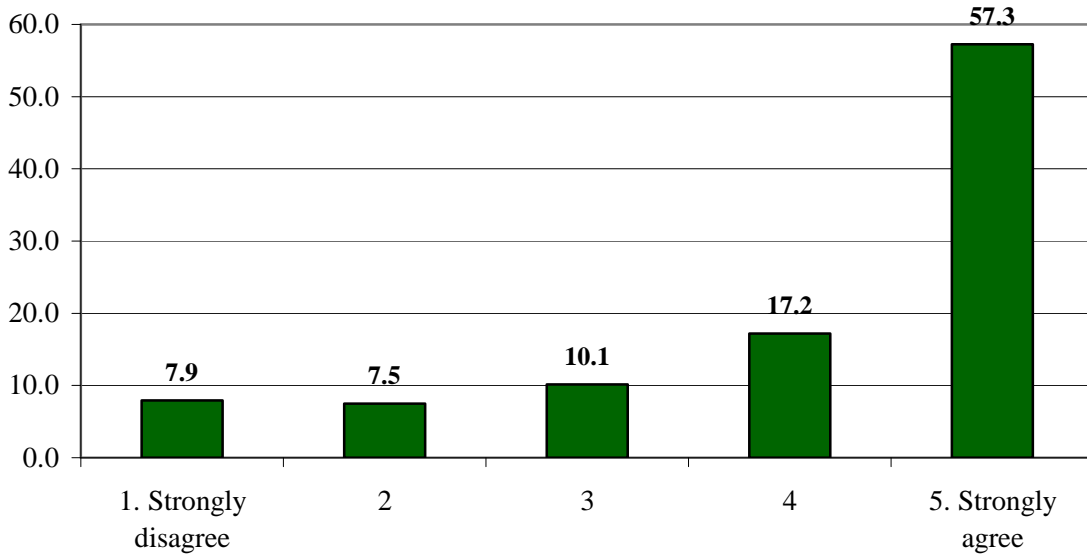
The second bill deals with relations between union and management. On a 1-5 scale where 1 is “Disagree strongly” and 5 is “Agree strongly”, what is your view of the following:

Average responses show strong agreement with all four aspects of the proposal tested. The highest level of agreement comes for requiring a secret ballot when deciding whether or not to have a union.

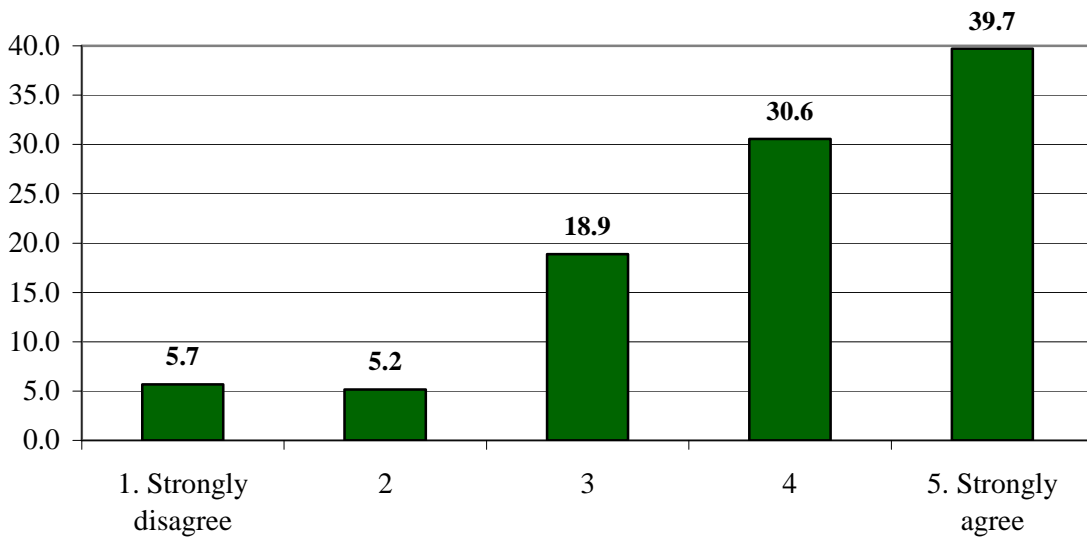
A5. What is your view on the following?



Requiring a secret ballot for voting on whether or not to have a union.
Mean response level = 4.08



Allowing union and management to negotiate the maximum length of their contract.
Mean response level = 3.93



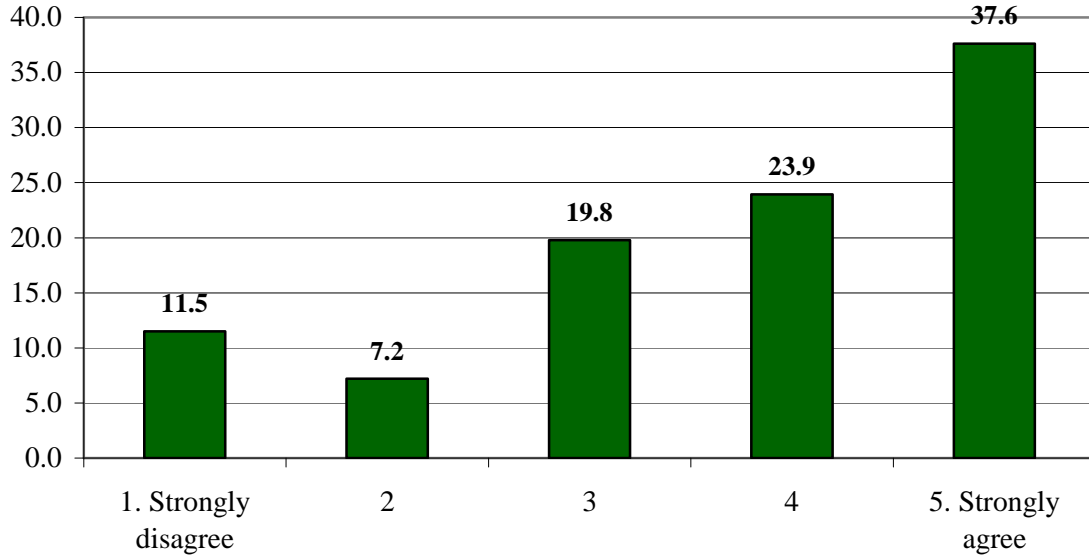
Statistically Significant

Business owner/manager

In households where no business owner or manager is present, agreement averages 3.86 part of the household. Where an owner or manager is present, it reaches 4.10.

Allowing management to communicate facts and opinions to employees about the issues involved in whether or not to have a union.

Mean response level = 3.69



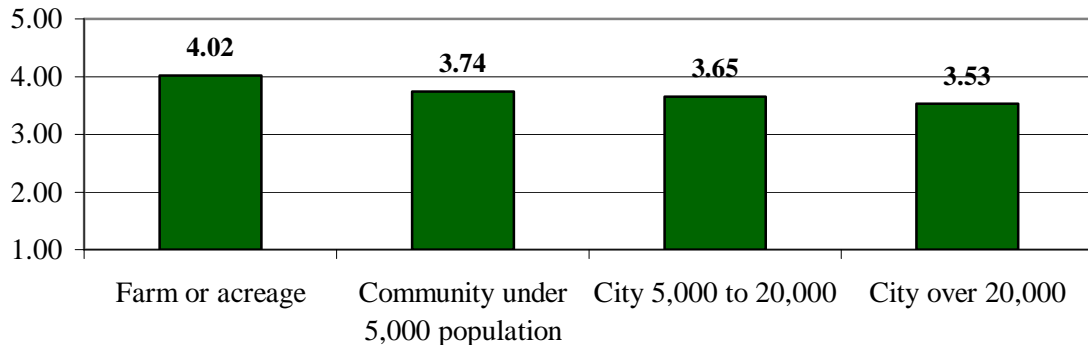
Statistically Significant

Residence Location

Support rises from strong to exceptionally strong as the size of community decreases.

Allowing management to communicate facts and opinions to employees about the issues involved in whether or not to have a union.

Mean response levels



Union household

While respondents from union households agree overall (3.41), they do so at a considerably lower level than respondents in non-union households (3.86).

Requiring at least 45% of employees to sign a union card, in order to trigger a vote on whether or not to have a union.

Mean response level = 3.50

