

Mount Sinai Bargaining Update: December 6, 2022

As you all are likely aware, Mount Sinai has been in collective bargaining negotiations with the Sinai Postdoctoral Organizing Committee (SPOC-UAW) since early October. As of Tuesday, December 6, we have had five formal bargaining sessions with the union. We have also supplemented these sessions with additional informal meetings with the union to continue making progress between formal sessions.

We are pleased to announce one interim agreement that we have reached. At our December 6 bargaining session, Mount Sinai proposed that all postdocs receive an across-the-board increase to their base salary of 3 percent, effective Sunday, January 8, 2023. We are pleased that the union has agreed to our proposal. We are happy to provide this increase to our postdocs in recognition of the current inflationary environment. While the union has not yet provided economic proposals, Mount Sinai indicated that the union's agreement to this proposal would not preclude them from making future proposals on wages.

Aside from that issue, we are proceeding in the manner customary for collective bargaining, in which the union provides us with their proposals first. Thus far, the union has provided us with 18 non-economic language proposals including, among other topics, recognition, severability, appointment security, grievance and arbitration, union-management committee meetings, health and safety, and a prohibition against discrimination and harassment.

As of our December 6 bargaining session, Mount Sinai has responded to 16 of the Union's 18 proposals. We plan to have responses to the two remaining proposals shortly. Additionally, we have reached two tentative agreements (TAs) with the union. This means that the parties have agreed to the substance of these provisions and consider them resolved as we continue to negotiate over the remaining provisions of the agreement. We are optimistic that, as the parties continue to work together, we can reach additional TAs in the near future.

We understand the desire of both parties to reach an agreement as efficiently and quickly as possible and have been working diligently towards this goal. However, this is an important process that takes considerable time to accomplish. In fact, the average length of time it takes to negotiate a first contract—which is what we are doing—is more than 12 months (see, e.g., Robert Combs, *Now It Takes 465 Days to Sign a Union's First Contract*, Bloomberg, August 2, 2022, reproduced below.) We commit to continuing to bargain in good faith with the union and continuing to make progress towards our mutual goal of reaching a fair contract as quickly as possible, including on union salaries and other economic items once the union makes proposals to us on those subjects.

From the start of this process, we have had what we believe are very productive sessions with the union where we have worked together to make progress towards reaching a fair and equitable contract for both sides. We will continue to keep you updated on the bargaining process. Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact either of us directly.

ANALYSIS: Now It Takes 465 Days to Sign a Union's First Contract

By Robert Combs 2022-08-02T05:00:44000-04:00

While viewing the Senate Budget Committee's recent [hearing on labor relations issues](#), I heard two facts that made me sit up and take notice.

"After a union wins an election, the average number of days to get to a contract is 409 days," Sen. Tim Kaine (D-Va.) said. "And about a third of victorious unions can't get a contract in the first three years."

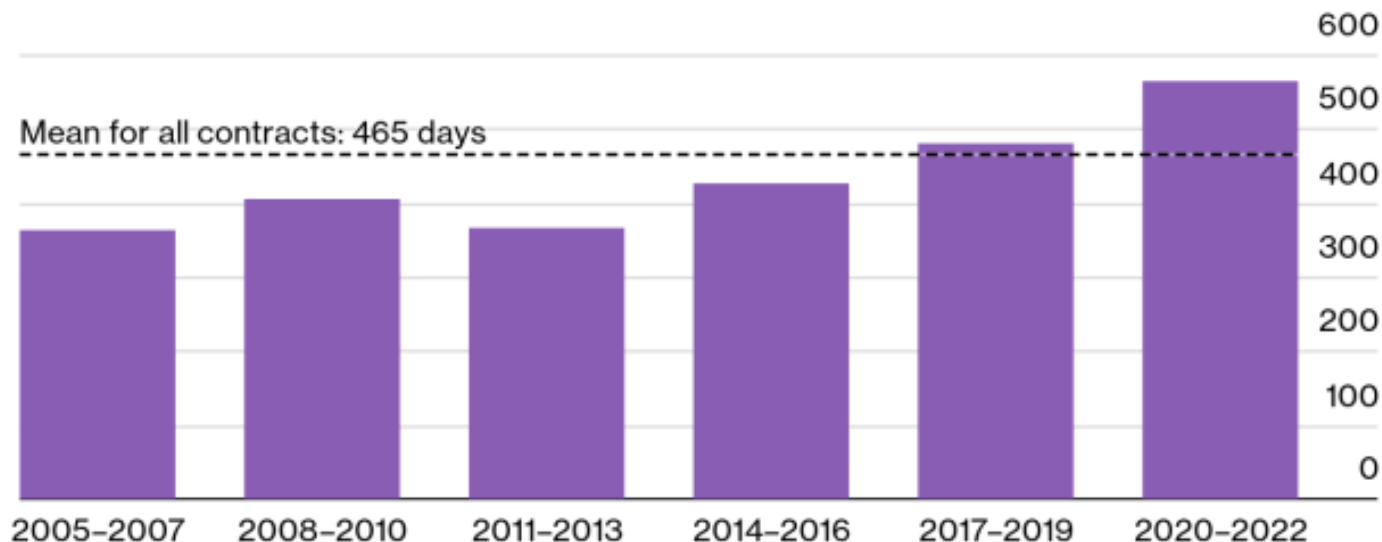
The reason the first statistic struck me is because it's from me. Or, I should say, it's from [Bloomberg Law's labor data](#), which led to an [article](#) I posted last summer.

Kaine's mention spurred me to return to our databases and update that figure. The result: Based on our analysis of 391 records of first contracts signed since 2005, the mean number of days it takes newly unionized employers and their newly organized workers to ratify a first contract has grown to 465 days. (The median showed a more moderate increase, from 356 to 374 days.)

Means are subject to outliers from time to time, which helps explain such a dramatic jump. But still, it's hard to ignore that there's been a trend toward longer delays in first-contract signings. Here's a look at the averages over time.

Signing Delays for Unions' First Contracts Are Getting Longer

Mean number of days from NLRB election to contract ratification



Source: Bloomberg Law Labor Data

Analysis covers 391 first contracts for which Bloomberg Law has obtained dates for NLRB election and contract ratification, 2005-2022. Years depicted here are for contract ratification dates.

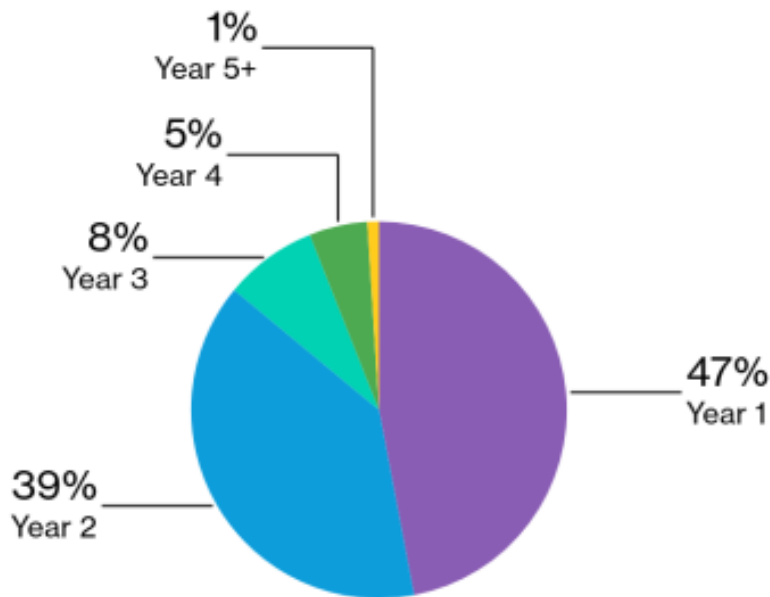
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The second statistic Kaine cited didn't come from Bloomberg Law. In fact, I'm not sure where it originated. I've traced it back to a mention in a [2009 Economic Policy Institute paper](#), but it might be even older.

I don't dispute the figure itself; whatever the methodology was, it was almost certainly different from how we crunch our data. But I thought I'd go ahead and provide a 2022 version anyway.

Most Unions Have No Contract Signed Within a Year of Organizing

Timing of contract ratification following an NLRB election win



Source: Bloomberg Law Labor Data

Analysis covers 391 first contracts for which Bloomberg Law has obtained dates for NLRB election and contract ratification, 2005–2022. "Year 1" means the contract was ratified less than 365 days after the election date.

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The result from our databases: 53% of the 391 first contracts took a full year or more to sign—virtually matching the 52% figure mentioned in the 2009 paper, incidentally. But only 6% of contracts took three full years or more, not one-third as Kaine and others have said.

Last summer, I posted [another finding](#) that longer delays in first contracts correlated to lower wage hikes for workers. I'll be updating that statistic soon.

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