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## **Avoiding Unionization Becomes Big Business**

**‘Union avoidance is an industry in the United States’**

**By Lew Dopson**

According to the U.S. Department of Labor Bureau of Labor Statistics, the share of U.S. wage and salary workers who were members of a labor union fell to 12 percent in 2006, down from 12.5 percent in 2005. Yet a recent study found nearly 60 million workers say they would vote for a union if they had the opportunity. In a poll released January 24 by Peter D. Hart Research Associates, 53 percent of nonunion, non-managerial workers said they would vote for union representation if given the opportunity. Moreover, data suggests that workers who belong to unions earn 30 percent more than nonunion workers, are 62 percent more likely to have employer provided health care coverage and four times more likely to have pensions. Given this union wage/benefit advantage and demonstrated interest in unionization, what then accounts for the tremendous gap between the 12 percent of workers who have a union and the 53 percent of unrepresented workers who, if given the opportunity, want a union? A significant percentage of this gap in union membership reflects efforts by employers to squelch workers’ free speech rights, practice various forms of economic coercion, and use ineffective labor law to indefinitely delay recognition through drawn-out appeals. Union avoidance is an industry in the United States, as employers resort to hiring of union-busting firms and management consultants specializing in suppressing employee free choice in 75 percent of organizing campaigns.