



GRIEVANCES AND ARBITRATIONSⁱ

Mid-America Carpenters Regional Council Arbitrations

MARBA received no arbitration demands in the month of January.

Laborers Joint Grievance Committee

The Laborers JGC did not meet in February. The next meeting will be held on March 31, 2026, at the Laborers District Council office in Burr Ridge beginning at 9:00 a.m. There are currently four (4) cases to be heard.

Operating Engineers Joint Grievance Committee

The Operators JGC met on February 18, 2026, at the Operators offices in Countryside, IL beginning at 8:30 a.m. to hear one grievance. The Union alleged a contractor did not use bargaining unit members to operate a tractor with a scrapper pan. The Employer failed to appear and the JGC voted to uphold the grievance based on the Union's presentation. The Union will advise the Committee of the number of grievances to be heard at the next session of the JGC which is scheduled to be held on April 1, 2026, beginning at 8:30 a.m. at the Operators offices in Countryside.

Teamsters Joint Grievance Committee

The Teamsters JGC did not meet in February. The next meeting date is scheduled for March 26, 2026, at 9:00 a.m. at the MARBA office should there be any grievances.

COLLECTIVE BARGAINING/LABOR ISSUES

2026 Bargaining Rights Due Soon

MARBA is in the process of preparing for negotiations later this spring with the Laborers District Council and Cement Masons Locals 502 and 11. The bargaining rights packets have been distributed to the MARBA Associations in late 2025. The due date for the required forms is **MARCH 6, 2026**. The packets contain information concerning the upcoming negotiations for these two trades only. If there are any questions about these two agreements or the information contained in the bargaining rights packet, please contact your MARBA member Association or the MARBA office.

Labor Relations Intake Form

MARBA has posted a link on its website that can be accessed by clicking [here](#) that allows contractors to submit information concerning labor matters related to a MARBA CBA. The answers will be sent to directly to MARBA Executive Director, Aaron Janik. This will assist MARBA in preparation for negotiations as well

as potentially addressing any industry-wide issues prior to a negotiation should the need arise. When filling out the form please provide specific information to ensure the issue(s) can accurately be reviewed.

Negotiation Updates/Contracts Expiring in 2026

MARBA has gathered a list of contracts due to expire in 2026. This list will be the basis of the negotiation update emails that are due to go out in early March. The current list of contracts set to expire that has been provided to MARBA is posted on the MARBA website. If there are agreements set to expire in 2026 not on the list currently being maintained by MARBA, please contact Aaron Janik at ajanik@marba.org to let him know. The list can be accessed by clicking [here](#).

INDUSTRY NEWS

Governor Pritzker Proposes Tax Break Pause for Data Center Projects

During his budget presentation, Governor Pritzker proposed a two year pause on tax breaks for data centers. Currently, owners/developers that spend \$250 million over 60 months, create 20 high paying jobs (defined as jobs paying 120% over the median wage in the county where the data center project is located), and meet certain energy standards are eligible for credits. From 2019 to 2024 all but one of 28 applications submitted for the credit were approved. Illinois currently has 201 data centers, as of May 2025, that have been built totaling approximately \$15.8 billion in investments. The pause would allow the state to evaluate the impact on the state’s power grid, including potential increased utility costs borne by all ratepayers. Governor Pritzker previously signed the legislation creating the tax incentives in 2019, heralding the projects’ significance to the overall Illinois economy.

STATE OF THE ECONOMY

Economic Indicators

Unemployment Rate	January 4.3% (December 4.4%), Illinois 4.6% (38 th – Dec 25)
Labor Participation Rate	January 62.5%, December 62.4%, November 62.5%
CPI All Urban Consumers	January 2026 over January 2025 = 2.39% 2025 Half Year 1 = 2.59%, Half Year 2 = 2.78%
CPI Chicago All Items	January 2026 over January 2025 = 1.35% 2025 Half Year = 3.62%, Half Year 2 = 2.63%, Annual = 3.08%
CPI Midwest All Items	January 2026 over January 2025 = 2.44% 2025 Half Year = 2.84%, Half Year 2 = 2.84%, Annual = 2.78%
Union Membership	2025 = 10.0% (Private Sector 5.9%) 2024 = 9.9%, 2023 = 10.0%
Unionized Construction Workers	12.0% (2025), 11.2% (2024), 11.4% (2023), 11.7% (2022)

30 Year Fixed Mortgage	As of 2-26-26 5.98%, down 0.78% over the prior year. Annual Average 6.52% (25), 6.90% (24), 6.61% (23), 5.34% (22)
15 Year Fixed Mortgage	As of 2-26-26 5.44%, down 0.50% over the prior year. Annual Average 5.72% (25), 5.93% (2023), 4.58% (2022)
Brent Crude Oil Price	\$72.87 per barrel (as February 27, 2026) \$145.61 per barrel all time high July 2008 \$2.23 per barrel all time low May 1970
Privately Owned New Housing Building Permits	4.3% above revised November rate 2.2% below December 2024 rate
Privately Owned New Housing Starts	6.2% above revised November rate (+/-10.7%) 7.3% below December 2024 rate (+/-14.0%)
GDP	Q4 2025 (Adv) 1.4% Q3 2025 +4.4% Q2 2025 +3.8%
DJIA	48,977.92 as of February 27, 2026 (4:44 p.m.) 48,892.47 as of January 31, 2026 (4:00 p.m.) 48,090.06 as of December 31, 2025 (4:00 p.m.)

JANIK'S J.D. – AN UPDATE ON LABOR/CONSTRUCTION LEGAL ISSUES
AARON JANIK- EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR MARBA

President Trump Continues Overhaul of Collective Bargaining at Federal Level

If the past year to eighteen months are any indication, the Trump administration has markedly overhauled labor law at the federal level. From the removal of NLRB members to the replacement of the NLRB General Counsel, the administration has moved to reshape labor policy at a brisk pace. With recent appointments confirmed, President Trump now has a Republican majority at the NLRB. This majority will undoubtedly look to roll back some, if not most, of the Biden-era policies and decisions. While such shifts are not unexpected given the changes that have occurred under recent presidential administrations, one area of labor law now being targeted is the right of federal agency employees to collectively bargain with their employers (i.e., federal agencies).

In late March/early April 2025, President Trump signed Executive Orders 14,251 and 14,253. The orders invoked portions of the 1978 Civil Service Reform Act, which permit presidents to restrict collective bargaining over matters related to national security. Using § 7103(b)(1) of the Act, Executive Order 14,251 determined that several agencies “have as a primary function intelligence, counterintelligence, investigative, or national security work.” The Order then designated those agencies for exclusion. Every president since the enactment of the statute, with the exception of President Biden, has used § 7103(b)(1) to exclude certain agencies from collective bargaining coverage. EO 14,251 represents the largest such exclusion to date.

Not surprisingly, the union representing employees at the affected agencies filed suit on First Amendment

grounds, alleging that President Trump retaliated against their members for speaking out against certain administration policies. The American Federation of Government Employees (AFGE) represents roughly 800,000 employees. A judge in the Northern District of California initially issued a preliminary injunction against the administration. However, on February 26, 2026, a three-judge panel of the Ninth Circuit stayed that injunction, holding that the plaintiffs were unlikely to succeed on the merits of their retaliation claims. The panel—two judges appointed by President Trump and one appointed by President Obama—had previously stayed the lower court’s ruling last summer, but its February 26 decision fully dissolved the injunction. In concluding that the plaintiffs were unlikely to succeed on the merits, the court found that the Plaintiffs relied heavily on language contained in a White House FAQ rather than on the text of the Executive Order itself.

Prior to the ruling, the Office of Personnel Management directed agencies to move forward by rescinding and terminating collective bargaining agreements with their unions. AFGE has indicated that it is still deciding how to proceed following the recent decision. It may seek *en banc* review while also returning to the district court to continue litigating the matter. According to its statement, AFGE is “confident that when the full record is developed” it will prevail. The Ninth Circuit’s decision can be found by clicking [here](#).

UPCOMING SEMINARS AND EVENTS

JOIN THE GLCA FOR THEIR ANNUAL SAFETY AWARDS

DATE: THURSDAY, MARCH 12, 2026
 TIME: 5:00 P.M. TO 7:00 P.M.
 LOCATION: DOUBLE TREE BY HILTON
 510 E. IL ROUTE 83
 MUNDELEIN, IL 60060
 COST: \$60.00
 CONTACT: TO REGISTER CLICK [HERE](#)

CALENDAR

MARCH 2	12:15 P.M.	CBA CONSTRUCTION LAW SEMINAR (WEBINAR)
MARCH 5	12:00 A.M.	CHICAGO FED ECONOMIC CONDISTION UPDATE (WEBINAR)
MARCH 6	8:00 A.M.	LABORERS CRAFT COMMITTEE (ONLINE)
MARCH 6	9:30 A.M.	CEMENT MASONS LMCC MARKETING MEETING (ONLINE)
MARCH 10	12:00 P.M.	MARBA BOARD MEETING (MARBA)
MARCH 20	9:00 A.M.	AUTO MECHANICS TRAINING FUND (AURORA)
MARCH 23	10:00 A.M.	IRTBA LABOR RELATIONS (ITASCA)
MARCH 26	9:00 A.M.	TEAMSTERS JGC (MARBA)
MARCH 27	8:00 A.M.	LABORERS CRAFT COMMITTEE (ONLINE)
MARCH 31	9:00 A.M.	LABORERS JGC (BURR RIDGE)

¹ Information for MARBA Matters was obtained from the following sources: BNA Construction Labor Reports, Crain’s Chicago Business, Northwest Times of Indiana, Chicago Tribune, and Sun-Times, CDQ, and the BLS, as well as various websites and other publications.

Did You Know?

X, formerly known as Twitter, was launched on March 21, 2006.