



Labor Practitioners Predict a Surge in Union Activity

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Over the past several weeks, the AFL-CIO has seen the greatest mass exodus in labor history, setting the stage for a new dialogue on unions and the role they play in the American workplace. The rift became official on July 25, when two of this country's largest unions, the International Brotherhood of Teamsters and the Service Employees International Union, announced their intention to leave the AFL-CIO. Four total unions have been joined by three others (the Carpenters and Joiners of America, the Laborers International Union, and the United Farm Workers) to form the "Change to Win" coalition. Change to Win leaders have said that they formed the coalition because the AFL-CIO had lost focus on the importance of grass roots organizing, in favor of political maneuvering. Not surprisingly, practitioners like Steve Bernstein, foresee a significant increase in organizing drives. "I would look for short-term increases in organizing, particularly in those areas where coalition unions are already strong," Bernstein said. Change to Win claims that the new coalition, along with its member unions, will spend nearly \$750 million annually on organizing alone.

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