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ginia, Florida, Nebraska, Montana, and Wyoming have unionized. So have print magazines like **New York** magazine, the **New Yorker**, and **Fast Company**.

Not that there weren't setbacks and failures too. Some employers fought unionization. Joe Ricketts, billionaire founder of TD Ameritrade and patriarch of the family that owns the Chicago Cubs, shut down the sites Gothamist and DNAinfo and laid off 115 workers in five cities a week after the sites New York workers voted to form a union in 2017.

Gawker itself went dark in August 2016 just months after signing a three-year union contract that guaranteed a \$50,000 minimum salary, a successor clause, and union rights. The site was killed by a \$140 million court judgment in a lawsuit over its having published video of Hulk Hogan having sex with his friend's wife. But six other Gawker Media sites remain union under new ownership, including **Jezebel**, **Gizmodo** and **Deadspin**, and workers reached agreement with the latest owner,



Above, Vox Media employees swarm the offices of Writers Guild of America, East on June 6, 2019. More than 300 Vox Media employees took part in a 24-hour strike that day, and soon after, ratified their first collective bargaining

agreement. A month later, 49 writer-producers at affiliated Vox Entertainment joined the union.

G/O Media, on a second collective bargaining agreement this March.

Nolan, who now reports at the G/O site Splinter News, says industry's volatility is the biggest factor behind unionization.

"The biggest motivation for a lot of people is just wanting to have some level of stability, wanting to have a career instead of constantly being on this treadmill hopping from job to job, trying to hustle all the time to keep yourself afloat."

The workforce is also bringing

a distinctive agenda to union bargaining. Several newsrooms have negotiated diversity commitments from employers, in which they pledge to interview at least some minority applicants before each hiring decision. Protections against sexual harassment are also big. So are provisions intended to ensure editorial independence from owners' business interests.

The wave of organizing is bringing not just members but new energy into two unions: Writers Guild of America

(WGA) East and NewsGuild-Communications Workers of America (CWA).

WGA East is an affiliate of the AFL-CIO and a sister to the independent Hollywood union WGA West. Its core membership consists of about 4,000 writers in the television and film industries, but it has added over 1,000 members since the online media explosion began.

Meanwhile, the NewsGuild-CWA — known as the Newspaper Guild (TNG) until 2015 — was historically a union of print

newspaper reporters. It too has added over 1,000 members since the union wave began.

The impacts may benefit the union movement overall. One side effect of the continuing wave is likely to be much more sympathetic and knowledgeable coverage of unions.

#### SEE THE CONTRACTS

Writers Guild of America East publishes all its collective bargaining agreements online at [wgaeast.org/guild-contracts/staff-contracts](http://wgaeast.org/guild-contracts/staff-contracts).



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