



International Union of Operating Engineers

AFFILIATED WITH THE AMERICAN FEDERATION OF LABOR AND CONGRESS OF INDUSTRIAL ORGANIZATIONS

September 30, 2020

JAMES T. CALLAHAN
GENERAL PRESIDENT

TO: All IUOE Local Union Business Managers

Dear Brothers & Sisters:

I am pleased to inform you of the General Executive Board's decision to endorse Vice President Joe Biden for President of the United States in 2020.

After careful consideration, including a battery of four surveys of IUOE members in the last year, the Board determined that Vice President Biden is the best choice for Operating Engineers and their families.

We understand that a member's vote is a personal decision, and there will be plenty of members that disagree with the Board. The IUOE poll in June revealed that members were evenly split on the question of an endorsement of Joe Biden – 37% support the endorsement and 37% viewed an endorsement of the Vice President unfavorably. The remainder were undecided. Leadership oftentimes means taking a tough decision in an uncertain environment – one that will not make every one of our members happy.

Our role as a labor organization is to focus on the wages, benefits, and the prosperity of IUOE members. In short, a labor organization should focus on labor policy. On that score, there really is no comparison between the two major party candidates.

Joe Biden supports the IUOE position on labor policies, including Davis-Bacon prevailing wages, Project Labor Agreements, and labor law reform. He will sign the PRO (Protecting the Right to Organize) Act, which takes major strides to reform labor law, fundamentally altering power between workers and employers. The long-term decline of the union movement would end if we can enact meaningful labor law reform, something that has not been accomplished in generations.

This legislation eliminates states' ability to enact right-to-work laws. It reestablishes the ability of unions to establish secondary boycotts. And it ends the "two gates" system and allows "common situs" picketing. The PRO Act increases penalties on employers that violate labor law, finally giving the law real teeth and discouraging employers from the frequent violations that we see today. In short, working people will once again have power in the workplace if we can enact the PRO Act into law.

In contrast, President Trump has threatened to veto the PRO Act. In the Statement of Administration Policy, the White House says of the bill, "...H.R. 2474

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would also restrict workers' freedom of association. It abolishes State right-to work laws, and would thereby make union dues compulsory nationwide. Additionally, the bill would legalize "secondary boycotts," which Congress previously banned because they pressure workers to join a particular union. And it would rush union elections, depriving employees of time to make a considered choice...by imposing unnecessary and costly burdens on American businesses, this bill would take the country in precisely the opposite direction from the President's successful deregulatory agenda..."

Four years ago, President Trump vowed he would 'protect' and 'fight for' workers. Instead, his administration has systematically done the opposite. In a series of decisions and actions, the Trump National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) has narrowed its interpretation of what counts as "protected concerted activity"—for example, to protest or strike over safety conditions, or to organize a union—leaving workers unprotected against employer retaliation.

The Janus decision in 2018 by the U.S. Supreme Court struck a serious blow against public sector bargaining. With support from the President's newest Justice at the time, Neil Gorsuch, the decision extended right-to-work law into public sector employment in every state in the nation. Since then, President Trump has made appointments and nominations to the Supreme Court that has tilted it more conservative and more anti-worker.

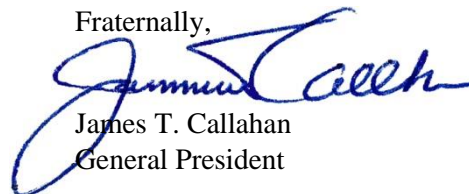
Now Trump Administration appointees are pushing a plan to change the way Davis-Bacon prevailing wage rates are calculated. They are scheming to move away from the current survey method and use Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) wage data instead. This would result in drastic cuts to the current D-B wage packages for Operating Engineers and all other crafts. For example, a current \$45.90 total D-B package for an Operating Engineer in Iowa will be cut to \$26.85 under the BLS method. These changes can, and most likely will, be imposed by Trump appointees during a second term and Congress will be powerless to stop it.

The IUOE has long-maintained a bi-partisan approach to politics and supports candidates on both sides of the aisle when they support issues important to Operating Engineers. As we do on so many other political decisions, we need to look beyond party. We need to look beyond personality. We must focus on those policies that benefit Operating Engineers and our families. With that as the driving criterion for our decision, the choice could not be clearer—Joe Biden is the best choice for President of the United States.

We understand that a member's vote is a personal decision. While we will never have unanimity in the IUOE ranks, the question about who leads the United States is simply too important to the lives and livelihoods of Operating Engineers to remain on the sidelines.

If you have any questions or comments, please feel free to contact me or Jeff Soth, IUOE Legislative and Political Director.

Fraternally,



James T. Callahan
General President