



Founded 1889

## *United Association* of Journeymen and Apprentices of the Plumbing and Pipe Fitting Industry of the United States and Canada

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**TO:** Vice Presidents, International and Special Representatives, and Business Managers  
**FROM:** General President Mark McManus and the UA Political Engagement Committee  
**DATE:** August 17, 2020  
**SUBJECT:** United Association Makes Endorsement in 2020 Presidential Campaign

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### OUR DECISION

With under three months until the General Election on November 3, the United Association of Journeymen and Apprentices of the Plumbing and Pipe Fitting Industry of the United States and Canada (UA) has concluded its endorsement review process. Our Political Engagement Committee (PEC) met frequently over the last few months to discuss and consider the merits of both presidential candidates, and whether either has earned the support of the Brothers and Sisters of the United Association. The PEC also weighed remaining neutral in this election. ***After extensive discussion and consideration, the UA PEC and General Officers have made the decision to endorse Vice President Joe Biden for President in 2020.***

The UA Political Engagement Committee was formed to directly involve a wide variety of UA members in the political process, including our endorsement decisions for candidates across the country. The PEC is made up of Business Managers, Business Agents, Journeymen and Journeywomen, and Apprentices from all across the country. They have met frequently over the last two years and began discussions for a possible presidential endorsement earlier this year.

### OUR PROCESS

Over the summer, the UA PEC met virtually to discuss its criteria for any potential endorsement in the presidential race. It was not guaranteed that an endorsement would be made. General President McManus and the UA PEC established four main policy areas to evaluate the candidates on the most important issues facing UA families: union rights, infrastructure, energy, and retirement security and benefits. A candidate did not necessarily need to score perfectly in each category to earn our endorsement; instead, a side-by-side comparison (attached) was done to establish a fuller picture of each candidate's track record and priorities moving forward.

### ON UNION RIGHTS

When it comes to protecting the fundamental abilities of unions to organize and fight for fair wages and benefits, the contrast could not be starker. Vice President Biden has committed to signing the Protecting the Right to Organize Act (PRO Act), which would make it easier for the UA and other unions to organize new contractors, strengthen the rights of workers, and enhance the National Labor





Relations Board's power to punish employers who violate labor laws. Biden will also impose a national ban on state so-called Right-to-Work laws, which weaken our ability to fight for fair wages and benefits. President Trump has refused to sign the PRO Act and is in favor of Right-to-Work laws. Both of those positions would do irreparable harm to UA families.

President Trump's Labor Department has led the fight against union apprenticeships by instituting Industry-Recognized Apprenticeship Programs, or IRAPs. These programs essentially allow employers to skirt our high standards for apprenticeships – meaning they can hire non-union labor on the cheap. Vice President Biden will defend registered union apprenticeships from IRAPs, helping us maintain our status as the gold standard of the construction industry.

On union rights, the choice is clear. If elected President, Vice President Biden will protect our ability to organize and win more work with fair wages and benefits. Perhaps more importantly: Vice President Biden would appoint pro-labor judges to the federal bench to defend against anti-labor attacks, as well as appointing as pro-worker Secretary of Labor.

### **ON INFRASTRUCTURE**

The bottom line on infrastructure is simple: do the candidates keep their promises? President Trump promised a trillion-dollar infrastructure package that would put UA members to work. Almost four years later and he has never brought that plan up for a vote. In fact, his only proposal has been to cut federal funding for roads and bridges while also privatizing construction projects. That's unacceptable.

Vice President Biden is proposing a \$1.3 trillion infrastructure plan that will, among other things, double federal investments in clean drinking water and water infrastructure – especially in communities at high risk of lead or other contamination. Vice President Biden has a history of delivering on his promises on infrastructure, too. In 2009, he led the execution of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act that saved our country from the brink of depression. Vice President Biden's infrastructure plans will ensure that prevailing wage and project labor agreements (PLAs) are used on all projects and strictly enforced.

Vice President Biden will not only ensure robust investment in infrastructure, but he will deliver where the Trump Administration has failed UA families.

### **ON ENERGY**

Any Administration's policies on energy must take an all-of-the-above approach; that's the only way to achieve our carbon emission goals while still producing affordable and efficient energy and keeping UA members employed. Truth be told, the Trump Administration has done some good things for us. However, while President Trump has relaxed some regulatory standards and allowed pipeline projects to proceed, his Administration has been haphazard in their approach. As a result, it has actually resulted in more litigation and lengthy delays that mean instability for our members.

Vice President Biden has committed to securing federal investments in nuclear energy and an all-of-the-above energy approach, even in the face of staunch opposition from environmental activists. Biden also supports Concentrated Solar Power (CSP) and hydropower and has committed to making strong investments in those technologies. In addition, a Biden Administration will work with us on common sense reforms to the permitting and regulatory processes that govern energy projects and avoid



frivolous lawsuits that keep our members from working. Under a Biden Administration, potential problems would be addressed early on so that projects would not be needlessly held up or forced to become economically unfeasible.

And let's set the record straight here, no matter what you might have heard: Vice President Biden has publicly declared there will not be a ban on fracking.

The reality here is that both candidates are not perfect on energy, but Vice President Biden has shown a genuine pledge to ensuring new investments in nuclear and a modernization of the permitting and regulatory processes that have held up our projects for years – which is enough to earn our support on energy.

### **ON RETIREMENT SECURITY AND BENEFITS**

It's no secret that many union pension plans are in danger of insolvency. Sadly, the Trump Administration has done nothing to fix multiemployer plans and protect the hard-earned retirement of UA members. Instead of addressing this looming crisis, the Trump Administration chose to put other retirement assets at risk by undoing a Labor Department rule implemented during the Obama-Biden Administration that protected the retirement investments of union members by requiring financial advisers to put their clients' interests ahead of their own. President Trump effectively let Wall Street benefit on the backs of working families.

Vice President Biden has also committed to forming a working group with labor leaders to address such issues as the current health of multiemployer pension plans. We need an immediate fix, and under a Biden Administration we will take concrete steps towards protecting our retirement security.

### **A STEADY HAND**

We're at a critical point in our nation's history: from defeating COVID-19, to rebuilding our economy and infrastructure, the next President will not have an easy job. With Vice President Biden, we know we'll have a steady hand in the Oval Office to help us come out of this pandemic stronger than before.

When Joe Biden was a young Senator, he didn't just stand with the UA in Washington – he stood with us on the line. Biden joined striking members on the jobsite in Delaware and helped stop management from breaking up the project, even when they called in the State Troopers. Compare that with President Trump, who actively fights against unions on his own projects and even refuses to pay contractors for work they already completed. We know who's really on our side.

Let's be real: Joe Biden is not a perfect candidate. Nobody will be with us on every single issue. But Biden will protect our ability to fight for fair wages and benefits, all while helping us win more work. He'll help us streamline and modernize permitting processes and invest in energy like nuclear, and he'll make sure our long-overdue pension relief gets done. He'll protect organized labor at its core and our ability to negotiate fair contracts with prevailing wage. We know we'll have an ally not only in the White House, but on FERC and PHMSA, too.

If we don't step up to lead, the UA is going to get left behind. We can't let that happen. That's why the UA PEC undertook this extensive process to evaluate the candidates on the issues that matter to us – and that's why we're outlining, for you, the candidates' stances and what led to our decision to endorse Vice President Joe Biden for President.