

# Framing the 2020 Elections



## **Biden Endorsement**

- Joe Biden has consistently prioritized issues affecting IATSE members and their families – from protecting the right to organize to defending our earned pension checks and health care. Joe has our full endorsement for President of the United States.
- Biden has shown genuine concern about the welfare of behind-the-scenes entertainment workers. His campaign hosted a virtual town hall with IATSE participants on how COVID-19 is specifically impacting entertainment workers and how he will address the unique challenges that those working in the entertainment industry will continue to face as we seek to recover from this unprecedented health crisis.
- As president, Biden will defend our right to organize, crack down on companies bargaining in bad faith, end “right to work” laws, appoint members to the National Labor Relations Board who will protect workers, increase workplace safety and health, and make it easier for working people to organize and form a union.
- Many union members are all-too-familiar with “captive audience” meetings in which employers try to intimidate workers into not forming a union. The Biden administration would ban these outright and support strong financial penalties for employers who union bust.
- Biden presents a stark and undeniable contrast from the current administration with regard to leadership and support for working people. Working people deserve a pro-worker President.

## **Labor Record of the Trump Administration**

- Whatever you think of the current administration, it has made workplaces more dangerous, anti-union forces more formidable, and our retirement security more uncertain.
- Trump’s labor record consists of slashing rules designed to protect us on the job, cutting workplace health and safety inspectors to their lowest level in history, and taking away overtime pay from millions of workers.
- The Trump administration has defended “right to work” laws that lead to lower pay for working people and higher pay for corporate CEOs. His first Supreme Court appointee, Neil Gorsuch, was the deciding vote to impose “right to work” on public employees nationwide.
- The President dictates the greater administration. The Secretary of Labor is a career union-busting lawyer, Eugene Scalia. The five-member National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) is composed of three Republican Trump appointees, with two Democratic seats held vacant. Only three members are needed for a quorum to rule.
- The Trump NLRB has systematically rolled back workers’ rights to form unions and engage in collective bargaining with their employers. It has done the bidding of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, acting on all 10 of the chamber’s top labor law priorities.
- The current administration has rolled back federal safety regulations that keep working people safe on the job. There are fewer workplace safety inspectors at the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) than ever before, and the number of workplace injuries has risen.
- In 2004, Donald Trump crossed the IATSE picket line of “The Apprentice,” where crew members of the reality TV show were speaking up together to get paid fairly for the work they did. The day he crossed that picket line was the day he showed how little he cares about IATSE entertainment workers.

## **COVID-19 Pandemic Response & Relief**

- IATSE working families and our communities are suffering due to an incompetent reaction to the COVID-19 health crisis. Trump dismantled the pandemic response infrastructure handed to him by the previous administration, ignored clear warnings from health experts in January, and claimed COVID-19 was a hoax and would magically disappear. By downplaying the seriousness of this health crisis, IATSE lives and jobs have been lost.

- Testing is key to getting us back to work. The fact is that the United States did not have proper testing available in March despite Trump repeatedly claiming that we did; and even now, we do not have adequate tests, masks, PPE, and necessary equipment.
- The original CARES Act relief legislation drafted by Senate Republicans contained no unemployment relief for displaced freelance entertainment workers. Democrats fought to include enhanced unemployment insurance benefits and eligibility for freelancers, self-employed, and gig workers in the final CARES Act that passed into law.
- House Democrats passed the HEROES Act, addressing many IATSE COVID-19 legislative priorities. The bill would extend the CARES Act unemployment insurance provisions, allow workers to maintain their employer-sponsored health coverage with a 100% COBRA subsidy, protect our healthy pension plans, and provide economic support for organizations in the arts, entertainment, and media industries to get people back to work.
- Congressional Republicans have dismissed the HEROES Act and questioned the need for additional federal relief following the CARES Act, delaying bipartisan negotiations on subsequent COVID-19 legislation.
- As IATSE kin are out of work and struggling due to the pandemic, Congressional Republicans and the Trump administration are threatening to end the enhanced unemployment insurance benefits provided in the CARES Act that are sustaining thousands of unemployed entertainment workers until we can safely return to work.
- Millions of Americans and many IATSE families have lost or are at risk of losing employer-sponsored health insurance coverage due to the pandemic. Yet, Senate Republicans have no plan to act on health care assistance.

### **Social Justice & Equality**

- The current administration has responded to calls for social justice and equality with divisive rhetoric and a blatant disregard for human life. We need leadership that will listen and unite instead of divide and conquer.

### **Retirement Security**

- The Trump administration has put Medicare and Social Security at risk by proposing billions of dollars in cuts. And under the current administration's watch, a looming crisis in multiemployer pensions has gotten even worse.
- After a lifetime of hard work, we all deserve to retire with dignity. Senate Republicans have proposed a plan that would make big cuts to retirees' benefits, decimate healthy plans like ours, and threaten the future of the entire multiemployer pension system. We must defend our hard-earned pensions.
- Biden has pledged to defend the pensions we've negotiated and worked hard for and will make sure multiemployer plans are protected. He also will protect Social Security and Medicare.

### **Federal Arts Funding**

- As the union behind entertainment, we know that funding for the arts directly impacts work for our skilled craftspeople. Trump has repeatedly proposed outright elimination of the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA), which would put countless community theaters and entertainment jobs on the chopping block. We must continue to fight back on attacks seeking to defund vital programs – like the NEA – that support working families, promote our crafts, and ensure all Americans have access to the arts and entertainment.

### **Tax Fairness**

- In 2017, Republicans rammed through a massive tax giveaway to big corporations and the wealthy. Meanwhile, the tax scam eliminated workers' ability to deduct business expenses like our equipment, travel for work, and union dues. This caused an industrywide tax increase for union creative professionals.

### **Register & Vote – MAKE YOUR VOICE HEARD!**

- Nationally, about 4 in 10 eligible voters did not cast a ballot in the 2016 presidential election. This is a larger subset of the population than voted for either candidate. Are you registered? (<https://www.nass.org/can-i-vote>)
- Visit <https://www.iatse.net/get-involved/political-legislative> to access the *2020 IATSE Election Planners by State*, which provide election and early voting dates, voter registration and vote by mail application deadlines, and resources to find voter ID requirements and polling locations. Educate yourself and make a plan to vote.
- COVID-19 has created unprecedented strain on our electoral system, but every state already has some form of voting by mail. In this uncertain time, we encourage our IATSE kin to identify and utilize state-specific vote by mail options as public health and safety concerns persist.