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## NOVEMBER 2020 GENERAL ELECTION

# Platforms show parties increasingly divided on unions

The parties today are far apart on labor policy.

By Don McIntosh

It wasn't always this way, but today the two major political parties in the United States are highly polarized—for and against unions.

The Republican Party, particularly at the national level, has increasingly become explicitly anti-union. At this year's Republican National Convention, former Wisconsin governor Scott Walker was given the honor of nominating Mike Pence as vice president. [Walker's claim to fame: stripping his state's public employees of collective bargaining rights.] The convention also gave a coveted speaking spot to anti-union teacher Rebecca Friedrichs. Friedrichs' lawsuit against her union was a precursor to *Janus v AFSCME*, the 2018 Supreme Court decision that barred any requirement that public employees pay union dues.

"Unions are subverting our republic," Friedrichs said at the Republican convention. "They undermine educational excellence, morality, law, and order."

The Republican party didn't adopt a new platform at this year's convention, on the rationale that too few delegates could take part in its crafting, but instead re-adopted its 2016 platform, which contains two references to "union bosses" (and 10 references to President Obama.) Here's some of the Republican Party's official agenda:



**CONVENTION UNION-BASHING** At the 2020 Republican Convention, anti-union teacher Rebecca Friedrichs was given a convention spot to attack unions, saying they deprive workers of their voices. "President Trump," Friedrichs said, "he's breaking the unions' grip on our schools."

- Pass a national "right-to-work" law, banning any requirement that union-represented workers pay dues.
- Repeal the Davis-Bacon law, which requires that the prevailing wage be paid on federal construction projects.
- Eliminate the right of airport TSA workers to unionize.
- Declare that minimum wage should be handled at the state and local level (even as Republican-led states have barred local jurisdictions from passing minimum wage.)

Meanwhile, there are signs that Democrats are returning to more robust pro-union stances. The 90-page official 2020 Democratic Party platform actually leads with its workers rights proposals, and is the most pro-union in recent memory. Some highlights:

- Prioritize passing the PRO Act. The Act, which passed the House this year, makes it easier and faster for workers to unionize and get a first contract, cracks down on employers who fire union supporters, bars employers from holding "captive audience" anti-union meetings, bans permanent replacement of strikers and restores the right to secondary boycotts, repeals so-called "right-to-work" laws, and extends union rights to domestic workers and farmworkers.
- Double the federal minimum wage to \$15/hour by 2026.
- Legislate paid sick days and 12 weeks of paid family and medical leave for all workers, so new parents can recover from childbirth and bond with new children, and take time when they or loved ones are seriously ill.
- Increase funding and staffing at the Department of Labor to aggressively enforce wage, hour, health, and safety rules, and increase funding to the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission and increase its authority to initiate directed investigations into civil rights violations
- Extend minimum wage and overtime protections to gig and platform workers.
- Guarantee a minimum level of collective bargaining rights for state and local public-sector employees.
- Make massive federal infrastructure investments, including modernizing highways, roads, bridges, and airports; high-speed rail; rural broadband; and clean energy, clean transportation, and advanced manufacturing.
- Pass a constitutional amendment to overturn Citizens United, and eliminate all private financing from federal elections.

**SEE THE COMPLETE PLATFORMS**  
Democratic <https://bit.ly/2l4kyX0>  
Republican <https://bit.ly/3ntYUMV>

## LCSA fundraiser under way

The holidays are just around the corner and Labor's Community Service Agency (LCSA) is planning an innovative drive-thru Presents from Partners event this year, with a goal of serving 900 kids (up from 300 last year), some of whom have been impacted by COVID-19 or wildfires. LCSA also wants to distribute \$15,000 in gift cards to families that attend. The gift cards can be used for holiday gifts in lieu of the thousands of toys kids typically pick from.

But to pull it off takes money. LCSA is now accepting donations from locals, councils, individuals, vendors, and businesses. All cards are welcomed — Fred Meyer union-represented cards are highly encouraged!

You can mail or drop off gift cards to LCSA at 9955 SE Washington St., #301, Portland, OR, 97216.

If you wish to ship toys instead, please send them to Sheet Metal Local 16 at 2379 NE 178th Ave., Portland, OR, 97230.

The deadline for donations is December 7.

For more information, call 503-231-4962.

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**PRESENTS FROM PARTNERS  
PARENTS ROOM**

**THE NEED THIS YEAR IS GREATER THAN EVER!**

**Please consider making a cash donation at IBEWUWFCU today!**

**Donations accepted until November 30, 2020**

**Elves will shop for gifts that children can give their parents—  
your donation will light up a child's face.**

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