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... Biden meeting

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counsel at the NLRB, she's been working as special counsel for Communications Workers of America (CWA). Abruzzo will need to be confirmed by the Senate.

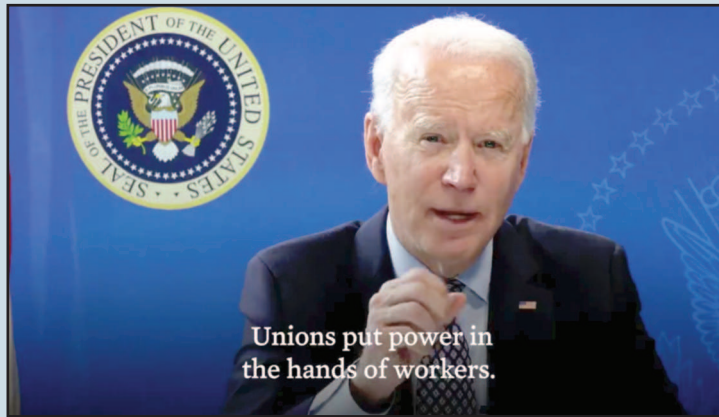
Trump's IRAP apprenticeship program sent to scrap heap

Biden also took steps Feb. 17 to support the apprenticeship model of workforce training, drawing immediate applause from building trades unions.

First, he told labor leaders that he'll ask the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) to reinstate the National Advisory Committee on Apprenticeships.

Connie Ashbrook, a member of Portland-based Elevator Constructors Local 23 who headed up Oregon Tradeswomen Inc., had served on the advisory committee for seven years when Trump took office in 2017. Up to then the 27-member group had been meeting quarterly to advise the DOL on apprenticeship issues. The new administration ghosted them.

"There was no formal goodbye," Ashbrook told the *Labor Press*. "I talked to the director of the office of apprenticeship. He



A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Feb. 28 video on the @POTUS Twitter account — <https://bit.ly/3b59V5G>

With Amazon warehouse workers in Alabama voting on a union, Joe Biden speaks out.

"I have long said America wasn't built by Wall Street. It was built by the middle class, and unions built the middle class. Unions put power in the hands of workers. They level the playing field. They give you a stronger voice, for your health, your safety, higher wages,

protections from racial discrimination and sexual harassment. Unions lift up workers, both union and non-union, but especially Black and Brown workers.

"I made it clear — I made it clear when I was running — that my administration's policy would be to support unions organizing and the right to collectively bargain. I'm keeping that promise.

"You should all remember, the National Labor Relations Act didn't just say that union

are *allowed* to exist, it said that we should encourage unions. So let me be really clear: It's not up to me to decide whether anyone should join a union. But let me be even more clear: It's not up to an employer to decide that either. The choice to join a union is up to the workers — full stop.

"Today and over the next few days and weeks workers in Alabama and all across America are voting on whether to organize a union in their workplace." This is vitally important — a vitally important choice as America grapples with the deadly pandemic, the economic crisis and the reckoning on race — what it reveals the deep economic disparities that still exist in our country.

"And there should be no intimidation, no coercion, no threats, no anti-union propaganda. No supervisor should confront employees about their union preferences. You know, every worker should have a free and fair choice to join a union. The law guarantees that choice. And it's your right, not that of an employer, it's *your* right. No employer can take that right away.

"So make your voice heard. God bless you and may God protect the workers and their families who are trying to figure out how to make it, fairly."

said, 'We're just going to wait and see. You can assume you're still a member of the committee until you hear differently.'" That was the last she heard. The DOL never called another meeting of the committee.

Biden next told labor leaders he supports Rep. Bobby Scott's National Apprenticeship Act of 2021, which would greatly in-

crease federal funding for apprenticeship and pre-apprenticeship programs, including programs that help recruit women and people of color.

Finally, Biden signed a new executive order rescinding the 2017 Trump executive order that had created "industry-recognized apprenticeship programs" (IRAPs). The Trump order

touted IRAPs as a new kind of apprenticeship program that could be designed and overseen solely by employers and employer groups. Federal apprenticeship laws dating back to 1937 had mandated a role for labor representatives in setting standards for federally recognized

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CORRECTION

Pension rescue GRANT. We incorrectly reported in our Feb. 19 issue that a COVID relief bill under consideration in Congress would rescue distressed union-sponsored multiemployer pension plans through a loan. The Butch Lewis Act of 2019 (S.2254) would have rescued the plans via a loan, but the version of pension rescue in Section H of the House COVID relief bill takes the form of a cash grant.



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