

# RWDSU

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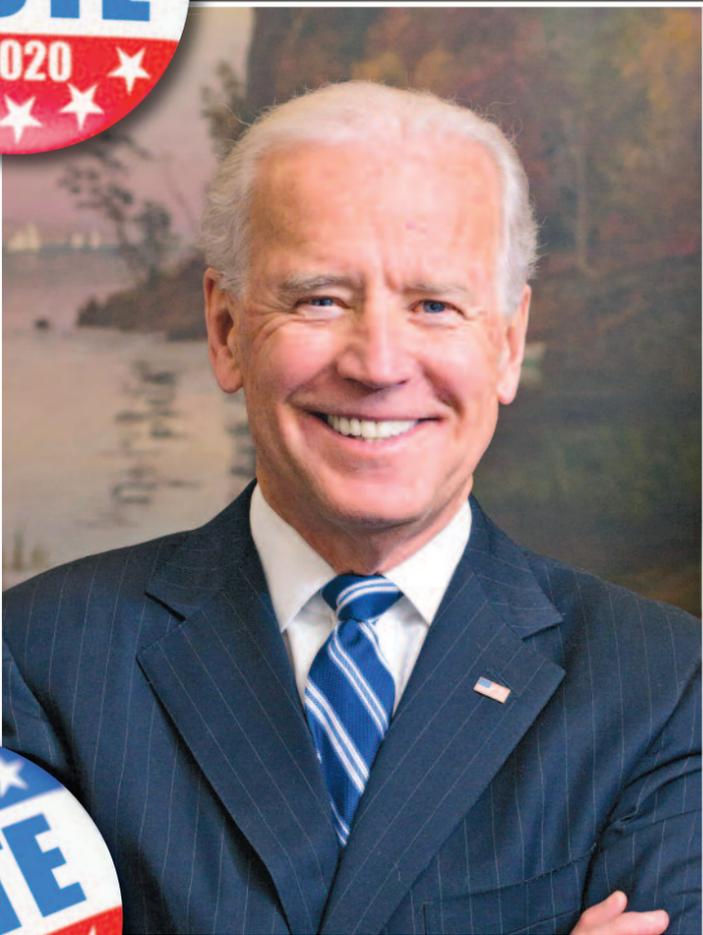
Fall 2020: Special Elections Issue

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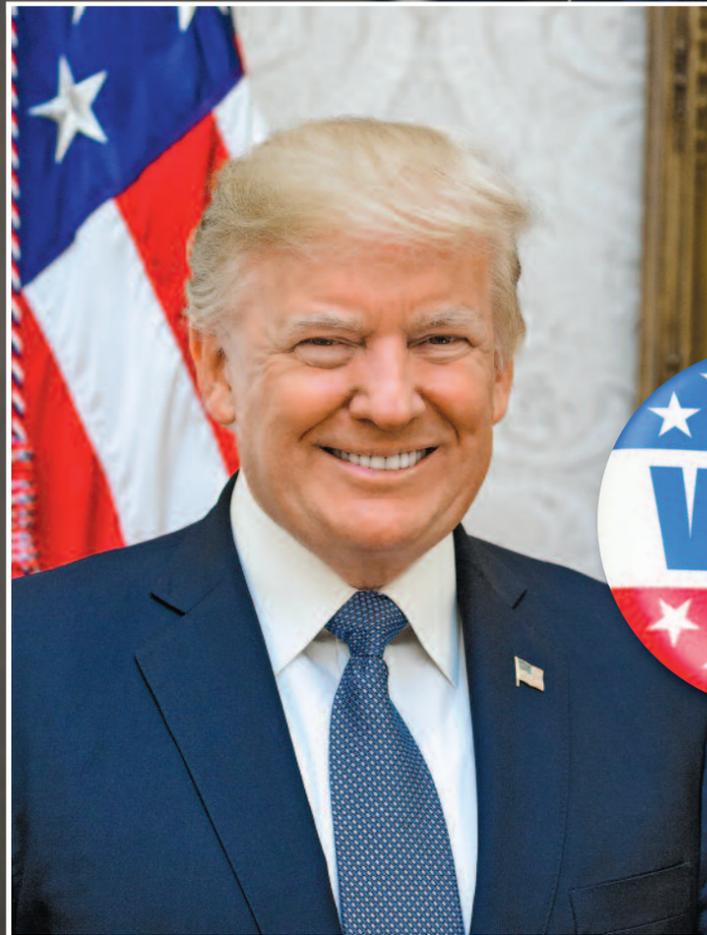
Vol. 68, No. 3

**THE MOST IMPORTANT ELECTION OF OUR LIFETIME  
ON NOVEMBER 3, MAKE YOUR VOICE HEARD: VOTE!  
ELECTION 2020 COVERAGE**

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VICE PRESIDENT JOE BIDEN



PRESIDENT DONALD TRUMP



Retail, Wholesale and  
Department Store Union, UFCW  
370 Seventh Avenue, Suite 501  
New York, NY 10001

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Workers Win  
Union Voice in  
Pennsylvania**

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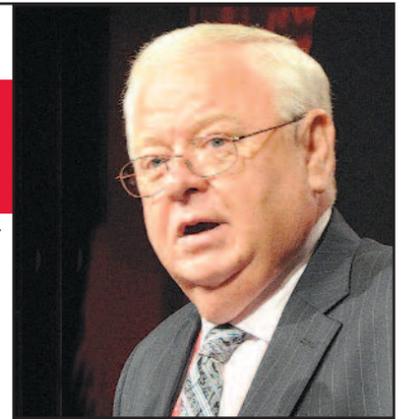
The objectives of the Retail, Wholesale and Department Store Union are to unite into this organization all workers employed in its jurisdiction in order to advance and safeguard their economic and social welfare...The Retail, Wholesale and Department Store Union will strive to preserve democratic processes, protect civil liberties, aid in the adoption of legislation which will promote the economic and social welfare of its members and that of labor in general and to improve the educational, social and cultural standards of society as a whole. *Through unity of purpose and action, through collective bargaining and legislation, the Retail, Wholesale and Department Store Union is dedicated to the ideal of making the jobs of its members the best jobs that can be devised from the point of view of wages, hours of work, physical conditions and human relations. Preamble RWDSU Constitution.*



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**MESSAGE FROM YOUR OFFICERS**

**It's More Important than Ever to Vote!**

**T**he 2020 elections are truly the most important elections of our lifetimes, and we owe it to ourselves, our families, and our communities to make sure we are prepared to vote and that our voices are heard at the ballot box.

*We need leadership that understands the struggles of everyday working Americans, and understands the importance of a science-based, rather than political response to our worst public health crisis in over 100 years.*

As November 3 - Election Day – approaches, America faces crises on three critical fronts: a public health pandemic, an economy in the worst shape since the Great Depression, and long-standing structural racism that holds far too many of us back and even endangers the lives of our brothers and sisters. The past four years have shown us the needless suffering that results from poor leadership and reckless economic and public health policies. We've seen how bad situations are worsened when those in charge don't care about our concerns, and are only interested in their own political fortunes and the economic needs of their wealthy backers.

We need leadership that understands the struggles of everyday working Americans, and understands the importance of a science-based, rather than political

response to our worst public health crisis in over 100 years. We need leadership that will represent all Americans, not just the wealthy. We need leadership that cares about the entire country, not just the states that voted to support them. We need a government that will protect workers' rights with a strong NLRB, and will protect your life and health at work with a strong OSHA.

In this issue of the Record, you'll see a comparison of the candidates on the issues that matter to working people, and you'll read the RWDSU's choices in important state and local races that will directly affect our power at the bargaining table and in the workplace. And you'll read about what's at stake in these very important elections.

We can't change anything if we don't vote, and early voting and absentee ballot voting is already underway.

For more information on voting rights, absentee voting, and early voting deadlines in your state, visit the RWDSU Elections Hub at [www.rwdsu.org](http://www.rwdsu.org). Make sure you are registered and make a plan to either vote in person on November 3, or to vote early or by mail. Encourage your friends, family, co-workers and other voters you know to do the same. We simply cannot afford to sit this one out. The 2020 elections will have an unprecedented impact on our economy, our public health, and social equality, and your vote is needed more than ever before. ■

*We can't change anything for the better if we don't vote.*

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## RWDSU AROUND OUR UNION

# Workers Continue Fight for Union at Housing Works

**E**mployees at Housing Works – which provides housing, health-care, job training, legal assistance, and other supportive services for people living with HIV/AIDS in New York City – have spent the year fighting for their right to vote to join the RWDSU. As Housing Works workers have fought for better jobs and to improve their clients' care, management has disregarded their progressive roots in favor of old-school union-busting tactics.

In September, the RWDSU fought back by filing Unfair Labor Practice complaints with the federal National Labor Relations Board, alleging company leadership fired four of their rank-and-file for being outspoken unionizers, a violation of labor law.

"I feel that I was targeted in a lot of ways because after we did go public [with our union drive], I was not reserved and quiet about my involvement," said Rebecca Mitnik, a former Housing Works case worker and one of four workers in the ULP complaints.

Mitnik – who worked to connect clients who have HIV/AIDS and are experiencing homelessness to various government support services – was among the early organizers of the push to unionize, talking to her co-workers in small sessions about working conditions. The termination not only left Mitnik without a job in the middle of a public health crisis, it ended her relationships with the people she cared for and left them in the dark by severing her company email account.

"I couldn't terminate relationships with my clients, I couldn't tell them I wasn't abandoning them," she said.

Also in September, workers and the RWDSU protested outside of the organization's South Slope, Brooklyn, location, which was employing "volunteer" labor after laying off the store's workers before reopening after being closed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. For employees, it was just another sign of disrespect from Housing Works.

"They opened a thrift shop using free labor even while laid-off retail workers still haven't been given their jobs back," Housing Works employee Brian Grady said during the rally.

Housing Works employees and the RWDSU have pledged to continue to apply pressure

on the organization to demand that it will stop trying to silence its workers and stop fighting their organizing campaign.

"The bottom line is this: Every time workers at Housing Works have tried to demonstrate the overwhelming support the union has, management has fought any effort to let them have a voice," said RWDSU President Stuart Appelbaum. "Time after time. It's been consistent. Always with a different excuse."

"These workers won't quit in their fight for respect and a voice on the job, and the RWDSU won't either," Appelbaum added. ■



Housing Works employees protest in Brooklyn in September.

## RWDSU to Bosses: Retail Workers are not the Mask Police



**"Our members aren't the mask police; it's a company and management responsibility,"**

– RWDSU Local 3 President  
Cassandra Berrocal

RWDSU members, like this Local 108 member in New Jersey, are protecting themselves and customers by wearing facemasks. It's important that management does its part to enforce mask rules.

**T**he RWDSU has been at the forefront of the effort to protect retail workers during the COVID-19 pandemic. The union has consistently fought for mandatory facemask use by all customers in stores, and fought for management to enforce these policies rather than members. With far too many stories of arguments, fights, and even shootings over mask policies at retail stores during the pandemic, it's an important issue for worker health and safety.

"Employees should not be expected to put their safety and their life on the line for their employer. That's an unreasonable expectation," said RWDSU President Stuart Appelbaum. "Retailers mistakenly believe that it is better for business to not potentially alienate customers by enforcing facemask rules. In fact, not creating a safe environment is worse for business," Appelbaum added.

The RWDSU has reached agreements at retail stores such as Macy's and Bloomingdales in

New York City that make it clear management is responsible for enforcement. "Our members aren't the mask police; it's a company and team leader – supervisor – responsibility," said RWDSU Local 3 President Cassandra Berrocal. "Masks are helping keep everyone safe, and thanks to union representation at Bloomingdales and other retail stores, it's clear that workers are responsible for their work, not for enforcing this important policy." ■

# RWDSU AROUND OUR UNION

## Genesis Abington Manor Employees Win in Pennsylvania

**N**ursing home workers at Genesis Abington Manor in Clark's Summit, Pennsylvania scored a win by joining RWDSU Local 262 in late July. The unit of 57 Licensed Practical Nurses and Certified Nursing Assistants won their NLRB election, and their union voice. They join hundreds of other Genesis workers who have joined the RWDSU in New Jersey and the Keystone State.

The workers at Abington Manor began organizing after years of losing benefits, stagnant wages, and unaffordable health care coverage.

LPN Kacey Walsh said "When I started the union campaign it was because I saw where the facility had weaknesses and how this was affecting the floor staff. The workers here do an amazing job together and truly love the residents, and it shows in the care they receive. In order to best serve the residents, we knew we needed a voice on the job, and the dignity and respect that comes with joining a union." ■

"The organizing committee of workers at Abington Manor truly did an amazing job," said RWDSU Organizer Paul Bazemore. "They deserve a strong contract, and that's what they are going to get."



## Quaker Oats Officers Elected

**L**ocal 110 members elected Officers at Quaker Oats in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, on August 27. Elected to three-year terms were: Chairperson of the Committee Shane Forbes. Forbes also serves as President of Local 110; Unit Recorder Phil (Flip) Ondler. Phil also serves as Local 110 Recorder; 1st Vice President (Chief Steward) Bob Dixon; 3rd Vice President Mark (Woody) Woldruff; and 1st Director at Large Marcus Langston. ■

## RWDSU Members Give Back in New Jersey

**O**ver the summer, RWDSU Local 108 and Local 262 hosted a grocery giveaway in New Jersey for union members and others in need. The locals were proud to partner with Mecenas - a Latino-aid charitable organization - to help organize a food drive to help community members who have been affected by the pandemic crisis. The event was sponsored in part by RWDSU-represented supermarkets.

"During this crisis, we think it's important to work with RWDSU-employers in the community to give back, and we were excited about the strong response," said Local 108 President Charles N. Hall, Jr. ■



Local 108 and 262 members and officers helped union members in need put food on the table in New Jersey.

# RWDSU VOICES: MEMBERS DISCUSS ISSUES, CANDIDATES, AND IMPORTANCE OF VOTING



**T**he 2020 Elections are upon us and, and voting is more important than ever for RWDSU members. RWDSU members throughout the country are talking about the issues and the candidates – and why we need to have our voices heard as we determine the direction of our country.

**Calvin Ewing**  
Mid-South Council  
Tyson  
Alabama



"I vote in every election, because I want representatives who believe in what I believe. The biggest issue for me is

Social Security; I'm getting ready to retire, and my mom already depends upon her Social Security benefits. Democrats want to protect Social Security, and they are in favor of unions. Unions are the backbone of the country, and that makes these elections even more important."

**Norman Hartley**  
Local 379  
Columbus Window  
Ohio



"I'm supporting Biden/Harris, because I feel like I don't have a choice. Health care and social justice are

huge issues for me, and I'm a black man in America and I feel like too often law enforcement isn't on my side. There needs to be some accountability; our lives matter, our families matter, and I feel like if we stay on the current path things are just going to get worse. It's our right to vote, people gave their lives for that right, and we have to make sure we don't allow anybody to suppress our votes."

**Mike Markus (and his son Owen)**  
Local 379  
Aramark  
Pennsylvania



"I'm ready to support a change in leadership, so I'm voting for Biden. For me the biggest issue is the pandemic; it was handled horribly. It wasn't taken seriously at all by Trump, and as a result it wasn't taken seriously by far too many people including employers. Early on it was a fight even to get basic safety precautions. I have a wife and family and the number one obligation of the government is to protect us and we need a government who will."

**Mark Holup**  
Local 3  
Bloomingdale's  
New York



"I respect Joe Biden, he's compassionate and he's got the experience, and I think Harris is a great choice. I think the Biden/Harris

team would be a great change for us. The current president, in my mind, thinks he's a dictator, and that's unamerican. We need to respect our voting rights, not discourage people from voting, and I'm very uneasy about President Trump's attacks on the Post Office and other important institutions."

**Leshawn Nelson**  
Local 338  
Gristedes  
New York



"It's important for all of us to vote so we all have an equal opportunity to have our voices heard. Voting is the key so we can have our say as

we all try to overcome these many challenges we are all experiencing right now."

**Alan Perkins**  
Local 110  
Quaker Oats  
Iowa



"I'm voting for Joe Biden and Kamala Harris for the simple fact that regardless of what Trump may say, his labor board appointees

and other appointees are chipping away at our rights in the workplace and weakening unions. At the end of the day, nothing is more important than a safe workplace, earning a fair wage, a retirement you can enjoy while watching your family grow, and we need to elect candidates who understand unions help make that happen."

**Kimberly Carmichael**  
Southeast Council  
Nestle  
Georgia



"Unions and working people haven't gotten any help from the Trump Administration. Nobody is perfect, but I know things

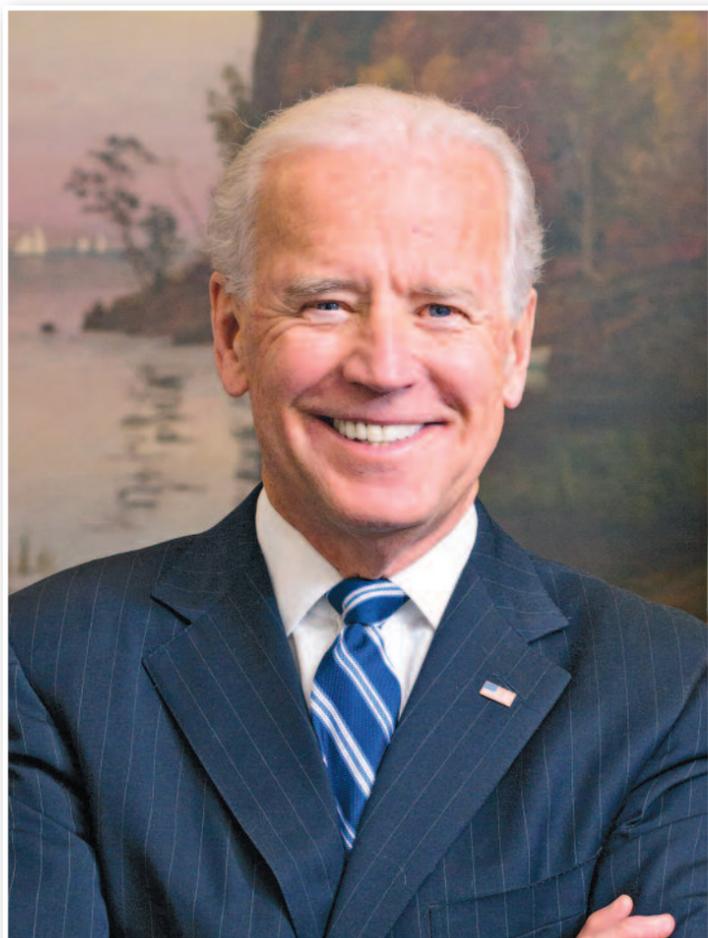
will get better with Biden and Harris. The NLRB is terrible right now, and that's one thing that would change; we'll have a labor board that has workers' interests in mind instead of the bosses. And, I think the past few years has really opened a lot of eyes about systemic racism. If we are going to address racism and move forward, we need Trump gone and Biden in the White House."

**Camille Yelverton**  
Local 108  
Merakey Allegheny Valley School  
New Jersey



"I believe Joe Biden is the better choice to lead America because he is pro-union and has a much better understanding of

the average American and the struggles we face. Trump lies about his accomplishments and has overturned many of the good laws former President Obama and Biden passed including those that strengthened civil rights. Biden was a champion of the health care bill, and he's level-headed and understands that America has many faces."



VICE PRESIDENT JOE BIDEN

# BIDEN AND TRUMP

Issue	Biden on the Issues
<b>Union Organizing</b>	Biden supports the Protecting the Right to Organize Act (PRO Act) that would hold union-busting companies accountable. Biden's plan would even hold company executives liable when they engage in union-busting. He has also proposed a ban on right-to-work laws.
<b>Pensions</b>	Biden would work to pass the Butch Lewis Act to create a Pension Rehabilitation Administration (PRA) and allow failing multi-employer pension plans to borrow money from the PRA.  The coronavirus has made the country's pension crisis worse and created uncertainty for retirees. The Butch Lewis Act would help stabilize pension plans for 10 million workers from coal miners to truck drivers.
<b>Wage Theft &amp; Misclassified Workers</b>	Biden will put a stop to companies that take advantage and misclassify workers as "independent contractors." This would provide rights and protections to the workers who often deliver our groceries and packages. He will staff the NLRB with appointees who understand worker issues.
<b>Federal Contracts</b>	Biden will rein in companies that receive our taxpayer dollars through federal contracts but then violate labor laws. Under his plan, if companies with federal contracts union-bust or steal workers' wages, Biden would end their contracts.
<b>Bad Faith Bargaining</b>	Biden has a clear plan to penalize companies that bargain in bad faith to avoid or delay a union contract.  Biden wants companies to pay a penalty as well as make workers whole for the time that companies stalled negotiations.
<b>Expanding Overtime</b>	As Vice President, Biden helped oversee the introduction of a new rule to expand overtime pay for more than 4 million salaried workers who were previously being ripped off.  If elected President, Biden will re-introduce this overtime rule.
<b>Poultry &amp; Meat Packing Line Speeds &amp; safety</b>	Biden is committed to re-introducing restrictions on line speeds to help protect hard-working RWDSU members in poultry and meat-packing plants.  Biden also believes plant workers should get paid sick leave and free COVID-19 treatment and that they should be able to join unions. He also believes undocumented workers should be shielded from deportation when they report an illness.
<b>Workplace Health &amp; Safety</b>	Biden has committed to increasing the number of OSHA inspectors and making clear directions for federal agencies to increase their inspections.  Biden supports OSHA Emergency Standards to increase access to protective gear and to stop employers from retaliating against workers who raise safety concerns.
<b>Increase the Minimum Wage</b>	When he was Vice President, Biden helped many states increase the minimum wage to \$15 per hour. He believes the federal minimum wage should be increased from \$7.25 to \$15 and indexing the minimum wage to the median hourly wage, so that low income workers don't fall behind.

**O**n Tuesday, November 3, our country faces the most important election of our lifetime. It is, as Democratic candidate Joe Biden says, an election to decide the soul of America. The stakes couldn't be higher; we need to elect leadership during these turbulent, unprecedented times that can lift us beyond the COVID-19 pandemic, unite us rather than tear us apart. Most importantly, we need someone who understands the issues that working people face, and has the compassion to care about moving working people forward, and fight for economic and social equality.

And that's why the 2020 Presidential election will be so crucial for the future of working Americans. Social Security, income inequality, workplace health and safety, health care, a strong National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) and OSHA to protect workers, and the very right to vote to vote itself; the winner will determine the direction of our country with the things that matter to us. One candidate, Joe Biden, has a decades-long legacy of fighting for working people, owing to his working-class background and a lifetime of meeting adversity head on and rising to the challenge. The other candidate, Donald Trump, now has a record of elected service, and it's one of failing to meet challenges, taking every opportunity to divide Americans, and fighting for the interests of the wealthy and connected while working people struggle to deal with the worst economy since the Great Depression.



We can shape our future by voting on November 3. And before we cast our vote, it's important that we compare the candidates' views on the issues that important to us ■

# : ON THE ISSUES

## Trump on the Issues

Trump issued Executive Orders attacking the collective bargaining rights of federal employees. As President, he issued a rule weakening roughly 800,000 home care workers' ability to be union members. He is also on record supporting right-to-work laws that weaken workers' union voice.

President Trump and the Republicans have taken no action to pass the Butch Lewis Act in the Republican-controlled Senate to make it law.

Trump slashed the number of labor enforcement investigators by 20 percent and centralized oversight in his Washington DC political appointees. His administration has weakened the NLRB.

While in office, President Trump rescinded the Fair Pay & Safe Workplaces Executive Order, which requires a company's labor record to be considered when awarding them a federal contract.

The Trump Labor Board has issued or proposed new regulations that would:

- (a) allow large corporations that indirectly control workers' jobs to escape their responsibility to collectively bargain with workers,
- (b) strip certain student-workers of their right to join a union and allow their employers to fire them for trying,
- (c) deliberately slow down the union election process and allow employers to delay union elections by instigating unnecessary pre-election litigation.

When Trump became President he abandoned this overtime regulation which has cost workers \$2.2 billion in lost overtime wages.

Trump removed restrictions on line speeds in poultry and meat packing plants, making a dangerous job even more perilous.

Trump invoked the Defense Production Act to keep poultry plants open during the pandemic with utter disregard for worker safety – the same act he refused to invoke when the nation was facing a dangerous PPE shortage in the early days of the pandemic.

Trump has slashed the number of inspectors working for the Occupation Safety & Health Administration (OSHA). This has been devastating during the ongoing pandemic.

Trump supports giving legal immunity for companies to protect them from lawsuits related to the pandemic, including from workers who get sick or die.

Trump flip flops on the minimum wage and has not given a clear position during his presidency. When campaigning in 2015, he said "wages were too high" and "I think having a low minimum wage is not a bad thing for this country." Trump said in July 2020 he would put out a statement on the minimum wage but like many of his promises and claims there's been no action.



PRESIDENT DONALD TRUMP

## What is the Protecting the Right to Organize Act ('PRO Act')?

- Holds corporations to account if they interfere in union organizing.
- The PRO Act imposes financial penalties on companies that interfere with workers' organizing efforts, including firing or retaliating against workers who are organizing.
- Gives the NLRB power to force an employer back to the negotiating table if they're found to be bargaining in bad faith. Those companies would also be required to pay a penalty and make workers whole for the time the company stalled negotiations.
- Makes it easier for workers to unionize and rein in union-busting companies by:

*Banning employers' mandatory meetings with employees, including anti-union captive audience meetings;*

*Shorten timelines of union election campaigns;*

*Stop employers from stalling initial negotiations with newly formed unions.*

*Allow workers to use the "card check" process when forming a union. The process supports workers choosing to form a union if a majority signs authorization cards.*

## PRO Act Would Help Fix it:

- Under the Trump Labor Board, employers have intensified efforts to stop workers from organizing a union and collectively bargaining.
- Three in four employers hire anti-union consultants and spent nearly \$1 billion per year to try and crush union organizing efforts.
- Even after a hard-won union election, newly organized workers do not have a contract a year later because of bad faith bargaining by employers.
- Because of employers' ability to union-bust without any consequences, only 10.5 percent of Americans are members of a union, which is significantly less than the 35 percent who were members in the 1950s.

**T**hroughout her long career in public service, Democratic candidate for Vice President Kamala Harris has been a strong supporter of the needs and aspirations of working people. She has stood with working families and supported unions consistently. She has also taken the time to cultivate a personal relationship with the RWDSU, taking part in a Zoom meeting with RWDSU members and leadership during the summer.

"The RWDSU is inspiring people with its leadership, advocacy, and fighting spirit. I thank RWDSU members for keeping the country moving during the pandemic," Harris said. "The Trump Administration's lack of leadership on worker issues shows the importance of strong unions in the U.S. to protect workers."

Vice President Mike Pence has a long record of voting against the interests of working people and supporting anti-worker legislation.

## WHERE THE VEEP CANDIDATES STAND ON WORKER ISSUES



Democratic candidate for Vice President Kamala Harris



Vice President Mike Pence

### Mike Pence:

#### AFL-CIO Rating:

As a member of the U.S. House of Representatives for 12 years, Pence had an extremely low five percent rating from the AFL-CIO, voting against the interests of working families 95 percent of the time.

#### Worker Rights:

As Governor of Indiana, Pence supported the state's new "right to work law" by defending the law from union lawsuits.

#### Prevailing and Minimum Wage:

As Indiana Governor, Pence signed the repeal of an 80 year-old state law that set a common wage for most state construction projects, driving down wages for workers. During his career, he has constantly fought increasing the minimum wage, in 2007 opposing a successful measure to raise the federal minimum from \$5.15 an hour to \$7.25, and in 2013 fought efforts to increase Indiana's minimum wage and signed a law blocking local governments in Indiana from requiring businesses to offer higher wages or benefits beyond those required by federal law. ■

### Kamala Harris:

#### AFL-CIO rating:

Senator Harris has a 100 percent lifetime rating from the AFL-CIO on worker issues in the Senate.

#### Worker Rights:

In the Senate, Harris co-sponsored the Protecting the Right to Organize Act, a measure that sought to prohibit "right to work" laws that aim to weaken unions and discourage union organizing. The PRO ACT also imposes penalties on bosses who engage in "Union-Busting" and interference with their workers' right to organize.

#### Fighting the Gender Pay Gap:

Women earn an estimated 82 cents for every dollar that men earn for the same work, which costs a woman on average over \$10,000 annually in comparison. Harris is a strong believer in equal pay and working to close the gender pay gap.

#### Paid Leave:

Harris supports making paid leave available to all workers, including part-time employees, and views it as a tool to keep workers safe during the pandemic. "Here's the bottom line: paid sick leave will save lives, paid sick leave will keep communities safer. It's just that basic," Harris said.

#### Retirement Security:

Harris supports the expansion and strengthening of Social Security benefits, and she supports cost of living increases for Social Security recipients. "In the richest nation in the world, it is a travesty that so many Americans are struggling to keep up with the rising cost of living," Harris said.

## STAND UP AND BE HEARD: PREPARE YOUR PLAN TO VOTE!

**T**he stakes in the 2020 elections couldn't be higher, and your vote is more important than ever. Nothing is more patriotic than voting, and nothing else we do has a greater impact on our jobs, our lives, and our families than casting our vote. Your voice will not be heard if you don't cast your vote.

Right now, It's important to make a plan to vote, either by mail or in person on Tuesday, November 3, or earlier where permitted. Early voting and absentee ballot voting are already underway, with deadlines fast approaching in most states. To help prepare your plan to vote, visit the RWDSU Elections Hub at [www.rwdsu.org](http://www.rwdsu.org). There, you'll find your state's early voting and absentee ballot deadlines, and can check to ensure you are registered to vote. The RWDSU Elections Hub also contains information about 2020 Elections candidates that you can use in determining who the best candidates are for working families. ■

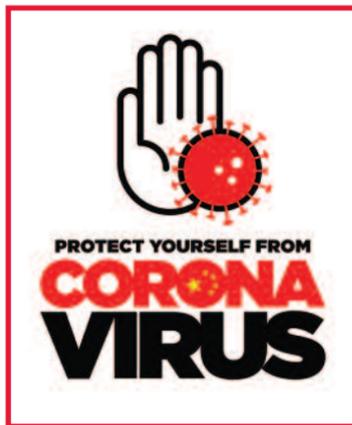


# TRUMP ADMINISTRATION'S DISASTROUS PANDEMIC RESPONSE HAS FAILED WORKERS

**T**here's no way to sugarcoat it; The Trump Administration's response to the COVID epidemic has been a disaster. From

the early days of the pandemic, the administration – led by Trump himself – has failed to rise up to the challenge of protecting Americans from a deadly virus, downplaying the danger while contradicting the experts and spreading misinformation and conspiracy theories.

Over 200,000 American deaths later, it's clear the virus is not a hoax, and is not simply going to "disappear," regardless of what the President says.



more interested in downplaying the virus than protecting workers, they got sick. Some even died.

At [www.rwdsu.org](http://www.rwdsu.org), you'll see a memorial page mourning RWDSU members who have lost their lives during the pandemic. Many of them doubtlessly caught COVID-19 at their workplaces. And it didn't have to happen. The Federal government gave constantly changing and contradictory advice, failed to mandate mask usage or provide PPE, and otherwise

failed to use their power to help working people, who were at the mercy of their employers' efforts (or lack of) to protect them.



**Joe Biden has shown leadership on the pandemic for months, appearing in public wearing a mask to promote public safety.**

The President's response was not to direct companies to improve safety at their plants and protect workers. It was to invoke the Defense Production Act to classify meat plants as essential infrastructure that must remain open, endangering countless workers. The administration chose corporate profits over the health and safety of working people.

And, the administration's OSHA has also failed to protect workers, issuing only insultingly small fines to two meat processing facilities owned by companies bringing in billions in annual revenue. Over 200 meat workers in the

U.S. have died from COVID-19 and over 40,000 have tested positive, yet Trump's OSHA has done nothing to deter these companies' lackadaisical approach to worker safety.

## Biden Offers a New Approach

It's clear that we need a change of direction to protect working people. From the earliest days of the Pandemic, Joe Biden took the Coronavirus seriously. In a January op-ed, Biden referred to "the possibility of a pandemic" and said the number of cases would increase. In January he recommended following the Obama administration's approach on Ebola, including international cooperation and the use of sound science. Biden has pledged to create a science-based response to the virus, and supports wearing masks to protect each other. Biden would also strengthen OSHA so it serves its original purpose of protecting workers, rather than covering up for negligent companies.

America's response to COVID-19 continues to fall short, and we need a change if we want to protect workers get on the path to a return to normalcy. ■

## Working People Hit Hard

Working men and women helped America survive the first few months of the pandemic crisis by keeping our grocery stores open, keeping our meat and food processing lines running, and caring for the sick and the elderly. And thanks to an Administration response

## Profits Over Worker Health

RWDSU members at poultry and meat processing plants were particularly hard hit early on, with the virus spreading like wildfire as companies failed to react. Entire plants closed as thousands of workers across the U.S. became sick amidst massive outbreaks.

**RWDSU 2020 ELECTION HUB**

Learn more about all the election deadlines, options and resources to plan your vote in the 2020 election.  
Visit the RWDSU Election Hub at [www.RWDSU.org](http://www.RWDSU.org) today!

# RWDSU CHOICES: KEY CONGRESSIONAL AND GUBERNATORIAL RACES



**E**lection Day 2020 isn't just about the presidential race. In this most important election year of our lifetime, there are many key Senate, House, and gubernatorial races that will have a great affect on the issues that are important to working men and women. Union rights, social justice, higher minimum wages, paid family leave, social security, health care; all of these

important issues are affected not only by who wins the contest for the White House, but also by the outcome of so many other key races. We need pro-worker elected officials in Congress to further our legislative agenda, and we need pro-worker governors who will fight for us at the state level.

Here's a quick look at some key races across the country.

## Key Senate Races:

### ALABAMA: Doug Jones (D)



In December, 2017, Senator Doug Jones won a close election in Alabama. RWDSU members were fully engaged in that election, and we'll be there for

Doug as he faces re-election for the first time since that upset special election victory. He faces a tough challenge against Republican former football coach, Tommy Tuberville. Jones will be depending upon our help again and it's important we again answer the call – whomever wins this seat could help decide which party controls the U.S. Senate.

### GEORGIA: Raphael Warnock (D)



Raphael Warnock is a voice working people need in the Senate. The long-time pastor has proven time and again that he stands with working Georgians. He

has engaged in civil actions to support the Affordable Care Act and expand Medicaid, and has led efforts to expand voter registration in Georgia. His support for an economy that works for all Americans is rooted in his upbringing in a large family in a Georgia housing project. He understands the issues working families face, is a strong supporter of unions, and believes we need higher wages, a secure social security program, and pay equality for all Americans.

### GEORGIA: Jon Ossoff (D)



Jon Ossoff earned the support of the RWDSU – and prominent activists including the Rep. John Lewis - thanks to his commitment to important worker issues such

as strengthening the Affordable Care Act. He is a strong ally of unions and working people.

### IOWA: Theresa Greenfield (D)



Theresa Greenfield is a strong union backer who supports a living wage, equal pay, and has won the support of the Iowa AFL-CIO. Greenfield's late husband was a

union electrical worker who was tragically killed on the job. Greenfield has spoken powerfully of her personal experience and how support from union brothers and sisters in times of trouble has helped her throughout her life. It will be another key battle in who controls the Senate after November, and RWDSU members can help make a difference.

### MAINE: Sara Gideon (D)



Sara Gideon supports an increase to the minimum wage and strengthening collective bargaining rights. Gideon has been endorsed by the Maine AFL-CIO. She

supports expanding job training programs, paid family leave, and targeted tax cuts for the middle-class. She supports rolling back Trump's tax cuts for the wealthy. She is running against incumbent Republican Senator Susan Collins in this important race.

### MICHIGAN: Gary Peters (D)



First elected to the U.S. Senate in 2015, Gary Peters is facing off against Republican John James in a seat the Democrats must hold in order to win back the Senate. A

former member of the U.S. House and the son of a union shop steward, Peters has been endorsed by the Michigan AFL-CIO and more than 20 unions. The outcome of this race in one of the nation's key battleground states

will be watched closely. Senator Peters has a long history of standing with workers, walking the picket line and advocating for Michigan's automotive industry.

### NEW JERSEY: Cory Booker (D)



Senator Cory Booker is seeking re-election to the U.S. Senate for a second term in 2020. Senator Booker has been a staunch friend of unions and workers

and, has developed a personal relationship with the RWDSU. He recently led a Senate investigation into the conduct of meatpacking companies during the pandemic, which included reports from RWDSU members.

### SOUTH CAROLINA: Jaime Harrison (D)



Jamie Harrison has mounted an impressive campaign against long time Senator and Trump apologist Lindsey Graham. Harrison supports protecting social

security and investing in good jobs that build the middle-class, and will make combating the COVID pandemic a priority. Graham has an anti-worker, anti-union record, personally introducing anti-union 'right to work laws' and attacking unions who has stood up for South Carolina workers seeking a voice in the workplace.



## Key House Races:

### NY-1: Nancy Goroff (D)



Nancy Goroff believes unions ensure that worker rights are protected and will fight to strengthen workers' rights. She is a strong supporter of the Affordable Care

Act. In Congress, she will work to lower the minimum age for Medicare and allow younger people and their employers to buy into Medicare. Her opponent, incumbent Republican Lee Zeldin, supports the repeal of the ACA.

### NY-2 open: Jackie Gordon (D)



New York's 2nd congressional district is an open seat following Rep. Peter's King's retirement. Jackie Gordon, a teacher and U.S. combat veteran, is the Democratic candidate. Jackie Gordon has been a "proud member" of New York's teachers' union for 32 years, and understands worker issues and the importance of building an economy for all of us. She supports tax relief for the middle class and making sure the wealthiest Americans pay their fair share. She has been endorsed by the RWDSU and a number of other unions in New York.

### NY-11: Rep. Max Rose (D)



Rep. Rose served as a U.S. Army platoon leader in Afghanistan and was awarded the Purple Heart for his bravery. He has been a staunch supporter of the

RWDSU in our fight against Amazon's anti-union behavior at the Staten Island facility in Rose's district and he has our strong endorsement for re-election in 2020. Rose has stood on the picket line, fought tirelessly for 9/11 victims' compensation and consistently lifted up the voices of RWDSU members during his two years in Congress.

### NJ-7: Tom Malinowski (D)



Incumbent Malinowski stands up for working families. He supported the PRO Act, which opponent Tom Kean Jr. opposes. Malinowski is the candidate in this

race who stands with working people and the many RWDSU members who live in the district. During his time in the New Jersey Senate, challenger Tom Kean Jr. voted five times against raising the state's minimum wage, undermined collective bargaining, and voted against providing health and unemployment insurance for workers in labor disputes. He also opposed wage theft protections.

### PA-8: Matt Cartwright (D)



Set in Pennsylvania's northeast corner, the 8th congressional district is one of the country's most competitive congressional races. Incumbent, Rep.

Matt Cartwright is a former lawyer who has stood with unions during his time in Congress. Most recently, he fought for more PPE and championed a bill for hazard pay in congress for the workers, including many RWDSU members, who have stood on the frontline during the pandemic.

### IA-1: Abby Finkenauer (D)



Born and raised in a union family, as the daughter of a union plumber and pipefitter, Abby Finkenauer has been a major supporter of Iowa's labor movement,

including the hard-working members of the RWDSU. While serving in the Iowa state house, she earned her reputation as a fighter for working families by opposing efforts to strip collective bargaining and workers' compensation. And she has continued her strong pro-labor record since her election to congress in 2019. Challenger Ashley Hinson's anti-worker voting record stands in stark contrast to Rep. Finkenauer. Hinson, as an Iowa State Representative voted to cut unemploy-

ment benefits during the pandemic, voted to remove collective bargaining rights and cut workers' compensation benefits.

### MI-3 open: Hillary Scholten (D)



Michigan's third congressional district is an open seat following the retirement of incumbent, Rep. Justin Amash. The election for Rep.

Amash's replacement will be a hotly-contested race. Democrat Hillary Scholten, a former social worker and attorney who is outspoken in her support for unions, worker rights, higher wages, and safe working conditions, is facing off against Republican business analyst, Peter Meijer. Meijer strongly supports anti-union right-to-work laws and is critical of increases in the minimum wage.

### GA-7: Carolyn Bourdeaux (D)



Located north of Atlanta, Georgia's 7th congressional district will be a key House contest. Historically a Republican-held seat, the district has been represented by

Rep. Rob Woodall since 2011. Over the last two decades, the district and its demographics have changed significantly. The Democratic candidate, Carolyn Bourdeaux, lost the district to Rep. Woodall by just 450 votes in 2018. Bordeaux, a current state senator, is running again in 2020. This November, Bordeaux faces Marine Corps pilot and Navy Commander, Rich McCormick. With another close margin expected, RWDSU support for this pro-worker candidate is essential.

### OH-1: Kate Schroder (D)



Incumbent Rep. Steve Chabot has come under criticism from labor for being one of many House representatives who supported the Republicans' 2018

corporate tax cut bill. The bill gave tax breaks to the wealthiest and largest corporations at the expense of American working families. The AFL-CIO gives Rep. Cabot a lifetime score of just 8% out of 100% on labor issues. Democrat Kate Schroder, who has been endorsed by Ohio Senator Sherrod Brown, the Ohio AFL-CIO and more than a dozen local labor unions, is also the RWDSU pick in this contest.

## Key Gubernatorial Races:

### INDIANA: Dr. Woody Myers (D)



Former Indiana Health Commissioner and Democratic candidate Dr. Woody Myers is running against Republican incumbent Eric Holcomb,

who has continued the anti-worker policies of former Gov. Mike Pence, defending the state's right to work law and lowering wages for some workers. Dr. Myers has visited union workers on picket lines in Indiana, and supports unions, higher wages, and better working conditions, and has been endorsed by numerous unions in the state.

### NEW HAMPSHIRE: Dan Feltes (D)



State Senator Dan Feltes has a long history of fighting for workers, and has received numerous Legislator of the Year awards for bipartisan leadership on many critical

issues, including from the Campaign for a Family Friendly Economy for his work advancing paid family and medical leave insurance. He supports a living wage for all workers and strengthening public schools.

### WEST VIRGINIA: Ben Salango (D)



Jim Justice is West Virginia's richest man and has been Governor since 2017. Elected as a Democrat, he switched to the Republican Party

after he became Governor. In 2020 he faces off against democratic nominee Ben Salango who is currently Kanawha County Commissioner. Salango has been endorsed by the West Virginia AFL-CIO and more than 20 local unions and has a plan to increase access to healthcare, reintroduce the state's prevailing wage and provide free skills training. Justice has provided no platform on these important worker issues.

# RWDSU HEALTH AND SAFETY GUIDE



## Our Health and Safety Can't Afford Four More Years of Neglect

**T**he COVID-19 pandemic crisis is teaching us many lessons. It has made it clear that our health and safety at work is vital to the health and well-being of our families and community. RWDSU members in the food processing, grocery, health care and other service industries are essential workers, and we need and deserve essential protections.

The work we do is essential to our country's economy, and safe and healthy workplaces are essential in making sure we can do our jobs while protecting workers and the public. Unfortunately, it's been an uphill battle, and far too many workers have become ill and even died during the COVID-19 pandemic. OSHA, the agency mandated by law to help protect workers from workplace hazards, has been missing in action during this entire public health crisis. The agency has received thousands of requests for assistance from workers concerned about their exposure to COVID-19, but they have failed to respond in any meaningful manner. OSHA has chosen not to intervene in workplaces to inspect or do any enforcement activity, for clearly political reasons. It has refused to issue any emergency temporary regulations to help prevent the spread of the virus in our workplaces. Instead OSHA has issued guidelines and recommendations which are empty and easily ignored by employers, because they cannot be enforced.

### OSHA Weakens, Endangering Workers

Even before COVID, OSHA was in decline. The average number of inspections per year have been lower than during the Obama and Bush administrations. Positions have not been filled and the number of inspectors has not been this low since 1975. Today there are 9,000,000 workplaces OSHA has responsibility for, far more than in the past.

We need an OSHA that is recommitted to the core provision of the act that employers have a legal obligation to provide a workplace which is free of hazards which can result in death or serious injury. This provision could



**Workers need to regain our voice at the policy tables to share our experience and knowledge and make workplaces safer.**

have been utilized during the current crisis even though there isn't a specific standard on infectious disease. But it was not. The other most common hazards our members face, such as musculoskeletal injuries from excessive repetitive work, heat and poor indoor air quality and workplace violence, need to be addressed by OSHA adopting new worker protections. That won't happen under the cur-

rent leadership. We've seen what happens when anti-worker politicians gain power; Just as the Republican-appointed Secretary of Labor played a major role for industry in vigorously opposing an Ergonomics standard 20 years ago, we see an OSHA unable and unwilling to protect workers today.

In addition to additional enforceable protections, we need an OSHA that makes reducing

hazards and saving lives a priority, rather than the OSHA we see today which seems more interested in protecting corporate profits. Workers need to regain our voice at the policy tables to share our tremendous experience and knowledge about how their work can be done in a safer manner. We have a right to safe and healthy working conditions and to be able to return to our families at the end of the work day safe and sound. We all share those basic values. But to ensure that in the future, we need change because we know that without change nothing changes. The elections on November 3 will determine if we see these changes and make our workplaces safer, or if OSHA will become even less effective. ■

### Questions and Information

**If you have any questions or want any information about COVID-19 or any other workplace hazard contact RWDSU Health and Safety at 212-684-5300. ■**