



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:** All Local Union Business Managers in the U.S.  
**FROM:** Mark McManus, General President  
**DATE:** July 26, 2021  
**SUBJ:** Biden-Harris Administration Delivering for UA Members

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Just seven months into the Biden-Harris Administration, UA members are already seeing dramatic changes in policy that translate to more jobs with fair wages and benefits. President Biden promised to be the most pro-union president in history – and he’s already delivering.

### **Revoking Industry-Recognized Apprenticeship Programs (IRAPs)**

- President Biden took action to protect the gold-standard status of the UA’s training and apprenticeship program by revoking the IRAPs rule proposed during the Trump Administration. The IRAPs rule would have severely weakened industry standards for registered apprenticeships. Instead, the Biden-Harris Administration stood with workers to protect our apprenticeship programs and way of life.

### **Protecting and saving the Multiemployer Pension System**

- The last few presidents each promised to save the pension system, but only President Biden delivered. His stimulus package included \$86 billion for the multiemployer pension system, effectively saving the entire system and ensuring millions of workers – and countless UA members – will be able to retire with dignity and the pensions they earned.

### **Appointing Two UA Members to Transition Agency Review Teams**

- During the transition period, then-President-elect Biden appointed two UA members to the Agency Review Teams:
  - Director of Pipeline and Gas Distribution Dave Barnett to the Department of Transportation Review Team
  - VIP Program Manager Mike Hazard to the Department of Labor Review Team.
- These two appointments ensured that UA members had a direct voice in the earliest stages of the Biden-Harris Administration, shaping the policy directions and personnel decisions from Day 1.

### **President Biden Meeting with GP McManus in Oval Office to Discuss UA Jobs**

- Less than one month into the Administration, President Biden and Vice President Harris invited UA GP McManus into the Oval Office to discuss infrastructure, energy priorities, and UA jobs. This direct line of access to the President and Vice President means that GP McManus can fight for UA jobs directly – and more effectively. In this meeting, he fought for strong labor protections on all federally funded projects, an all-of-the-above energy approach, and protecting the rights of unions to organize.





### **Increasing Competition and Strengthening Buy America**

- President Biden issued an Executive Order to increase competition in the American economy through a wide range of programs that will lead to higher wages, better benefits, and more jobs for our members. The Executive Order took action to crack down on wage and benefit suppression.

### **Case-by-Case Approach to Pipeline Decisions – and Support for PennEast and DAPL**

- While the Biden-Harris Administration pulled the permits for the Keystone XL pipeline, they remain committed to a case-by-case approach to pipeline decisions. More importantly, they have backed recent pipeline projects that put UA members to work:
  - Dakota Access Pipeline, where the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers supports continued operation during pending court cases; and
  - PennEast, where the U.S. government and the Biden-Harris Administration backed the project and supported eminent domain.

### **Case-by-Case Approach to Pipeline Decisions – and FERC Approval Process**

- As part of the Biden-Harris Administration’s case-by-case approach to the pipeline approval process, the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) recently approved two new pipeline projects after a thorough review process. The Administration remains committed to evaluating the merits of each individual pipeline project, as demonstrated by the review and approval for these two projects:
  - Tuscarora XPress Pipeline expansion; and
  - Northern Lights pipeline expansion.

### **Approving Most Oil and Gas Permits Since President Bush**

- President Biden’s case-by-case approach to energy permitting decisions continues to create good-paying jobs for UA members, as his Administration is currently on pace to approve more annual drilling permits since the George W. Bush Administration.
- Through July 13, President Biden had already approved 2,488 drilling permits – roughly the same number of approvals in all of President Trump’s first year in office.

### **Meetings and Access to Cabinet Secretaries and White House Senior Staff**

- During the transition period, and throughout the first few months in office, the UA has had unprecedented access to Cabinet secretaries, nominees, and senior staff. GP McManus met with nominees for Secretaries of Energy, Interior, Labor, and Transportation, as well as high-level officials in the White House. At the staff level, the UA continues to meet with the White House regularly to advocate for UA jobs.

### **Confirming Building Trades Member Marty Walsh as Secretary of Labor**

- After four years of anti-union and anti-worker leadership at the Department of Labor, President Biden moved quickly to confirm card-carrying building trades member and former Mayor of Boston Marty Walsh as Secretary of Labor. In just a few short months, Secretary Walsh has taken action to reverse anti-worker policies within the Department of Labor and to create more good-paying UA jobs.



### **Supporting the PRO Act and the Right to Collectively Bargain**

- The Biden-Harris Administration has made it the official policy of the United States Government to support workers' rights to collectively bargain. Even more, they fully support the Protecting the Right to Organize (PRO) Act – the most sweeping pro-union legislation in generations.

### **Firing anti-union NLRB General Counsel Peter Robb – and Replacing with Union Lawyer**

- On one of his first days in office, President Biden fired anti-union and anti-worker National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) General Counsel Peter Robb and replaced him with a union lawyer, Jennifer Abruzzo. This General Counsel position is a critical role within the NLRB to strengthen the rights of workers everywhere.

### **New Head of Wage and Hour Division at DOL Recommended by UA**

- Within the Department of Labor, President Biden has appointed a new Administrator of the Wage and Hour Division – which, among other things, protects and enforces Davis-Bacon prevailing wage laws and fights worker misclassification. This Administrator was recommended to President Biden by the UA and the Minnesota Pipe Trades – showing once again the strong role the UA plays in shaping the policies coming from the Biden-Harris Administration.

### **Repealing the Independent Contractor/Worker Misclassification Rule at DOL**

- The Department of Labor, led by building trades member Marty Walsh, undid a Trump Administration rule that made it easier for unscrupulous contractors to misclassify workers as contractors. Instead, the Biden-Harris Administration is taking steps to ensure all workers have a fair shot and ability to earn family-sustaining wages.

### **Reversal of Anti-ESG Factors Rule and Proxy Voting Rule**

- As part of their efforts to undo harmful anti-worker policies enacted during the previous administration, the Biden-Harris Administration took steps to undo a rule that was designed to prevent the retirement and other fringe benefit funds of UA members from considering investments in infrastructure and other funds that create jobs for UA members. The Biden-Harris Administration simultaneously initiated action to reverse a rule that would have prevented our retirement and other funds from exercising their shareholder rights in corporate board rooms.

### **White House Task Force on Worker Organizing and Empowerment**

- The Biden-Harris Administration created the White House Task Force on Worker Organizing and Empowerment, chaired by Vice President Harris and Secretary of Labor Walsh, to take a whole-of-government approach to empower workers. The task force will help ensure the rights of all workers to collectively bargain and be heard.

### **COVID Response and Plans to Build Back Better**

- On the heels of a deadly global pandemic, President Biden proposed a response and recovery plan that puts workers first. Building trades members – like the UA – were prioritized for COVID vaccines, and the infrastructure package he put together to jumpstart our economy and build back better is led by the men and women of the UA.



### **American Rescue Plan: Direct Checks, Unemployment Insurance, Expanded Child Tax Credit**

- Before any meaningful recovery plan could take root, the Biden-Harris Administration first had to provide direct assistance to millions of Americans. In President Biden's stimulus package, the American Rescue Plan, he provided direct checks to Americans, improved unemployment insurance with tax forgiveness, and an expansion of the child tax credit – all critical steps that put the men and women of the UA first.

### **American Jobs Plan and American Families Plan Mean More UA Jobs**

- After the success of the American Rescue Plan, President Biden put forward a two-part legislative package: the American Jobs Plan and the American Families Plan. Taken together, these plans will help jumpstart an economic recovery for all Americans – and create thousands of good-paying UA jobs rebuilding our aging infrastructure.

### **Build Back Better with UA Energy Projects and Replacing Lead Pipes**

- The Biden-Harris Administration has taken an all-of-the-above energy approach, ensuring that they protect existing UA jobs and create more in the energy industry. Even more, the Administration has committed to replacing 100% of lead pipes in American communities – putting UA members to work.

### **Support for Fire Sprinkler Incentive Act**

- President Biden has a long history of supporting fire safety measures, and his support for the Fire Sprinkler Incentive Act is no different. The act provides funding and helps accelerate building retrofits, creating good-paying jobs for UA sprinklerfitters.

### **Executive Order Strengthening PLAs**

- Among President Biden's many Executive Orders in his first few months protecting workers, his coming Executive Order to strengthen Project Labor Agreements (PLAs) will be one of the most significant actions taken by a president in generations. The Biden-Harris Administration has already demonstrated its commitment to creating good-paying union jobs, and this coming action to strengthen PLAs will directly translate to more UA jobs with better wages and benefits.

### **General Support for Prevailing Wage on all Federally funded projects**

- The Biden-Harris Administration has effectively changed U.S. federal policy to support the use of prevailing wage provisions on federally funded projects – ensuring all workers earn a fair wage, regardless of where their jobsite takes them. So far, we have seen prevailing wage provisions included in proposed infrastructure packages and new investments in energy.

### **Prevailing Wage on CHIPS Act**

- As part of the administration's support for prevailing wage, the U.S. Senate included Davis-Bacon prevailing wage protections in the base bill of the Creating Helpful Incentives to Produce Semiconductors for America (CHIPS) Act. This bill ensures prevailing wage is the standard paid on the job building these new semiconductor manufacturing facilities – a massive investment in our nation's critical infrastructure and a good source of UA jobs.



### **Drinking Water and Wastewater Infrastructure Act**

- The Drinking Water and Wastewater Infrastructure Act builds on President Biden’s call to build back better and provides funding to update aging systems, invest in new technologies, expand access to marginalized communities, and replace lead pipes. The bill includes strong labor protections, meaning UA members will win more work modernizing and replacing our nation’s infrastructure with fair wages and benefits.

### **Clean Energy for America Act of 2021**

- As part of his all-of-the-above energy policy, President Biden is providing an expanded approach to clean energy – ensuring workers, like UA members, lead the way. The Clean Energy for America Act was introduced in the Senate to translate that policy push into action. This bill provides federal funding with strong labor protections for UA energy projects like carbon capture sequestration, nuclear energy, and hydrogen as part of the Administration’s efforts to build back better and modernize our nation’s infrastructure.

### **Waivers for Canadian Members**

- With members in the U.S. and Canada, the Biden-Harris Administration’s support for waivers for Canadian members to work on jobsites in the U.S. is critical. Simply put, the Biden-Harris Administration is committed to strengthening labor standards and putting more UA members to work – on both sides of the border.

### **Subsidies for New and Existing Nuclear Fleet**

- The Biden-Harris Administration’s all-of-the-above energy approach includes support for new and existing nuclear plants, including critical subsidies and tax credits that will increase investment and lead directly to more UA jobs building our energy future.

### **Labor Standards on Clean Energy Projects**

- This all-of-the-above energy approach includes strong support for a robust set of labor protections. As we saw with the Drinking Water and Wastewater Infrastructure Act and the Clean Energy for America Act, the Biden-Harris Administration is putting workers first with its support for labor protections like prevailing wage, the use of registered apprenticeships, and project labor agreements. As we continue to meet with the White House and Congressional offices, these labor standards on clean energy projects will be a critical piece of President Biden’s plans to Build Back Better.

The Biden-Harris Administration has already taken concrete steps to not only strengthen the rights of workers to organize, but to create good-paying UA jobs and modernize our nation’s aging infrastructure. These legislative actions and policies will continue to put UA members first and help ensure the strength of our union for generations to come.