

Democratic and Republican national committees adopt party platforms

A political party's platform is a formal set of policy goals supported by the party as a whole. The contents are intended to communicate the party's ideas and beliefs to the public and identify the presidential candidate's objectives should he or she be elected. Generally, political parties release a new platform ahead of each presidential election.

The platforms are finalized and voted on at the parties' conventions. The Democratic and Republican party platforms cover a wide range of domestic and foreign policy matters. Among them: the Postal Service.

On July 27, the Democratic National Committee (DNC) announced its platform's guiding principles. The platform, adopted during the virtual Democratic National Convention in August, included NALC's input on priorities for the Postal Service. That platform is as follows:

Strengthening the U.S. Postal Service

The U.S. Postal Service (USPS) is the world's most efficient mail carrier, and Democrats are wholly committed to supporting a public USPS. We will fight all efforts to privatize the USPS and will work to ensure the USPS is financially sustainable, including by repealing the mandate that the agency "pre-fund" retiree health costs. Democrats will protect the Postal Service's universal service obligation as a core American value and maintain six-day and doorstep mail delivery, which is a lifeline for rural Americans. And we will work to restore service to appropriate levels, including overnight delivery of first-class mail and periodicals within the same metropolitan area,



maintaining six-day and door-to-door delivery, and appointing members to the Board of Governors and the Postal Regulatory Commission who champion a strong public Postal Service. We will also support new revenue streams for the USPS, including allowing secure shipping of alcoholic beverages by mail and exploring options to enable unbanked and underbanked Americans to access financial services through the Postal Service.

In sharp contrast, the Republican National Committee (RNC) did not seek NALC's input on priorities for the Postal Service. Instead, the RNC announced via resolution, on the eve of its convention on Aug. 24, that due to COVID-19, it would not amend its 2016 platform, stating: "The RNC has unanimously voted to forego the

Convention Committee on Platform, in appreciation of the fact that it did not want a small contingent of delegates formulating a new platform without the breadth of perspectives within the ever-growing Republican movement." In June, discussions began within the party to retain its platform at the behest of the president. While the 2016 platform made no mention of the Postal Service, it was clear in its view of the federal workforce:

Improving the Federal Workforce

We recognize the dedication of most employees of the federal government and thank them for their service, with special praise for the whistleblowers who risk their careers to expose waste, fraud, and misuse of power. None of them should ever be compelled to join a union or pay dues to it.

In fairness to their fellow workers, union representatives should not be allowed to engage in union-related activities while on the public's time. The inability of federal managers to discipline and, if necessary, dismiss problem staff members is an affront to every conscientious worker, as is the misuse of funds for lavish conferences and routine bonuses. The appointees of a Republican president will work with career managers to end those abuses and enforce high standards for all federal employees. We reaffirm the existing protections that provide all employees of the federal government the opportunity to pursue their desire to serve their country free from discrimination. We call for renewed efforts to reduce, rather than expand, government responsibilities, and we urge particular attention to the bloated public relations budgets of the departments and agencies. The federal government spends too much of the people's money telling the people what they should do.

The Democratic platform makes several commitments to strengthening labor rights for federal employees and other workers:

Democrats will fight to raise wages for working people and improve job quality and security, including by raising the federal minimum wage so it reaches \$15 an hour by 2026. Raising the federal minimum wage, so fewer workers are forced to hold down multiple jobs to make ends meet, will significantly decrease risks of infection from COVID-19 and in the future. We know that strong American labor unions help increase wages and job standards

for workers across the economy, which is why Democrats will prioritize passing the PRO Act and restoring workers' rights, including the right to launch secondary boycotts. We will repeal so-called "right to work" laws that undermine worker power and lead to lower wages and less protection for workers across the economy, and ensure those who have been left without wage and hour protections for decades—including domestic workers and farmworkers—have the same rights as other workers. Democrats will support legislation to strengthen whistleblower and anti-retaliation protections for workers who speak for themselves or their coworkers. And we will take action to rein in anti-competitive corporate power by rewriting the rules that have undermined workers' ability to advocate for themselves, including non-compete clauses, no-poaching agreements, and contracts that force workers into mandatory arbitration to resolve violations of employment laws.

Democrats will recognize unions with majority sign-up—via "card check" processes—and ban captive audience meetings, which employers use to bully and browbeat workers. We will hold executives personally accountable if they interfere in workers' efforts to organize, including issuing criminal penalties for intentional obstruction. We will take action to guarantee that when workers come to the table, they are able to bargain with the employers who actually hold the power, including franchisors, and penalize companies that bargain in bad faith with their workers. Democrats will

vigorously protect all private-sector workers' right to strike without fear of coercion, interference, and undue delay. We will also establish the federal government's role in promoting and facilitating collective bargaining and helping the parties bring their negotiations to a rapid and successful conclusion, committing to a high standard for intervening in strikes, including under the Railway Labor Act.

The right of workers to come together and form a union is under attack. We must unrig the rules that block workers from having the union they want and update our labor laws to make it more possible. We must change labor law so that it is easier for unions and employers to enter into multi-employer agreements establishing minimum workplace standards related to wages, benefits, and working conditions.

The Republican platform, in contrast, prioritizes rolling back laws and regulations that benefit unions and workers:

The unionization of the federal workforce, first permitted by Democrat presidents in the 1960s, should be reviewed by the appropriate congressional committees to examine its effects on the cost, quality, and performance of the civil service. Union representatives in the federal workforce should not be paid to conduct union business on the public's time.

These platforms show a stark contrast in goals and priorities when looking ahead to a potential Biden administration versus four more years of a Trump administration. **PR**