

AFL-CIO

AMERICA'S UNIONS

THE WORKERS FIRST AGENDA: 5 PRIORITIES FOR 2021

We urge the Biden administration and Congress to seize this opportunity to transform the lives of working people through bold, structural change, starting with the following five priorities:

I. WORKER EMPOWERMENT

Because stronger unions are essential to addressing the multiple crises facing America, we will urge the new administration to have a plan ready on Day One to enact the PRO Act and the Public Service Freedom to Negotiate Act; create an interagency task force on collective bargaining; and rescind executive orders undermining collective bargaining.

II. WORKER SAFETY AND THE PANDEMIC

The most immediate focus of 2021 will be bringing the COVID-19 pandemic under control, starting by guaranteeing access for all workers to free vaccines and rapid testing; issuing emergency COVID-19 standards from the Occupational Safety and Health Administration and Mine Safety and Health Administration; signing an executive order under the Defense Production Act to ensure adequate supply of personal protective equipment; and ensuring paid sick days, paid family leave and child care for all workers.

III. GOOD JOBS AND PUBLIC INVESTMENT

The first order of legislative business in 2021 will be the next COVID-19 bill, which must include \$1 trillion in flexible grants for state and local governments. But we must begin now to focus on “building back

better,” starting with a multitrillion-dollar infrastructure package and federal labor standards and domestic sourcing requirements for clean energy projects. Other priorities for promoting good jobs include rescinding the Trump Labor Department’s anti-worker regulations; raising labor standards for all jobs supported by federal funding; eradicating workplace discrimination; reforming Wall Street; making the global economy work for working people; building a more just immigration system; increasing public investment; and making the wealthy and big corporations pay their fair share in taxes.

IV. RACIAL JUSTICE AND DEMOCRACY

The racial justice crisis is intimately connected to the ongoing public health and economic crises. We will urge the administration to appoint a “racial equity czar” to lead an interagency task force to survey and address the structural racial equity issues in jobs, health care, criminal justice and policing that have become more apparent during the ongoing COVID-19 crises. The Jan. 6 attack on the U.S. Capitol also underscored the pressing need for racial justice and democracy reform.

V. ECONOMIC SECURITY

We will urge Congress and the new administration to address America’s continuing economic security crisis by providing pension funding relief; increasing Social Security benefits across the board; reducing prescription drug prices; lowering the Medicare eligibility age to 50; creating a public option; strengthening the Affordable Care Act; rebuilding the unemployment insurance system; and establishing postal banking.