



INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF
PROFESSIONAL AND TECHNICAL ENGINEERS
AFL-CIO & CLC

IFPTE 2008 Presidential Candidate Survey

Distributed to Declared Candidates, July 6, 2007

**Senator Joe Biden, Senator Sam Brownback, Senator Hillary Clinton,
Senator Christopher Dodd, Senator John Edwards, Mayor Rudolph Giuliani,
Senator Mike Gravel, Gov. Mike Huckabee, Rep. Duncan Hunter,
Rep. Dennis Kucinich, Sen. John McCain, Sen. Barak Obama, Rep. Ron
Paul, Gov. Bill Richardson, Gov. Mitt Romney, Rep. Tom Tancredo,
Gov. Tommy Thompson**

Labor Law Reform

Regrettably most American workers in all sectors and professions do not have a voice on the job. They are forced to helplessly watch as their jobs are being sent overseas or they are being replaced right here at home by foreign workers through the government sanctioned H-1B and L-1 Visa programs. Real wages are down, healthcare and retirement benefits are under attack, and job stability is quickly becoming a thing of the past. Given these circumstances it is no surprise that American workers by the millions want the union advantage of being able to bargain collectively and have a voice in the very decisions that will have lifelong impacts on their working futures.

While employers are permitted to break the law on a daily basis when it comes to organizing campaigns, workers are suffering the consequences. Intimidation, captive audience meetings, and outright firings are common business practices for many companies when illegally blocking unionizing drives. All done without even a slap on the wrist.

IFPTE, along with the entire US Labor Movement, believes the time has come for meaningful labor law reform. To their credit, the House passed the Employee Free Choice Act (HR 800) earlier this year by a bipartisan vote of 241-185. Unfortunately however the Senate could not see its way to look past partisanship by failing to invoke cloture on EFCA.

- The Employee Free Choice Act is a much needed labor law reform for American workers. If you were President, would you advocate for this legislation's passage and sign it into law?

Yes. I am an original co-sponsor of the Employee Free Choice Act (EFCA) and when I am President, I will make this one of my top priorities. My administration will work to pass it within my first 100 days in office.

The EFCA would level the playing field between workers and employers and ensure that employees would not be unfairly punished by their employers for attempting to unionize. It would strengthen penalties for employer coercion when employees attempt to organize, encourage mediation and arbitration for first-contract disputes, and allow employees to form unions by signing cards authorizing union representation. I am also committed to ensuring that federal contractors that benefit from taxpayers' dollars demonstrate fairness toward their employees. The card check process, which requires majority sign-up, is the most effective way to protect employees' freedom to choose to form a union.

The right to organize is a fundamental right that I have supported throughout my decades in public service. I have always promoted dialogue and bargaining in good faith. As Senator, I have regularly weighed in to bring all sides back to the table.

Federal Taxpayer Resources and Union Busting

IFPTE is currently involved in a campaign to organize over 1,400 Analysts employed by the Government Accountability Office (GAO). Much to the dismay of IFPTE, the AFL-CIO and the workers at GAO, Comptroller General David Walker has elected to engage in union busting behavior that would be envied by private sector corporations like Wal-Mart. Among Mr. Walker's strategic moves aimed at preventing a union vote at GAO was to hire a private sector, "union avoidance" law firm to assist him in preventing the analysts at GAO from forming a union.

While this type of behavior in the Private Sector is common place and should not be allowed to continue, it is virtually unprecedented in the Federal Sector. IFPTE believes that using taxpayer appropriated monies for the purposes of preventing Federal employees from organizing is a reckless misuse of taxpayer resources.

- As President, will you prevent the use of taxpayer funds by any Federal Government Agency from being used to prevent workers from unionizing?

I support the right to organize and taxpayers should not foot the bill for anti-union efforts. I am also committed to ensuring that federal contractors that benefit from taxpayer dollars demonstrate fairness toward their employees. I have been proud to stand with organized labor whenever I was called, and I fully support the right to organize and bargain collectively for a better way of life, higher wages, quality health care, and a secure retirement. I am committed to strengthening unions as a way to strengthening the middle class.

Federal Employees Civil Service & Collective Bargaining Protections

Since 2002 the current administration has undertaken a strategic plan aimed at eroding Title V civil service protections, collective bargaining rights, veterans preference, and the pay of federal employees. This is particularly true when it comes to the Departments of Homeland Security (DHS) and Defense (DoD).

With respect to the DoD, where IFPTE represents tens of thousands of Civil Servant workers, former Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld unilaterally created the so-called National Security Personnel System (NSPS) to supposedly govern the human resources practices for upwards of 700,000 DoD Civilian workers. As the Congress and the workers quickly learned however, the true intention of NSPS was not to enhance national security, but was to effectively eliminate the role of unions within the department, as well as do away with most protections afforded civil servants under Title V.

IFPTE, in coordination with the 36 member United DoD Workers Coalition (UDWC), has worked in a bipartisan fashion to encourage Congress to repeal much of NSPS through the FY08 Defense Authorization bill. However, this attack on workers has taken its toll on the morale, recruitment and retention in the federal sector.

- Will you actively work to preserve the collective bargaining, Title V Civil Service protections, pay and Veteran's Preference of federal employees, as well as work to overturn the damaging reforms implemented since 2001?

Yes. I believe we need a basic bargain in our country – that if you work hard, you can have a chance at the American Dream – and unions are critical to that. As President, I will work to make collective bargaining fair and enable workers to organize without undue corporate interference.

I believe that it is important that we provide our government employees with protections when it comes to issues like pay and promotion, collective bargaining, discipline and firing, and performance appraisals. That is why I strongly support the civil service protections that are laid out in Title V of the United States Code and did not support the Department of Defense's National Security Personnel System. I have been a vocal opponent of the Bush administration's efforts to do away with these protections. Civil service protections ensure that employees are treated fairly; without them, we would return to the patronage, political favoritism and abuse that characterized the federal government before these protections existed.

I also believe that if you serve your country, your country must serve you too. That is why I support – and will continue to support as President – Veteran's Preference, which gives veterans some degree of preference for federal employment. That kind of recognition of the sacrifices – economic and otherwise – veterans make for our country is, I believe, fair and appropriate. As President, I will work to make sure that employees, in both the private and public sectors, are treated justly.

Privatization of Federal & Public Sector Jobs

In recent years, Federal and State governments have claimed that contracting out saves taxpayer dollars and can help solve their budget woes. Unfortunately however most privatization of government sector work ends up costing taxpayers more money and result in inferior services.

In the Federal Sector the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) does not base their contracting out decisions on the best value for the taxpayer. Instead OMB simply requires that all government agencies reach a quota in terms of the numbers of jobs put up for competition. When that doesn't work they simply award no-bid contracts to companies like Halliburton.

In the public sector governments like New Jersey view the privatization of the roadways as a quick influx of cash as a short term fix to their dire budget situation. However, New Jersey's politicians ignore the fact that privatization of the Turnpike and other roadways will lead to a long term disaster for those who are paying the tolls, and will end up being even more costly for the taxpayers.

In Washington State, for example, an IFPTE Local 17 report entitled, Value Subtracted, The High Cost of Contracting Out WSDOT Engineering, found that the State Department of Transportation, "overspends between 20 and 30 percent on design costs when such engineering work is sent to private companies."

- As President, will you turn back unfair Federal outsourcing practices and replace them with a fair, human and equitable contracting out system? Also, will you support contracting out practices in State governments that are not based on short term influxes of cash, but are instead in the best interest of the taxpaying public?

The Bush administration has contracted out with impunity and now we are paying the price – growing deficits and diminished confidence in the federal government. Over the past six years, the Bush administration has steadily outsourced critical government functions to private companies, adding more than 2.4 million private contractors to the federal payroll for a total of 7.2 million. Today, government contractors have essentially become yet another special interest, with the top 20 contracting firms spending nearly \$300 million since 2000 to lobby the government.

The Bush administration often contracted out vital government services without even running a competition. As we saw in post-Katrina Louisiana and Iraq, that has too often resulted in incompetence, as unqualified people have been put in charge of delivering critical services. When I am President, I will clean up our contracting system by significantly reducing the number of contractors and providing transparency in the process. I have proposed cutting at least 500,000 federal contractors to save approximately \$10 to \$18 billion a year. I will put an end to no-bid contracts and I will ensure that in the instances where contractors might be necessary, I will ensure that we run a fair process for evaluating the proposals. I will also ensure that every

government agency publishes its budgets online to ensure that any public service that is contracted out to private companies will be known to the public and open to scrutiny.

Affordable Health Care

According to recent estimates, as many as 45 million Americans are uninsured, and those with coverage face rising co-payments, deductibles and skyrocketing premiums. Moreover, workers represented by a union are forced to make salary and other concessions at the expense of keeping a hold of health coverage that is comparable to what they currently enjoy. In many cases, even union workers are forced to accept inferior health coverage plans. Workers, union negotiators and even employers that want to provide health coverage are all feeling the squeeze.

Unfortunately, each time our elected leaders even come close to considering a fix to the US healthcare crisis, the pharmaceutical and healthcare lobby simply squash any reform that will benefit ordinary citizens. It is clear that the time has come for our elected leaders to turn their collective backs on the healthcare giants and instead stand up for everyday Americans by passing universal healthcare right here in the United States.

- As President, will you use the power of the bully pulpit to support measures that would provide universal healthcare for our nation's uninsured while relieving the burden of skyrocketing healthcare costs for workers and employers?

Yes. My American Health Choices Plan will provide quality, affordable health care to all Americans, including the 47 million who don't have coverage today. I believe we have a moral imperative to ensure that every American has quality health care. Since the first day of my campaign, I have spoken about the need to reduce costs, improve quality, and ensure affordable health care for all Americans. My plan is based on the principles of shared responsibility and choice. If you have a plan you like, you keep it. If you want to change plans or aren't currently covered, you can choose from the same plans available to Members of Congress or opt into a public plan option like Medicare. Under my plan, families will receive a refundable tax credit designed to prevent premiums from exceeding a certain percentage of family income and small businesses will receive a tax credit for providing health care to their employees. My plan will ensure that insurance companies cannot discriminate against people on the basis of age, race, gender, or other risk factors, like pre-existing conditions.

A key component of my goal to provide universal health care is to cut costs throughout our entire system, which will lower costs for all Americans. A few months ago, I outlined a seven-point plan to do just that. First, we must keep people healthy – and away from needing complex and costly care – by focusing on comprehensive preventive care, which will keep our costs down in the long run and improve Americans' quality of life. I also believe that we must modernize our health care system, by, for example, using electronic medical records and other health information technology, and we must coordinate and streamline care for the chronically ill, who have high chances of suffering from complications. Under my health care plan, individuals and small businesses will have market access to larger insurance pools that will lower costs and prohibit insurance companies from discriminating against people with pre-existing conditions. I also have several ideas on improving the quality of care – like creating a public-private partnership to fund comparative effectiveness research – and reforming medical malpractice. We must also fight to get drug costs under control.

Globalization/Liberal Trade Policies

It is clear that United States trade policies such as NAFTA, CAFTA or PNTR, have costs millions of US workers their jobs. To their credit, the new Congress sees the fallacy that is free trade and allowed Fast-Track trade authority to expire. Based on the dismal record of the aforementioned trade agreements, no President should have unchecked power to unilaterally negotiate away American jobs through corporate backed trade agreements.

Even without Fast-Track however, the Administration continues to pursue anti-American worker trade deals. Currently on the table are agreements with South Korea, Columbia, Peru and Panama, and the Administration is more than willing to negotiate more bilateral agreements that fail to enforce workers' rights laws, among many other flaws.

- As President, will you negotiate bilateral trade agreements with countries that include enforceable workers' rights provisions that are consistent with the U.N.'s Universal Declaration of Human Rights, provide reasonable wages and benefits, and provide all workers around the world the right to unionize?

I have long called for strong and enforceable labor provisions to be a part of trade agreements. This is critical if trade is to benefit not only elites, but also workers in America and around the world. Strong labor and environmental provisions are critical if we are to ensure that American workers are not being asked to compete on a playing field that isn't level. I supported the Peru free trade agreement in large part because the Democratic leadership negotiated the toughest labor and environmental provisions we have had to date. Going forward, trade agreements must continue to strengthen labor and environmental provisions, and we must ensure that they remain in the body of the agreement and are subject to enforcement provisions that are at least as strong as the commercial provisions.

Guest-Worker Programs

As a union that represents tens of thousands of highly technical workers, IFPTE has seen first hand the damaging impact that the H-1B and L-1 guest-worker programs have had on U.S. workers. As the programs are currently constructed, H-1B and L-1 visas disproportionately place skilled American workers in an unfair labor market by encouraging employers to seek foreign high-tech workers based on bottom line purposes and not because there is a shortage of workers. Furthermore, the H1-B and L-1 visa programs give employers the power to exploit foreign workers by paying them significantly less than the prevailing wage, providing little to no benefits, preventing them access to U.S. labor laws and blocking their ability to have a voice on the job by belonging to a union.

Over the last many years, the U.S. high-tech industry has successfully manipulated the federal legislative process by encouraging Congress to expand guest-worker programs at the expense of American workers. In fact, it was widely expected that the latest attempt at immigration overhaul legislation in the Senate would include huge increases in H-1B visas, along with a massive liberalization of the already flawed program. Fortunately for US high-tech workers, that latest effort failed.

- Will you support legislative and regulatory efforts aimed at protecting American high-tech workers from the importation of low cost high tech labor through guest-worker visa programs such as H-1B and L-1?

I believe that guest-worker programs like H-1B require strong oversight. We must ensure that the H-1B and similar programs are used in the way they were intended, and not for outsourcing

American jobs or for staffing with cheap labor. At the same time, we must ensure that we continue to attract the best and the brightest from around the world. Accordingly, as part of comprehensive immigration reform, I support increasing the cap on the H-1B, but also significantly increasing the price and using the proceeds to train American workers. As President, I will also make the necessary investments in math, science, and engineering education to ensure that our children have the skills and knowledge to compete and succeed in the 21st century.

Support for NASA

The current Administration, while publicly stating its strong support for the cutting edge work done by NASA, has not stepped up to the plate in proposing budgets that are reflective of their rhetoric. IFPTE, as NASA's largest Civil Servant union, remains concerned that lawmakers on both sides of the aisle don't fully appreciate the importance that NASA has to the nation and the world. Furthermore, NASA's contribution to US national security is not only underappreciated, in most cases it is irreplaceable.

Budget proposals that would drastically cut the funding for U.S. Aeronautics, Science and Technology R&D are now annual events in Washington. These proposed cuts have led to threats by NASA management over the last several years to lay-off through a Reduction-in-Force (RIF) upwards of 1,000 Civil Servant workers. Given the unique talent at NASA, IFPTE believes such a move would be an irreversible blunder that the US would not soon recover from.

- As President, would you make NASA a priority in your administration by adequately funding the space agency's aeronautics, science and technology missions through your annual budgets, and work to preserve and grow the uniquely talented Civil Service workforce that is NASA?

Yes, I will make sure that NASA is adequately funded when I am President because NASA is important to advancing our technological innovation, growing our economy, and enhancing our national security. A report by the National Research Council, an expert advisory panel of the National Academy of Sciences, last year urged Congress and the White House to "seriously examine the mismatch between the tasks assigned to NASA and the resources that the agency has been provided to accomplish them." I believe it is vital to properly fund and support NASA, in order to ensure that the United States remains a leader in areas like aeronautics research, an industry that also provides us with a significant trade surplus.

Pensions & Social Security

While the last Congress and our current President found a way to effectively prevent middle-class Americans from declaring bankruptcy anymore, they have yet to address the raiding of workers pensions through corporate bankruptcy scandals. Furthermore, the current Administration's affinity for corporate America resulted in a debunked effort to privatize the Social Security benefits of retired Americans.

It is clear that the retirement security of American workers is quickly becoming a thing of the past. Corporate bankruptcies allow companies to simply turn their backs on their financial obligations to workers while simultaneously advocating for privatizing Social Security so that Wall Street can cash in. No longer can workers depend on their employers to do the right thing with their pensions, nor can they count on Social Security.

- As President, will you work to reform our pension system so that no matter how often you change jobs every worker will have a single pension upon retiring, and corporations will no longer be permitted to turn their backs on worker pensions by declaring bankruptcy? Will you also work to make Social Security solvent and oppose any effort for privatization of this important program?

I believe that Social Security is a solemn promise to our seniors, and I am committed to keeping that promise. I am proud to have fought President Bush's attempt to privatize Social Security. In my administration, privatization will be a complete non-starter. It is the single greatest domestic program in our history, and we have to protect it. I have a clear, straightforward plan to keep Social Security strong for future generations. First, I will restore fiscal responsibility in Washington. That will give us the kinds of options we had in the late 1990s, when we had a plan to keep Social Security solvent until 2055. Second, I will address the long-term challenges facing Social Security through a bipartisan process, through which we should consider a range of options to strengthen the program without hurting seniors or middle-class families. Finally, I believe we need to look beyond fixing Social Security to tackle the crisis of poor retirement savings in this country. That is why I proposed an American Retirement Accounts Plan that would give tens of millions of families a matching tax cut of up to \$1,000 to help them save for retirement outside Social Security.

I believe it is critical that we continue to protect the defined benefit plans that provide secure retirement benefits for tens of millions of workers. I have supported legislation to require that companies fund 100 percent of their defined benefit pension obligations. This legislation which is now law is called the Pension Protection Act. It established new minimum funding standards for employers with defined benefit pension plans. Before the bill, companies were only required to fund 90 percent of their anticipated future pension obligations, and in practice, companies funded far less because of a number of loopholes. Now companies with defined benefit plans are required to fund 100 percent of their future obligations.

We should also take a close look at the growing practice of companies entering into bankruptcy as a tactical maneuver simply to shed their pension and other obligations to workers. I led an effort in the Senate to help save the pensions of the 60,000 auto workers and retirees affected by Delphi Corporation's bankruptcy last year. I also pushed the Labor Department to investigate the Dresser-Rand employees who lost their pensions when Halliburton sold its stake in the company.