

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

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# IFPTE 2016 Presidential Candidate Survey

## **Distributed to Candidates, December 11, 2015**

*Governor Jeb Bush -- Dr. Ben Carson -- Governor Chris Christie*

*Secretary Hillary Clinton -- Senator Ted Cruz -- Carly Fiorina*

*Governor John Kasich -- Governor Martin O'Malley -- Senator Rand Paul*

*Senator Marco Rubio -- Senator Bernie Sanders -- Donald Trump*

**Presidential Candidates:**

Below is a series of questions addressing several issues of importance to the members of the International Federation of Professional and Technical Engineers (IFPTE). We respectfully request that you provide IFPTE with answers to these nine questions, and we will in turn provide them to the membership across the nation.

Please reply to Matt Biggs, IFPTE Legislative Director, [mbiggs@ifpte.org](mailto:mbiggs@ifpte.org), or mail to:

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Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact Matt Biggs at (202) 239-4880.

Thank you in advance for answering this survey.

## 1. Labor Law Reform, Minimum Wage

Unfortunately most American workers in all sectors and professions do not have a voice on the job. Real wages are down, healthcare and retirement benefits are under attack, and job stability is quickly becoming a thing of the past. While professional and manufacturing workers are forced to watch as employers' ship their jobs overseas or replace them with cheaper imported labor through our unjust STEM visa programs, millions of other minimum wage workers are living in poverty. Regrettably, 1.3 million workers in our nation are earning the \$7.25/hour minimum wage, with another 1.7 million earning even less than that. 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.

However, when workers do explore the opportunity of forming a union their efforts are frequently met with employer interference. 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.

- ***Will you use the power of the bully pulpit to advocate for, and sign into law, meaningful and fair labor law reform like that embodied in The Employee Free Choice Act? This legislation passed the House of Representatives in March 2007 to provide workers the ability to decide to form and join unions absent employer threats and interference.***

*It is vital that we modernize basic labor standards. Worker protections and basic labor standards have failed to keep pace with changes over the past half century. I was proud to be an original cosponsor of the Employee Free Choice Act. I support card check and binding arbitration to help workers that have voted to join a union reach a first contract. We need to find ways to support workers that want a union in their workplace to have fair elections without fear of employer retaliation or intimidation. That's why I support the WAGE Act. Labor organizing should be protected in our courts. Workers need recourse when they are punished by their employers for organizing.*

*We also need to take other steps to raise wages and reduce poverty among working families, including raising the minimum wage, eradicating wage theft, ensuring that employers do not misclassify true employees as "independent contractors" to skirt their obligations, and leveling the playing field for women and people of color.*

- **Will you support an increase in the nation's current \$7.25/hour minimum wage to at least \$15/hour?**

*It is past time that we raise the minimum wage and lift hardworking American families out of poverty. If we raise the minimum wage, one in four working moms will get a raise. This is not just an economic issue, it's a family issue. That is why I support legislation to raise the federal minimum wage from \$7.25 today to \$12 an hour—the highest it's ever been in this country, even adjusted for inflation. And after that, I support indexing the federal minimum wage to the median wage, so it keeps rising over time. I believe the federal minimum wage is just that—a minimum, a floor. I also believe that there are places in the country where the minimum wage should be higher, because the costs of living are higher. It costs more to live in New York City than in Little Rock, Arkansas. That's why I stood with fast food workers in New York, and with workers in Los Angeles and Seattle, in their fight to raise the minimum wage to \$15. But I won't be satisfied with just fixing the minimum wage—I have a comprehensive plan to raise incomes for all Americans, so families across the country can afford a middle class life.*

## **2. Federal Taxpayer Resources and Union Busting**

President Obama signed Executive Order 13494 (EO 13494) in January, 2009, forbidding government contractors from spending taxpayer dollars on union avoidance law firms and others for the purposes of frustrating their employees' ability to decide whether or not to form unions. While IFPTE applauds the intent of this EO, we are disappointed that it only applies to those contracts put in place after the EO was signed. In other words, its impact is meaningless for many workers.

- **As President, will you prevent the use of taxpayer funds by any federal contractor from being used to frustrate and otherwise interfere into organizing drives, and have it apply retroactively to current contracts and contractors?**

*I have supported the fundamental right to organize my entire career, and I oppose any use of taxpayer resources to foot the bill for anti-union efforts. We should be protecting the right to organize, not weakening it. That is why I support President Obama's Executive Order to prohibit federal contractors from using federal funds to influence, frustrate, or interfere with employees' decision to join or not to join a union. As president, I will work hand-in-hand with the IFPTE to explore ways to make these protections comprehensive.*

## **3. Federal Employee Civil Service & Collective Bargaining Protections**

Since 2011 our nation's federal employees have sacrificed at least \$159 billion for our nation, mostly through years of pay freezes and pension cuts that went towards deficit reduction, while some was used to offset the 2012 extensions of the payroll tax cut and Unemployment Insurance (UI), as well as to help pay the bill to avoid sequestration through FY15. Government employees have also experienced furlough days and job insecurity due to the government shutdown and sequestration. Despite these huge sacrifices, there continue to be attacks in Congress aimed at federal worker pay, pensions, health care and worker protections.

· ***Will you actively work to preserve the collective bargaining, Title V Civil Service protections, pay and Veteran's Preference for federal employees, as well as work to ensure that there will be no more cuts to federal employee pensions, and that federal workers will receive pay raises commensurate to the services they provide the American taxpaying public?***

*As Secretary of State, Senator, and First Lady, I have been proud to work alongside the talented men and women of the federal workforce, and I have witnessed first-hand the vital contributions that they make to our nation. I was serving as Secretary of State when federal salaries were frozen in 2011, and I saw how difficult it was for employees to be told that even though they were working hard and their living costs were going up, their paychecks were not. The government is not going to be able to recruit and retain the high-caliber employees it needs if it does not pay federal employees fairly for their work.*

*As President, I would work to ensure that federal employees are paid fairly, including by providing appropriate pay raises, and I will oppose across-the-board arbitrary pay freezes, retirement cuts, or cuts to other employee benefits. I also believe in the importance of meeting our commitments to retired federal employees. It is unfair to require additional increases in retirement contributions as a backdoor pay-cut for federal workers. I also believe that if you serve your country, your country should serve you. That is why, as President, I will continue to support Veteran's Preference for federal employment.*

· ***Will you renew President Obama's Executive Order (EO 13522) that calls for a National Labor/Management Partnership?"***

*As I have said throughout this campaign, I truly believe that when unions are strong, America is strong. That is why, as President, I will work to restore union collective bargaining rights, raise the minimum wage, and strengthen overtime rules. The National Council on Federal Labor-Management Relations has played a vital role in advancing efforts that similarly strengthen our unions. The Council has promoted partnerships between labor and management while also finding ways to improve agency operations and government service delivery. That is why, as*

*President, I will renew President Obama's Executive Order calling for the National Labor/Management Partnership.*

#### **4. Privatization of Public Sector Jobs**

Federal lawmakers at both federal and state governments continue to claim that contracting out saves taxpayer dollars and can help solve their budget woes. However, in most cases privatization of government sector work ends up costing taxpayers more money and sometimes even results in inferior public services.

In the federal government, the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) does not base their contracting out decisions on the best value for the taxpayer, leading to the privatization of critical government services. In the public sector states like New Jersey, for example, view the privatization of the roadways, vital services provided students at state colleges and universities, and other services as a quick influx of cash and a perceived short term fix to their budget situation. What is lost in the rush to privatize government functions is that the consequences will have dire long term ramifications for both workers and taxpayers.

***As President, will you turn back unfair federal outsourcing practices and replace them with a fair 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?***

*I do not believe that we should be needlessly contracting, outsourcing, or privatizing work that is inherently governmental in nature, including state and local government services. During my time in the Senate, I expressed concern with the federal government's over-reliance on contractors. The federal government should be focused on hiring the best employees to perform government functions, rather than unnecessarily contracting out services. This is especially true when studies show that federal workers can often perform the same functions at a lower cost than private contractors. For example, a 2011 study by the Project on Government Oversight found that the federal government routinely approves contractor billing rates more than 1.8 times as high as the total cost of compensating federal employees to do comparable work.*

*In the Senate, I opposed numerous Bush Administration proposals to privatize the federal workforce. For example, I consistently supported measures to block the Bush Administration from imposing privatization quotas on federal agencies and outsourcing government jobs. I was also an original co-sponsor of the Honest Leadership and Accountability in Contracting Act,*

*which would have prohibited the contracting of inherent government functions and cracked down on contracting-related fraud.*

*As President, I will oppose efforts to contract out work unless doing so is necessary, in the best interest of the federal government and is clearly cost effective. I will direct the Office of Management and Budget, along with all federal agencies, to take practical steps to inventory and analyze federal service contracts so that the U.S. government can make informed decisions that better manage contractors. And I'll encourage state governments to do the same. I will also work to ensure that better information about the true cost of government contracts, including service contracts, is available online and accessible to the public, so that Americans can see when they are not getting appropriate value from federal contractors. Our country depends on public services and the people who provide them. I will work with the IFPTE to ensure we continue to push for value and fairness in our federal contracts.*

## **5. Excise Tax on Health Benefits**

Workers in all sectors of our economy have forgone pay and other benefits in exchange for adequate employer-provided health care coverage. At the bargaining table, for example, workers are accepting lower or no pay increases, reduced pensions, and the curtailing of other important benefits in exchange for an employer provided health benefit that is both affordable and meets the health needs of their families. As health care costs have skyrocketed, and absent any cost controls put into place by national lawmakers, workers have been forced to fend for themselves by negotiating these kinds of unfortunate trade-offs for many years.

While IFPTE applauds measures to ensure that everyone has access to health care—including a single-payer national health insurance system—we are concerned about the impending 40% excise tax called for by the Patient Protection & Affordable Care Act. This law levies a tax on individual policies costing more than \$10,200 a year and family policies in excess of \$27,500, and is slated to go into effect in 2018. Millions of workers will see sacrifices made at the bargaining table fall by the wayside, suffer reduced employer provided benefits, and will ultimately have to incur the cost of any tax that will be passed on from the employer to the employee.

***As President, will you work to eliminate this burdensome tax on working families by endorsing policies similar to those laid out in S. 2075, The American Worker Health Care Tax Relief Act of 2015, sponsored by Senator Sherrod Brown, and other similar bipartisan measures currently pending in Congress?***

*I think the primary way we need to pay for the Affordable Care Act is reforming our delivery system for health care in this country so that we contain costs. That's why I think we need to repeal the Cadillac tax. It shifts too much cost to middle-class families. As President, I would work with Congress to ensure that our tax code appropriately advances the health care interests of lower-income and middle-class families.*

## **6. Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP)**

IFPTE sees little improvement in the TPP compared to the NAFTA model. TPP's labor chapter will do nothing to help improve working conditions for workers abroad, and lacks any enforceable language giving workers an authentic right to collectively bargain. It will not guarantee or even promote workplace rights and labor standards. As is the custom in past trade agreements, this one has no real enforcement mechanism within the labor chapter, leaving it up to the discretion of the nations themselves to remedy any labor dispute. When you compare that unenforceable system to the enforceable investor-state process allowing corporations to sue governments at the expense of the public good, it is not surprising that IFPTE and many others are disappointed with the TPP agreement.

There is little doubt that if the TPP agreement is permitted to move forward it will lead to the loss of even more American manufacturing jobs to low wage nations who have little to no worker protections.

***As President, will you reject the TPP, and instead embark on a new trade policy by negotiating bilateral trade agreements with countries that include enforceable workers' rights provisions consistent with the U.N.'s Universal Declaration of Human Rights, provide reasonable wages and benefits, and provide all workers around the world with the right to unionize?***

*We need to be sure that any new trade deal meets three clear tests: It has to create good American jobs, raise wages, and advance our national security. We should be willing to walk away from any measure that falls short of these tests, and as such, I do not support the Trans Pacific Partnership (TPP).*

*We've seen that even a strong deal can fall short on delivering the promised benefits, so I don't believe we can afford to keep giving new agreements the benefit of the doubt. The risks are too high that, despite our best efforts, they will end up doing more harm than good for hard-working American families whose paychecks have barely budged in years.*

*I still believe in the goal of a strong and fair trade agreement in the Pacific as part of a broader strategy both at home and abroad, just as I did when I was Secretary of State. The goal of any trade agreement should be greater prosperity and security for American families, not trade for trade's sake. I want to see trade deals that include strong and enforceable provisions on labor and environmental standards—American workers cannot be undermined by cheap and unfair labor practices. And we must address currency manipulation and unfair competition by state-owned enterprises that take away American jobs, especially in manufacturing.*

## **7. 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. In fact, just this year companies like Disney World and Southern-Cal Edison fired hundreds of their workers and replaced them with H-1B visa holders. 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 from having access to the U.S. labor market.

IFPTE has endorsed a plan by former Secretary of Labor Ray Marshall to “base future entry levels on the real needs of the labor market.” The Marshall Plan is to improve, not expand temporary worker programs, which urges movement away from indentured work that results from the H-1B and L-1 visa programs. As stated in the Marshall Plan, “Our country has long recognized that it is not good policy for a democracy to admit large numbers of workers with limited civil and employment rights.”

**· *As President, will you propose and/or support legislative and regulatory efforts aimed at reforming the H-1B and L-1 Visa programs consistent with the principles in the Marshall Plan?***

*I support comprehensive immigration reform (CIR) and a pathway to citizenship, not just because it's the right thing to do, but also because it strengthens families, our economy, and our country. I was a strong supporter of CIR as a U.S. Senator, co-sponsoring Senator Ted Kennedy's 2004 bill and supporting the Comprehensive Immigration Reform Act in 2006 and 2007. As part of a comprehensive immigration reform package, I will support H-1B and L-1 Visa reform to prevent employers from misusing the program. These visas should be used to enhance our workforce and meet the needs of the labor market, not to displace American workers.*

## 8. Support for the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA)

IFPTE remains concerned with the current Administration's recent budget proposals "to explore options to end federal ties to TVA." IFPTE believes that this language is misguided, as TVA's mission of providing inexpensive and reliable power services to those in the Tennessee Valley has served as an incredibly successful economic engine for Tennessee and parts of the other six states it serves. With over 13,000 employees—many in family wage, union represented jobs—the TVA generates approximately \$11.2 billion in annual revenues. Since 2005, TVA has been responsible for saving and creating over 300,000 jobs and spurring \$32 billion in business investment in TVA serviced areas. TVA has 155 power distributor customers that they sell electricity to, and serves some 56 industries and federal entities. IFPTE sees no compelling reason to even consider divesting TVA's functions. Even the Administration's very own commissioned Lazard Study recommended last year "against pursuing a divestiture of TVA."

· ***As President, will you reject any notion of divesting some or all of the valuable services that the TVA provides to the citizens in the Tennessee Valley states?***

*When the United States invests in building, upgrading, and improving our national infrastructure, we create good jobs and careers, boost economic competitiveness, and give rise to entirely new industries. That's been true of the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) and I want to see that continue. But today, we are dramatically underinvesting in our future infrastructure. As a share of the economy, federal infrastructure investment is roughly half of what it was thirty-five years ago. As president, I will galvanize the investment needed to help cities, states, and rural communities upgrade and repair existing energy infrastructure and build the new infrastructure we will need for a clean energy future. In this campaign I have laid out my plan to increase federal infrastructure funding by \$275 billion over a five-year period, fully paying for these investments through business tax reform. Of these funds, I will allocate \$250 billion to direct public investment. Further, my administration will establish a National Infrastructure Bank to leverage public and private capital to invest in part, in energy infrastructure and will award competitive grants to states, cities and rural communities that take the lead in reducing carbon pollution by investing in renewable energy, carbon capture and sequestration, and reducing energy costs by investing in efficiency in both new and existing buildings -- many measures the TVA has already began to implement.*

*As we invest in modernizing the United States' energy infrastructure, we need to do so as part of a continent-wide strategy that ensures safe, reliable and affordable energy delivery, unlocks economic opportunity for American businesses and workers, and accelerates the transition to a*

*clean energy economy across the North American continent. My administration will consider the TVA a partner in this effort.*

## **9. Pensions, Social Security**

It is clear that the retirement security of American workers is quickly becoming a thing of the past, leading to a retirement crisis for Americans of epic proportion. In 2012, former Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions (HELP) Committee Chairman, Tom Harkin, issued a report that found that half of Americans have less than \$10,000 in savings for retirement, just one in five private sector workers is covered by a defined pension benefit, and the retirement to income deficit between actual retirement savings versus projected retirement savings is \$6.6 trillion. Things have not gotten any better since 2012. Earlier this year the Center for American Progress found that, “nearly one-third of non-retired Americans have no retirement savings or pension.”

Despite this looming crisis facing America, national lawmakers have advocated for everything from privatizing Social Security to raising the retirement age. Others, including the Obama Administration, have advocated for cutting the Social Security COLA by tying its increase to the Consumer Price Index (CPI). And, adding insult to injury, some also want to end Medicare as we know it and replace it with a voucher system.

IFPTE believes any cuts to Social Security and Medicare are misguided. Instead, we must not only strengthen these programs, we must expand them.

***As President, will you work to reject any cuts to Social Security and Medicare, including tying the COLA to the CPI, and instead work toward thoughtful and worker friendly reforms to expand both Social Security and Medicare?***

*Let me start by saying I've fought to defend Social Security for years, including when the Bush Administration tried to privatize it. We need to keep defending it from attacks and enhance it to meet new realities. To that end, I will work to preserve Social Security for decades to come by asking those at the top to contribute more. This could include taxing some of their income above the current Social Security cap, and taxing some of their income not currently taken into account by the Social Security system. We need to reject years of Republican myth-making that claims we cannot afford our Social Security system, and that the only solution must therefore be to cut benefits. I will oppose any plan that tries to close Social Security's shortfall on the backs of the middle class, whether in terms of middle-class tax increases or benefit cuts; accounting gimmicks like chained CPI; or privatization Social Security. I'm especially focused on the fact*

*that we need to improve how Social Security works for women. I also want to enhance benefits for our most vulnerable seniors and those who have taken time out of the workforce to care for a child or ailing family member.*

*We must also defend and enhance Medicare. As President, I will ensure that all Medicare beneficiaries receive the assistance they need and deserve—and that includes opposing any effort to raise the eligibility age. We also need to address the skyrocketing cost of prescription drugs. And, as I've said for years, we need to allow Medicare to negotiate for lower drug prices and pass those savings to Medicare beneficiaries. In the Senate, I co-sponsored legislation, including the Medicare Prescription Drug Gap Reduction Act and the Meeting Our Responsibility to Medicare Beneficiaries Act, which would have finally allowed Medicare to negotiate fair prices. As President, I will continue to support efforts to save billions of dollars per year for seniors and taxpayers.*

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