



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

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Statement by IFPTE President Matt Biggs on Announcement by Vice President Harris and Labor Secretary Walsh on Boosting Union Representation for Federal Workers

Elections have consequences. This weeks' announcement by Vice President Kamala Harris and U.S. Secretary of Labor Marty Walsh on boosting union representation in the federal sector is a positive consequence that stands in stark contrast to the policies of the previous administration.

The previous administration tried to strip union rights from International Federation of Professional and Technical Engineers (IFPTE) members who were serving as federal immigration judges. The move was a cynical attempt to silence them.

In the Trump years, IFPTE members, civilian employees of the U.S. Department of Defense, and other areas of the federal government saw their ability to offer suggestions to improve their agencies curtailed because labor/management committees were shut down.

Federal workers face many of the same threats as workers in the private sector. Only last year, in the darkest days of the pandemic with near record unemployment confronting the country, the federally owned and operated Tennessee Valley Authority tried to lay off hundreds of IT professionals and outsource their jobs to tech firms overseas. Only because those federal workers were represented by our union were they

able to launch a successful campaign to keep the work in the United States and prevent the spread of sensitive information about the electric grid and nuclear facilities.

Federal workers share the same challenges that employees of large, private sector employers face but they also have their own special workplace issues. For example, our members at NASA and other agencies were deemed “non-essential,” went without paychecks, and were locked out of their offices during the last government shutdown.

IFPTE applauds the Biden administration for continuing to understand that a healthy and prosperous middle class is directly linked to increased union density. Today’s announcement is good news for both federal labor and management. Approval of labor unions is at a 65-year high according to the Gallup poll released last month. Having a more unionized workplace should help the federal government recruit and retain skilled labor, operate more efficiently, and boost morale for federal workers.

Matt Biggs is the President of the International Federation of Professional and Technical Engineers. Across North America, IFPTE represents 90,000 highly-skilled, workers in both the public and private sectors. In the federal government, IFPTE represents tens of thousands of highly-skilled professionals who work in a wide range of occupations including Immigration Judges, at the Department of Justice, engineers and technical workers at the Department of Defense, Administrative Law Judges who hear cases at the Social Security Administration, along with rocket scientists and technicians at NASA, The union is an affiliate of the AFL-CIO and the CLC. More information can be found at www.IFPTE.org.