



AFT ENDORSEMENT OF JOE BIDEN

Questions and Answers

The AFT executive council endorsed Joe Biden. What were the criteria for doing so? Why now?

When the AFT adopted its presidential primary endorsement process in February 2019, it did so with the commitment to conduct the most extensive, transparent and inclusive presidential endorsement process in AFT history. From the beginning, the AFT established three criteria for earning the AFT endorsement:

1. The candidate shares our values.
2. The candidate has the consensus support of the membership.
3. The candidate has a pathway to winning both the nomination and the general election.

The process proved successful: A record number of more than 300,000 members engaged.

The AFT executive council, at its February 2020 meeting, adopted a resolution that three candidates shared our values and had a path to winning the nomination—Joe Biden, Bernie Sanders and Elizabeth Warren—and subsequently encouraged our members to actively support any or all of them.

Since that meeting, our members, like Democrats across the nation, have coalesced around Biden. Members support Biden by a 2-to-1 margin (60 percent to 30 percent), and he has clear majority support of our members across all constituencies. And with nearly 60 percent of the national convention delegates having been allocated, Biden has a nearly insurmountable lead. Furthermore, he has proven he has the ability to attract voters and build a coalition to win not just the primary but also the general election.

The timing of this endorsement is important. As the Democrats have been engaged in a very energetic primary campaign, President Trump has been free to spend millions of dollars and wage an uncontested re-election campaign across the country. And even during these times of crisis, Trump is using his bully pulpit not to bring people together, but to sow division and to focus on what is good for himself at the expense of the American people.

It is time for us to close ranks behind Biden. He has earned our endorsement for the Democratic primary. He is a proven and empathetic leader, and it is now essential to have a singular voice to combat Trump during this critical time.

Our criteria and how Biden earned the endorsement

Criteria 1: Sharing our values

AFT members have a long history with Biden and know him as someone whose life experiences shaped a resilient, competent, compassionate and honest leader with an unbending optimism and commitment to working people. Biden has spent his entire career championing the values of strong public schools and colleges, affordable healthcare and higher education, labor rights and civil rights. His record shows that no matter their station in life, he believes every person deserves to be listened to and treated with respect and dignity.

Biden believes in the promise and purpose of public education, and as president would strengthen and invest in public schools and support educators. Biden's plans are informed by his wife, Jill, who has been a teacher her entire career, even while Biden served as vice president.

Whether as a U.S. senator, where his lifetime AFT voting record was nearly 100 percent, or as vice president, where he helped pass the Affordable Care Act, Biden has repeatedly shown that he believes in the dignity of every person. He is the leader we need in this moment.

As president, a Biden administration would continue to put middle-class values front and center. He is with us on investing in public education; making healthcare and college more affordable; knowing that healthcare is right, not a privilege; and on rebuilding an economy that puts the needs of everyday people first. His agenda and proposals reflect these priorities, including:

- Tripling funding for Title I, fully funding the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, investing in school infrastructure and expanding community schools;



For more information about the endorsement process, visit AFTvotes.org.

- Building on the Affordable Care Act and making healthcare more affordable by offering a public option and reducing prescription drug prices;
- Offering free tuition to attend public colleges and universities for families making less than \$125,000, and providing \$10,000 per year of student debt relief for those working in public service;
- Protecting the rights of workers to collectively bargain and making it easier for workers to join a union, including supporting the PRO Act and the Public Service Freedom to Negotiate Act; and
- Ensuring the U.S. achieves a 100 percent clean energy economy and reaches net-zero emissions no later than 2050.

Biden's whole career has been devoted to building a pathway to the middle class for the millions of people facing an affordability crisis daily. It's time to give him the chance to do this as president.

Criteria 2: Consensus support of AFT members

The AFT's 2020 endorsement process has been the most transparent and inclusive process in our union's history, with hundreds of thousands of members directly taking action in the process. Whether through our 10 presidential candidate town halls, the national education forum with seven presidential candidates, the five regional meetings, several scientific polls, multiple member online surveys and other activities, member input has been at a record level. And, through this process, the members have gotten to know the candidates, and have made the decision to coalesce around Biden.

Biden's support among the AFT membership runs deep and wide. In the latest Hart Research poll, Biden has the support of the membership, leading his nearest competitor by a 2-to-1 margin (60 percent to 30 percent), and is the leading candidate across all AFT constituencies and across all demographics: women, men, African American, Hispanic, white, liberal, moderate, conservative, independent, etc.

Member support for the timing of the endorsement is also reflected in the fact that 75 percent of Democratic members support the AFT making an endorsement in the primary.

Criteria 3: Pathway to winning

Biden has the strongest path to winning the Democratic nomination and also the general election. From Feb. 29 until the time of the AFT endorsement, Biden won 19 of the 25 Democratic contests and developed an insurmountable delegate lead for the Democratic nomination. He did so

not by spending more money than the other candidates, but through his understanding and connection with the real concerns of all Americans, and by building coalitions of support across all groups, perhaps most critically in communities of color.

Biden has proven himself to be the strongest candidate against Trump in the general election, as evidence by his wins by wide margins in nearly all the presidential battleground states that have held primaries thus far, including Arizona, Florida, Michigan, Minnesota, North Carolina and Virginia.

Poll after poll shows that the leading issue for voters is nominating a candidate who can defeat Trump, and that among those voters Biden is the overwhelmingly preferred candidate.

How will the AFT support Biden? Is the endorsement for the primary or for the general election?

The AFT's greatest asset is its membership, people who have dedicated their lives to educating children, taking care of patients and serving their communities. With this endorsement, the AFT will commit the time and resources necessary to mobilize our members in support of Biden. The AFT and our members are trusted messengers in our communities, and our ability to relay factual information is more important than ever as we help elect Biden.

As mentioned above, Biden has a long history of listening to and working with the AFT and our members. With this endorsement, and with our appointment to the Democratic Party's platform committee, we will work to strengthen both the national Democratic platform and the policy positions of the nominee in a way that AFT members envision.

The endorsement is for the Democratic primary. An endorsement for the general election will occur at the AFT convention this summer and will be the responsibility of the delegates to the convention.

Where can I find more information about Biden, the endorsement process and how to get involved?

You can find additional information by visiting AFTvotes.org. The site includes information on Biden and his positions on the issues, including videos from his town hall with members in Houston and from the education forum in Pittsburgh. The site also includes very detailed information about the endorsement process and how you can get more involved and submit any questions you may have.



For more information about the endorsement process, visit AFTvotes.org.