



Local 1277

News

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President's report

A preview and overview

Looking Ahead to the 2024 Presidential And California U.S. Senate Races

By Jeff Shaffer
President, Local 1277

I know. We're not yet halfway through 2023 and here I am looking ahead to—and talking about—two very important political contests: The race for the Presidency and the campaign for an open U.S. Senate seat from California. But there are reasons for this, brothers and sisters, and I want to explain them.

First, our International Union is often an early endorser for national political office, as well as at the forefront of involvement in those campaigns which so greatly affect our careers, families, communities, and future. And once again, our ATU International is out front with a key endorsement.

As the picture and caption on this page shows, we are **"Ridin' with Biden"**! We are both out front and outspoken about this, and rightly so. President Joe Biden made it clear from the get-go that he was 100% in support of organized labor. *"I'm a union man,"* he said proudly, shortly after taking office and his voting record during six U.S. senate terms surely backs that up.

Democrat Joe Biden is one of us, in background, values and goals. He believes in the importance of unions, both as a progressive economic and social force, and as a key part of the effort to bring about more income equality, safer worksites, and creation of the hundreds of thousands of much-needed, good paying and good benefits jobs in rebuilding our national infrastructure, expanding mass transit, vastly increasing our chip-building capability, and protecting the environment.

See that warm embrace between Biden and ATU International President John Costa? No big surprise there. Their friendship and commitment to similar pro-working people, pro-family goals go back many years.

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ATU Endorses President Joe Biden for Second Term

As the most pro-labor President in U.S. history, a friend of the ATU, and a champion for working people, the ATU General Executive Board has endorsed Joe Biden for a second term as President. "In 2020, our Union took a bold step and was one of the first unions to endorse Joe Biden early in the Democratic Primary. We endorsed him because of his record on labor in the Senate and as Vice President," said ATU International President John Costa. "We also knew Biden would restore integrity to the highest office in the U.S. We were right." Leading us through a pandemic and an economic crisis, President Biden successfully fought for the bipartisan Infrastructure Bill, a once-in-a-generation investment into our nation's infrastructure and critical safety measures for our members. "Joe Biden has more than earned a second term as President, and the ATU is proud to endorse him. Just like in 2020, the ATU will be out in full force across the country to mobilize our members to make history again and elect Joe Biden to finish the job," Costa said.

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It is no accident that President Costa has been present at the White House for many labor-related ceremonies and bill signings (See the March-April 2023 paper).

Biden's first Secretary of Labor was former head of the Boston Building Trades Council. His choice to replace Martin Walsh is the former California Labor Commissioner, Julie Su. The President has named strong pro-union people to federal labor agencies, boards, and commissions. He has outspokenly supported organized labor's legislative agenda in Congress, signing into law sound measures while continuing to secure passage of pending legislation.

An early and enthusiastic endorsement of President Biden in 2024 is the proverbial "no brainer"!

Consider the Alternative!

Second, whoever the Republicans nominate for President in 2024—be it former President Trump, the hard-right wing Florida Governor, Ron DeSantis, or former U.N. Ambassador Nikki Haley—would be terrible for both the union movement and working men, women, and families.

Trump proved it during his four years in office! He happily named extremely anti-union businessmen and right-to-work cheerleaders to the Department of Labor, and the agencies and boards whose decisions so greatly affect our working lives and conditions. They did his bidding and rendered policy after policy, decision after decision, *against* our interests, needs, and goals. Trump and his pals did their level best to cripple organized labor and squash workers' rights.

And, even worse perhaps, he gave us (and maybe future generations!) three of the most conservative, anti-family, anti-common sense Supreme Court Justices ever. Labor, minorities, women, the environment, and compassionate justice and equality have been paying the price since then. And may well continue to do so!

So, we know all-too-well what Trump thinks of unions, and there's absolutely no reason to believe he'd be any different if he were elected next year. In fact, he might even be *worse* since he would not have to face the voting public ever again! *And don't think either DeSantis or Haley would be any better for us.*

DeSantis has more-or-less declared war on the 21st century, lashing out against science, medicine (no Covid vaccines in *his* state if he can help it), balanced education, lifestyles he doesn't approve of, and even Disneyland! Apparently, Mickey Mouse is too progressive for him. Haley is a weathervane, being pro-Trump one day, anti-Trump the next, depending on where

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ATU Endorses California Congressman Adam Schiff for Senate

Calling him a champion of working people of California, public transit, and labor unions, the ATU, including nearly 16,000 members in California, endorsed Congressman Adam Schiff (D-CA) in his bid to run for Senate in 2024 in California. "The ATU is proud to be among the first unions to endorse the Congressman, and hopefully, others will follow right behind us," said ATU International President John Costa. "In Congress, he championed the bipartisan infrastructure bill, which our Union helped to get passed, which is now pouring millions of dollars into systems like LA Metro." The ATU cares deeply about transit and labor policy but recognizes that if our democracy fails, to use a transit phrase, it is the "end of the line" for all of us. "It has never been more difficult or dangerous to be a bus driver, transit operator or allied worker in California," said Rep. Schiff. "There are constant threats and challenges arising from COVID and the economy, and we need a champion in the Senate who will address these matters and work to dramatically expand mass transit opportunities for workers and residents alike. That's why I'm so grateful to have the support of ATU in my bid for the Senate." Jeff Shaffer, Chair of the ATU California Conference Board and President/Business Agent of ATU Local 1277-Los Angeles, CA, pledged to mobilize our members across California in support of Schiff's campaign. "The ATU California Conference Board is endorsing Adam Schiff for Senate because he is the leader the labor movement needs. His record of standing up for working families is unmatched and we are eager to have his voice representing us in the Senate soon," said Shaffer.

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she is and who she's speaking to. And as former governor of South Carolina, she surely doesn't hold unions and the working people we represent in high regard.

So, it's President Joe Biden—by miles!—for us, for the ATU across the country, for the good of working people and families, and the progressive views and legislation we all support. It's never too early to make sure you, your families, friends, and neighbors are registered to vote in this critical Presidential election! It's simply that important!

Meanwhile, in the Senate

In addition to the extremely important Presidential race next year, one of California's two U.S. Senate seats is up for grabs. Fortunately, because of our state's political party registration numbers, that seat will remain in *Democratic* hands.

Why is this important? The 100-member senate confirms federal judicial appointments, including the Supreme Court (never forget that these federal judges have lifetime tenure, so they almost always outlast the President who nominated them). Additionally, the senate confirms most major departmental and agency appointments, as well as acting as a brake on the wild and erratic legislative proposals coming out of the House of Representatives. As we know all-too-well, the House, over the past 10-15 years, has become a hotbed of radical, ignorant right-wing, intolerant politicians who have no sympathy or understanding of the needs and goals of working people and families.

These House "crazies" (no other word for them) not only have completely bought into Trump/*Republican* Party ignorance and paranoia, they have expanded on it and made it their "mission" to gut every progressive and commonsense legislative achievement. They are shrill, dangerous, negative bomb-throwers out to destroy every thread of the national "safety net" and civil governance. The Senate—backed by President Biden—is the dam holding back their flood of lunacy and anti-union hatred.

But the Democratic majority in the Senate is razor-thin, so every vote counts and every senate race matters!

Long-time Democratic U.S. Senator Dianne Feinstein has been a solid legislator, good for the country, California, and working families. She has had an illustrious, productive career, and is set to retire next year. We salute her achievements.

Three California Congress members are running to replace her. All have progressive records and demonstrated support for unions and the working people's agenda. Once again, our International Union is out front early with its endorsement: *Burbank Congressman Adam Schiff*.

Congressman Schiff has a proven record of support for our agenda and mass transit (See the photo of him with I.P. Costa and note his and our comments). He has been in the forefront in the fight for more governmental transparency and accountability. He has been an enthusiastic supporter of President Biden's national infrastructure-rebuilding program and a strong supporter of personal, civil, and working-people's rights. He will be an excellent voice for us in the Senate.

Joe Biden and Adam Schiff in 2024! A winning ticket for ATU Local 1277, our International Union, and working families across California! I urge all our brothers and sisters to follow these important campaigns, be registered to vote, and be prepared to do whatever it takes to re-elect labor's friend as President and labor's ally as senator!

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Pitchers, Quarterbacks, Point Guards, Goalies. Back Your Team at Local 1277's Old Timer's Get-Together!

Calling all retired Local 1277 sports fans! Our annual fun-filled trip down memory lane—Local 1277's Old Timers Get Together—is set for **Saturday, October 28**. Be sure to Save the Date. This year's theme is "*Cheer for Your team!*" Time, place, and menus to be announced soon.

As always, all retirees must be up to date on their Union dues in order to receive an invitation. And, as always, you can be sure that this will be a day filled with eating, drinking, dancing, terrific prizes and, above all, memories and catching up!

So, brothers and sisters, get out those team caps, t-shirts, jackets, and jerseys and get ready to cheer for your team, boo the other guys, and have a great day with friends and families! Support for your local teams, pro or collegiate, is welcome, but even fans of out-of-town teams can join in the fun!

Heads Up to Long Beach Transit Members: Be Sure to Know Your Contractual Rights!

By Errol Frazier
Vice president, Local 1277

Recently, I was on the property at Long Beach Transit (LBT). While I was speaking with a couple of the Operations Shop Stewards, one of them, as he started to walk away, told me that he needed to go to a hearing. I asked, "What's it about," and he replied, "I don't know."

Let me tell you something, brothers and sisters: *With that answer, I realized immediately that I had to write this article. **Please be sure to read it!***

Article 21 of the Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) between Long Beach Public Transportation and Amalgamated Transit Union, Local 1277, spells out the procedural steps that have to take place in order for the agency (LBT) to apply *any* kind of discipline aimed at you, a brother or sister in our Union.

Article 21, Section C, specifically states: "***An employee shall be entitled to Union representation at any time he/she is requested to attend an interview or hearing at the option of the employee.***"

You, as a dues-paying member in good standing in Local 1277, *always* have at your side a Union representative who should have full knowledge of the contract so that he or she can help defend you against *any* contractual discipline. You, as a member, have that *absolute* right, and you should *always* take advantage of your Shop Steward's knowledge and experience to help to defend you against any charge or discipline that could lead to a loss of pay, suspension or worse.

Article 21, Section E, states in part: "***When required to report for an interview, (or hearing), the employee and the union will be provided at least forty-eight (48) hours' notice of the time, date, place and subject matter of the interview (or hearing).***" This is

another one of your rights that you should be sure to take advantage of if need be. If and when you ever get such a 48-hour notice to attend an interview or hearing, you, as a member of ATU Local 1277, should *immediately* contact a Shop Steward and start the process of helping him or her to mount a defense against the possibility of attendance points or loss of hard-earned pay.

And, very importantly, reach out to your Shop Steward as early as possible within that 48-hour window! Those 48 hours are precious. Do not waste any of that time. Get ahold of your Shop Steward ASAP!

You Have a Copy of Your Contract. Read it!

As a member of Local 1277's Long Beach Transit Unit, you have been given a copy of the contract that explains your worksite rights and responsibilities. These are the provisions that have been negotiated over the years by your Union to protect you, your career, your family, and your future. The contract explicitly spells out all the procedures that Long Beach Transit must follow with respect to any disciplinary action that could cause you to lose any of your hard-earned wages.

Finally, you should always know that your employer, LBT, has its own policies in place that should have been clearly explained to you when you were hired. In fact, it is more than likely that you had to sign your acknowledgment that you understood these policies. But, a knowledgeable Shop Steward, with the ability and experience to read any policies will be able to help defend you against any unwarranted discipline that could cost you attendance points or any loss of your hard-earned pay.

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**ALL JULY UNION MEETINGS
ARE CANCELED**

Here are the upcoming Local 1277 membership meetings for June and July. Please make every attempt to attend the meeting for your unit. It's **your** Union, and we need your participation at our meetings! All members will receive credit for the meetings.

Tuesday, Jun. 6:	Los Angeles area members: L.A. Building Trades Council, 1626 Beverly Blvd., Los Angeles. Morning Session 10:00 a.m. Evening Session 5:00 p.m.
Wednesday, Jun. 7:	Metrolink Unit members: Local 1277 Office, 1744 North Main Street. Morning Session 8:30 a.m. Evening Session 5:00 p.m.
Wednesday, Nov. 2:	Riverside area members: IELC Building, 1074 E. La Cadena Dr., Riverside. Morning Session 10:00 a.m. Afternoon Session 3:00 p.m.
Thursday, Jun. 8:	SunLine area members: Hilton Palm Springs, 400 East Tahquitz Canyon Way, Palm Springs. Morning Session 10:00 a.m. Afternoon Session 4:00 p.m.
Thursday, Jun. 8:	Long Beach area members: LBFA Local 372, 2201 Cherry Avenue, Signal Hill CA 90755. Morning: 10:00 a.m. Afternoon: 3:00 p.m. Evening: 6:00 p.m.