



# COMMUNIQUE

## 2020 GENERAL ELECTION: LABOR WINS WITH BIDEN-HARRIS WIN

By Marci Rosenblum  
Local 1180 Communications Director

It was one of the most contentious presidential races in history, but after months of political backstabbing and televised debates that mostly focused on ignoring the “times up” signal, Joe Biden was elected the 46th President of the United State. His running mate, California U.S. Senator Kamala Harris made history by becoming the first female Vice President, the first Black Vice President, and the first Vice President of Indian descent.

The news could not have been better for organized labor who hit the ground running early on to make sure the balance of power shifted in Washington come 2021. The goal: a president who knows and understands exactly who built America, who keeps it running, and who built the middle-class.

“We need an ally in the White House, not an enemy. The change in leadership cannot come soon enough. Four years of number 45 is four years too many,” said **President Gloria Middleton**, who has been an outspoken opponent of President Trump and his constant attacks on labor.

The entire 2020 campaign season was overshadowed by the COVID-19 pandemic with equal attention given to absentee voting as to the candidates themselves. Many states, including New York, relied on absentee ballots and mail-in voting to keep voters safe and to avoid early voting and Election Day crowds. As a consequence of the dangers of in-person voting during the pandemic, a reported five times as many New York voters requested absentee or military ballots for the Nov. 2020 election as those who did for the 2016 election.

On Election Day itself, tens of millions of registered voters, predominantly Republicans, came out to the polls. In the early returns, as expected, President Trump led, but millions of mail-in and absentee ballots in favor of the Biden-Harris ticket poured in as election workers across the nation counted—in some states for nearly a week—the votes that proved decisive in victory.

The Biden-Harris ticket won the Electoral College vote 306-232, with Biden flipping five states on his route to that win: Arizona, Georgia, Michigan, Wisconsin, and of course, Pennsylvania. As for

the popular vote—the number of Americans who actually voted for each candidate—Biden won more than 81 million votes, or 51.3%, to Trump’s 74.2 million votes, or 46.8%.

In New York State, after winning seats in upstate and holding off a Republican surge on Long Island, Democrats won a supermajority in the state Senate. This will be critical in the 2021 legislative session that kicked off on Jan. 6, when important bills are on the table that now might have a chance of passing: legislation for an early retirement plan for New York City public workers who were on the frontlines in the pandemic, as well as legislation for a stock transfer tax and a billionaires’ tax that would force the 1% to pay their fair share.

With no time to waste, the New York City labor movement is already focusing on the 2021 election. Hundreds of candidates are lined up to run for open City Council seats and the Central Labor Council has formed a committee to interview each one to determine how they stand on labor issues. In addition, there are more than a dozen names in the hat for Mayor, and for the first time, Ranked Choice Voting will be in place.

Ranked Choice Voting allows people to vote for multiple candidates, in order of preference. Instead of just choosing who you want to win, you fill out the ballot with your first choice, second choice, and third choice (or more as needed) for each position.

The candidate with the majority (more than 50%) of first-choice votes wins outright. If no candidate gets a majority of first-choice votes, then it triggers a new counting process. The candidate who did the worst is eliminated, and that candidate’s voters’ ballots are redistributed to their second-choice pick. In other words, if you ranked a losing candidate as your first choice, and the candidate is eliminated, then your vote still counts: it just moves to your second-choice candidate. That process continues until there is a candidate who has the majority of votes.

Watch for a more detailed description of Ranked-Choice Voting in the next Communique. ■