

IBEW BACKS AL GORE FOR PRESIDENT



Vice President Al Gore greets enthusiastic union backers.

“We need the best friend we can possibly have in the White House, and in 2000 Al Gore is that friend,” said IBEW International President J. J. Barry as the union geared up to support the Vice President’s candidacy for President of the United States in the Democratic primaries and beyond. The IBEW’s formal backing comes after members had the opportunity to cast their ballots in a preference poll conducted in November 1999, in which the Vice President garnered the largest bloc of support. (see “Gore Tops IBEW Poll,” *IBEW Journal*, January/February 2000, page 3).

“Al Gore has been a strong advocate of working people ever since he was first elected to the House of Representatives in 1976,” said President Barry. “As a Congressman, Senator and as Vice President, he has stood up time and time again for our rights.”

In expressing the IBEW’s support for the Gore candidacy, President Barry, International Secretary-Treasurer Edwin D. Hill and the IBEW International Vice Presidents and International Executive Council members noted his lifetime labor voting record of 88 percent. His record is especially strong when one considers that his home state of Tennessee is a right-to-work state, with relatively few union members. “The Vice President’s forthrightness in standing up for labor has demonstrated his courage and determination when it comes to fighting for his core beliefs,” President Barry said. They noted the Vice President’s

willingness to back up his words with action. Gore refused to cross a picket line of locked out broadcasting technicians at ABC News in 1998. While campaigning in this year’s New Hampshire primary, Gore walked a picket line with Teamsters on an unfair labor practice strike at Overnite, a trucking company.

Gore’s 88 percent lifetime voting record from the AFL-CIO includes issues of concern to all working families, including:

- Supports the right to organize
- Worked to increase the minimum wage
- Opposed anti-union paycheck protection
- Opposed “company unions” (TEAM Act)
- Supports pay equity
- Fought for Davis-Bacon and other prevailing wage laws
- Supports expanding Family and Medical Leave
- Working to save Social Security
- Fought for workplace safety
- Opposes striker replacement

Secretary-Treasurer Hill said that, taken together, these issues paint the picture of a pro-labor candidate. “Al Gore opposes laws that would limit your union’s ability to fight for you. The right to organize is perhaps the most pivotal issue facing American workers today, and the Vice President has been unequivocal in his stand in favor of that right. He was an early and vocal opponent of the infamous ‘paycheck deception’ movement in 1998 and continues his staunch opposition to attempts to deny working people a voice in the political process. Even on those issues where we disagree—such as trade—we would stand a better chance working with a Gore administration than that of any other candidate,” Hill said.

The IBEW’s officers stressed that getting information to members is the next step in the process. The *Journal* and the IBEW’s web site and portal page (ibew.workingfamilies.com) will provide information about the Gore record and that of other candidates as the 2000 election cycle unfolds. In the meantime, those interested can also reach the Vice President’s web site at www.algore2000.com.

Above all, President Barry and Secretary-Treasurer Hill stressed, the IBEW will work to ensure a large voter turnout of members and their families in the primaries and in the November general election. ■