



FP on the Hill Update: Employer Takeaways From Both Party Conventions

Insights

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Since the 1800's, party conventions have been a crucial part of the presidential campaign cycle, and 2024 was no different. With much fanfare, Republican and Democratic delegates met in Milwaukee and Chicago respectively to officially nominate Donald Trump and Kamala Harris to be their party's standard-bearers for President of the United States. For each side, conventions are also where delegates (comprised of elected officials, party chairs, and community leaders) vote to approve their party's platform, a laundry list of policy priorities which provide clues as to how each party would govern. From DNC delegate chants of "Union Joe!", to the RNC welcoming a union leader for the first time in party history, to both sides vowing to fight for American workers, it was an eventful period in this election cycle. Here are three key takeaways for employers from the conventions. You can also visit our [Election Season Resource Center for Employers](#) to review all our thought leadership and practical resources.

1. Unions Front and Center at the DNC, While Republicans Target the Organized Labor Vote

Decades after President Franklin Roosevelt signed the National Labor Relations Act to create the NLRB and allow workers to collectively bargain with their employers, Chicago's 2024 Democratic convention made clear that the party is still courting organized labor (further evident by a sea of "Union Yes!" signs). Presidents of seven major labor unions, including the AFL-CIO, Service Employees International Union (SEIU), and United Automobile Workers (UAW) delivered speeches, demonstrating the party's determination to keep this traditionally sympathetic constituency onboard.

It was also notable that Teamster's President Sean O'Brien, who became the first union president to speak at the Republican National Convention (RNC) in July, was not invited to speak at the DNC. O'Brien's invitation to address Republicans in Milwaukee indicates that GOP party leaders appear to view a portion of the labor vote as gettable in November. It will be worth monitoring how this plays out over the remaining days of the campaign, as both parties appear to be more sympathetic toward organized labor and unionization now than in previous election cycles.

2. Parties Approved 2024 Platforms

Now that the dust has settled from both conventions, it is worth examining the labor-related policy

priorities outlined in each approved party platform – and now they overlapped and diverged from each other.

Policy Overlap: One example of a policy that was featured at the RNC is former President Trump’s plan to eliminate federal taxes on tips for restaurant and hospitality employees, which the Harris campaign also publicly supports. The issue has garnered bipartisan support in Congress and could pass under either a Democratic or Republican administration. Both parties also vowed to prioritize investment in manufacturing jobs.

Policy Divergence: Both parties promised to fight for American workers, but their approaches are different. While Democrats touted several Biden administration policies such as union job creation via the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act and the passage of the Butch Lewis Act to fund multi-employer pension plans, Republicans emphasized that they would reauthorize the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act and implement tariffs to create jobs and lower taxes on workers. The GOP platform also promises to overturn President Biden’s Artificial Intelligence Executive Order, which the current Administration believes will protect employees from job displacement and promote workplace equity. As Executive Orders are far easier to overturn than laws passed by the legislative branch, former President Trump would all but certainly nix the Order should he retake the presidency.

Finally, the Democratic platform calls for the passage of the PRO Act, which Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions (HELP) Committee Chair Bernie Sanders (I-VT) also championed in his DNC speech. Though conservative members such as Sen. Josh Hawley (R-MO) have signaled openness to the pro-union legislation, the viability of its (unlikely) path forward will be determined by the balance of power in Congress following November’s election.

3. Harris and Trump Would Build on Pre-Established Labor Legacies

One aspect that makes the 2024 presidential election unlike others before it is the public’s familiarity with the policies of both candidates before the conventions. While Biden is no longer at the top of the Democratic ticket, a President Kamala Harris would likely pursue the union-friendly labor policies of the Biden/Harris administration, including raising the federal minimum wage, establishing a national paid leave policy, and making it easier for workers to collectively bargain with their employers.

Meanwhile, in addition to the aforementioned “no tax on tips” policy, which was referenced several times over the course of the RNC, a second Trump term would likely bring additional regulatory relief for businesses and a renewed interest in tariffs, especially on China. With both conventions in the rearview mirror and just over two months until Election Day, the race for the White House may fluctuate, but each party’s labor policy priorities appear well grounded in prior experience.

Conclusion

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