



A Union of Professionals

AFT's 2020 Presidential Election Endorsement Process

The American Federation of Teachers has a long history of engaging in the political process. The foundation of the AFT's effectiveness is our members. The more involved our members are, the stronger our collective voice is and the more effective our political role becomes.

With this in mind, the AFT executive council considered and approved unanimously a resolution on our 2020 presidential endorsement process. The resolution is based on the fundamental principle that an endorsement is most powerful when it is rooted in the engagement and trust of the members, and is designed to ensure unprecedented member input with the following core objectives:

- Expand opportunities for member input and feedback;
- Ensure transparency of the process, keeping our members informed on each step;
- Provide opportunities for our members to engage directly with the presidential candidates both to ensure that the candidates understand and value the issues affecting our members' lives, and to provide an opportunity for our members to engage with campaigns if they so choose; and
- Aim for the highest level ever of member participation in the AFT endorsement process.

The AFT is committed to improving the process with new initiatives to ensure our members have a meaningful voice in it. New and improved initiatives that build upon what worked in previous endorsement processes include:

- **Increased Member Engagement, Input and Feedback:** We will use new tools and technology, as well as other proven methods of communication, to engage with members on the issues of importance to them and to receive input and feedback. This may include, but is not limited to, national town halls; the use of digital media platforms such as Hustle, Twitter and Facebook Live; scientific polling; and/or dedicated member websites for obtaining and sharing information and feedback.
- **Candidates Engaging Directly with AFT Members:** The AFT will require presidential candidates to engage directly with AFT members in a live event if they wish to be considered for the AFT's endorsement. Our members have critical perspectives, knowledge and experiences that presidential candidates need to understand. Members need to be able to ask questions of the candidates and assess who best addresses their issues and concerns. Such events can take many forms but may include meeting members at the workplace, participating in candidate forums and joining Facebook Live forums.
- **Pre-Endorsement Campaign Engagement by Affiliates and Members:** AFT affiliates and members are encouraged to actively engage with presidential campaigns prior to the AFT's endorsement of a candidate. With so many presidential candidates running who may warrant "favorite daughter/son" support or support for other reasons, engagement by affiliates and members before the AFT's endorsement will help energize and strengthen our ability to influence the debate.
- **When Appropriate, We All Come Together:** The AFT executive council may, after an extensive process, endorse a candidate for president. If/when this occurs, the AFT and our affiliates will work together in support of the endorsed candidate, regardless of affiliate efforts prior to the endorsement. Coalescing will ensure that our collective voice can shape the debate and that we can dedicate our resources to elect a candidate that best supports our members and communities.

The AFT executive council took seriously its responsibility to provide an endorsement framework that maximizes member participation in the process. Its success will depend on the AFT and our affiliates working together to engage and educate our members. If we do so, our members and communities will benefit as we help elect a candidate who shares our vision and aspirations for our country.

If you have suggestions or questions regarding the presidential endorsement process, please contact the AFT's Political Department at 202-879-4454 or aftvotes@aft.org.