



FAQ: US Presidential Endorsement Process

1. **Why is UTLA moving an endorsement process to consider supporting Bernie Sanders for US President?**

Engaging the power we built through our strike, UTLA is moving forward with a unique member engagement process to consider an endorsement of Senator Bernie Sanders in the Democratic Party primary. The 35-1 vote of the UTLA Board of Directors on Sept. 11 and the 135-46 vote of the House of Representatives on Sept. 18 indicate that the broad leadership of UTLA currently believes that Sen. Bernie Sanders is the candidate to consider endorsing in the US Presidential election.

2. **What does the process look like?**

Between Oct. 2-Nov. 12, chapter leaders will engage and dialogue with their members about the merits of the potential endorsement, which will end in an up-or-down advisory vote during the November 13 Area meetings. All members are welcome to participate in this vote. The UTLA House of Representatives will consider this advisory vote in a separate meeting and will vote to make the final decision on the endorsement.

3. **Will PACE money be used?**

No PACE money will be used for any US President endorsement. This endorsement is meant to support the candidate who best reflects our issues and has the best chance to win. This endorsement could influence the other Presidential candidates to develop a strong and substantial K-12 public education platform. We have a national platform and we should use it. Hopefully, UTLA will influence other local, state and national unions to seriously consider an equally robust endorsement process.

4. **Shouldn't we have an all-member vote on this?**

Democracy is critical. This is the most open and democratic process that UTLA has ever engaged in for an endorsement. In our constitution, the right to endorse resides with the House of Representatives, often with recommendations from PACE and the BOD. This current process is far broader as it involves chapters leaders engaging with members from every chapter in LA.

5. **Shouldn't we respect the political opinions of our members, and not tell them how to vote?**

How we vote can be a sensitive issue and we are not going to tell people that they have to vote for Bernie Sanders. However, we are part of a bigger movement for public education. As leaders of this union, BOD members, House members and chapter chairs, we are also leaders of that movement. Students and communities join us in the ongoing fight to protect public education against billionaire privatization interests. With the crisis we face and the opportunity we have with Sanders and the movement behind him, we think we have an obligation to take a position.

6. Shouldn't we consider all the 2020 Presidential candidates?

We've provided chapter chairs with comparisons on key platform issues between Sanders and other candidates. As Board Members, House of Reps members and Chapter leaders, we have an obligation to continue to lead and organize around policies that widely benefit our members and our communities. Sanders' history, policies and movement, align closely with UTLA. He is the only candidate taking on the billionaires and the privatization movement. Sanders' education program exactly matches our demands.

7. What about AFT and NEA? Don't we usually follow their recommendation?

Traditionally we have followed the national unions' lead on Presidential endorsements, but this is not a traditional election. In the last round of Democratic Party primaries, many members were upset with the decision the national affiliates made to endorse Hillary Clinton. This time, 8 months after many major candidates declared for the Presidency, and only 4 months away from the first primary, NEA and AFT's approach doesn't seem to be concrete in driving candidates towards having comprehensive K-12 programs and no one besides Sanders has clear anti-privatization plans. This is concerning, given that local unions deferred to the national affiliates in 2008 and 2016, and in both elections, we ended up with candidates who did not challenge privatization, but in fact aided it.

8. Will Sanders' Medicare For All plan mean that our current healthcare plans will be eliminated?

Healthcare is a concern for all of us. LAUSD spends over \$1.1 billion a year on employee healthcare. It is the no. 1 issue that LAUSD goes after in negotiations every few years. Solving that problem for good would simplify negotiations. Under Medicare for All, our coverage will stay the same or get better, and will include mental health, vision, and dental care. Medicare For All doesn't take away your provider (doctor) – it takes away the private insurance that does nothing but add costs. Sanders' comprehensive plan includes a requirement that any savings that an employer achieves under the new healthcare system be redirected to employees in the form of wage increases. We have a chance to change the dynamic with the school district on healthcare, IDEA Funding, Title I and school funding in general. We do not want to let that slip away.

9. I don't want four more years of Trump. Don't other candidates have a better chance? Unfortunately, the mainstream media benefits from positive coverage of moderate Democrats, pushing out polls that do not reflect the electorate. Beating Trump has to be the priority, and Sanders is the best candidate to do that. Sanders has the most individual donors and the most donors in swing states and counties. On Oct. 1, the Sanders' campaign reported more individual donors and more money — \$25 million — than any other Democratic candidate in the third quarter. Sanders has massive support across demographics and specifically with millennials who number in the millions, are typically not polled and are less likely to vote if they are not enthusiastic about a candidate.