



How to Establish a Local Union Candidate Endorsement Process

One way to expand your local's political program, increase interaction with candidates running for elected office, and grow your local's influence in the political process is to establish a local union endorsement process. Below are suggested steps to get started, but each local determines its own independent process.

STEP 1 **Assign a point of contact for endorsement consideration within the local**

- It is recommended that the local's Political Coordinator (PC) serve in this role.
- If the assigned point person is not the PC, communicate all candidate endorsement requests and decisions to the PC to keep them apprised.

STEP 2 **Designate a deliberative body responsible for making decisions on endorsements**

- Viable options include the local's executive board, political committee, or general membership.
- Establish a clear democratic process for reaching local endorsements.

STEP 3 **Draft a questionnaire for candidates seeking the local's endorsement**

- A standard questionnaire will contain questions about the candidate's stances on labor issues and issues specific to your local.
- Ask about the candidate's existing relationship with the local and knowledge of IATSE's industry/crafts.
- A **sample questionnaire** for a *federal candidate* is provided at the end of this document. For a state/local candidate questionnaire, replace the template questions pertaining to federal issues with state and local issues.

STEP 4 **Invite candidates to speak in front of the local's deliberative body for endorsements**

- After completing the questionnaire, invite candidates to discuss their campaign, why they are running, and issues important to the local.
- Ask them why they are seeking to earn your local's endorsement and how they will prioritize behind-the-scenes entertainment workers if elected.

STEP 5 **Perform endorsement due diligence**

- Research all candidates for the office being considered and allow those interested an opportunity to seek the local's endorsement.
- Communicate with the AFL-CIO state federation and/or central labor council regarding their endorsed candidates in state and local races. These bodies often release a full slate of endorsed candidates that have been vetted by the local labor community. The local may choose to take their slate into consideration.

STEP 6 **Vote**

- After considering all the candidates, hearing from those seeking the local's support, and verifying their labor credentials with local labor bodies, it is time for the local's deliberative body for endorsements (See Step 2) to vote.

STEP 7

If local votes to endorse a candidate, collaborate with the campaign on a mutual rollout of the endorsement

- Endorsement rollout can take the form of a press statement, a post on the local's social media platforms, a joint appearance, or something similar.
- Communication of the endorsement is for the local to determine, but an important element of the process.

STEP 8

Remain in contact with elected officials the local has endorsed

- Hold elected officials accountable to the pledges and commitments they made to earn the local's endorsement.

****SAMPLE QUESTIONNAIRE****



IATSE Local [Number] Federal Candidate Endorsement Questionnaire



Candidate name: _____

Elected office you are seeking: _____

Campaign name: _____

Campaign Point of Contact (Name, Title): _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Campaign Address: _____

With my signature, I attest that I have completed this questionnaire honestly and request consideration for endorsement by IATSE Local [Number] for the elected office listed above.

Candidate's Signature: _____ Date: _____

Candidate Background

1) Please share your bio and professional background. Why are you running for the elected office listed above?

2) Why are you asking for IATSE Local [Number]'s endorsement?

3) Do you have a personal or professional history with IATSE Local [NUMBER], or the IATSE more broadly? How have you previously supported behind-the-scenes entertainment workers and our industry?

4) Please list the organizations—unions, labor bodies, community groups, issue groups, etc.—that have endorsed you:

Union Labor Campaign Pledge

IATSE members are employed by staging, lighting, and sound companies, media production companies, and venues utilized by campaigns for rallies and events.

This pledge is to ensure the workers at your campaign events and on your media productions will receive health care and retirement contributions, and the area standard wages.

Should your campaign hire outside vendors to produce political commercials and/or large staged events – crafts within the jurisdiction of the IATSE – we ask that you commit to using labor under a union contract.

Yes

No

Please expand, as needed: _____

IATSE Federal Priorities

1) Protect the right to organize, expand collective bargaining rights, and eliminate so called “Right-to-work” laws.

Labor unions are under assault, with policies across the country undermining workers’ collective bargaining rights and stripping union workers of the wages, benefits, and retirement security they deserve. The PRO Act (H.R. 842 / S. 420) would strengthen the federal laws that protect workers’ right to organize a union and bargain for higher wages and better benefits.

If elected would you:

Support the PRO Act

Oppose the PRO Act

Please expand, as needed: _____

2) Advance equity, diversity, and inclusion in the arts and entertainment industry.

Equal rights are the cornerstone of the labor movement. IATSE is committed to equality of opportunity, eliminating all forms of discrimination, and upending systemic racism in the arts and entertainment industry. **If elected, would you pursue smart policy solutions aimed at creating diverse talent pipelines, incentivizing diversity in hiring, and supporting collective bargaining:**

Yes

No

Please expand, as needed: _____

If elected, would you:

Support the Equality Act (H.R. 5 / S. 393)

Oppose the Equality Act (H.R. 5 / S. 393)

Please expand, as needed: _____

3) Restore tax fairness for union creative professionals

The 2018 Tax Cuts and Jobs Act eliminated Unreimbursed Employee Expenses as a tax deduction. W-2 workers lost the ability to deduct expenses such as our equipment, travel for work, and even union dues. This meant a significant industrywide tax increase for working class, union creative professionals. The Performing Artist Tax Parity Act would reverse this harmful tax hike by updating the Qualified Performing Artist tax deduction. **If elected would you:**

Support the Performing Artist Tax Parity Act

Oppose the Performing Artist Tax Parity Act

Please expand, as needed: _____

4) Increase federal funding for the arts

As the union behind entertainment, we know that funding for the arts directly impacts job growth and work for our skilled craftspeople. Federal arts agencies – like the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) – support working families, bolster local economies, and ensure all Americans have access to the arts and entertainment.

If elected, would you support an annual funding level for the NEA equivalent to \$1 per capita (\$331 million)?

Yes

No

Please expand, as needed: _____

5) Safeguarding our hard-won health care benefits and realizing a health care system that is affordable and accessible to all

We must make quality health care a basic right in the United States. Our longstanding goal for achieving this is to move expeditiously toward a single-payer system that provides universal coverage, without diminishing the hard-fought benefits union members have won for themselves and all working people.

If elected, would you support movement toward a single-payer system that provides universal health care coverage, without diminishing the hard-fought benefits union members have won for themselves?

Yes

No

Please expand, as needed: _____

6) Enforce strong copyright laws to protect creative content

Fighting online piracy and enforcing copyright obligations are critical to our members. While we do not own the copyrights to the works we help create, our livelihoods depend on contractual residuals paid to our health and pension plans when the copyrights for those audiovisual works are licensed to others over the life of a work. The theft of copyrighted works – domestically and internationally – threatens our hard-won health care benefits and retirement security. Outdated and overbroad copyright safe harbor provisions allow stolen or otherwise illegitimate content to proliferate, cutting into the revenues that provide for our health and pension benefits.

If elected, would you support reforming Section 512 of the Digital Millennium Copyright Act (DMCA) to restore balance between content creators and online platforms and ensure that creative professionals can earn a fair return for their work?

Yes

No

Please expand, as needed: _____

Is there anything else you would like us to know about you, your candidacy, or your policy priorities not already covered by the questions above?

Please return completed questionnaire to [Point of Contact's Name] at [Point of Contact's Email]. Thank you for your interest in IATSE Local [Number]'s endorsement, we will be in touch.