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ORGANIZED LABOR'S NEW LABOR SECRETARY

President-elect Biden on January 8 nominated Boston Mayor Marty Walsh as the next Secretary of Labor. Mayor Walsh is the first DOL nominee in over 50 years who is a union member. Walsh received his union card in 1988 when he joined the Laborer's International Union 223 in Boston. He became a collection agent for the Massachusetts Laborer's Benefit Fund in 1990 and Recording Secretary and then President of Laborer's Local 223 in 2005. In 2011, Walsh was elected as General Agent of the Boston Area Building Trades Council, an umbrella group of 35,000 skilled trades union members.

In response to President-elect Biden's nomination, Mayor Walsh stated that "working people have been struggling for a long time under the erosion of their rights and the deep inequalities of race, gender and class. We are facing hard times but nobody's tougher than the American worker. And now we have the opportunity to put power back in the hands of working people all across this country."

AFL-CIO President Richard Trumka stated that "Marty [Walsh] is a friend and knows Joe [Biden]. They've worked together on numerous occasions. They have the relationship I think is necessary." American Federation of Teachers President Randi Weingarten stated that Walsh "comes to this [position] with a closeness to the President-elect and an ability to get things done."

Walsh was recorded on a wiretap in 2012, the year he became Boston's mayor, telling a development company that it would have problems if it did not use union labor on a particular project. Walsh was never charged with violation of state or federal law as an outcome of that wiretap.

Mayor Walsh will be one of the strongest advocates for organized labor of any Secretary of Labor in recent history. He will focus on pay issues, safety and health, benefits, and facilitating the opportunity for unions to expand their membership.

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