

Collectives' sigh of relief but US is anything but united

November 05, 2020

NATIONAL EDUCATION ASSOCIATION OF THE UNITED STATES

The American people have voted, and they made their choice clear. On behalf of more than 3 million members of the National Education Association (NEA), I am honoured to congratulate Joe Biden and Kamala Harris on their election as the next President and Vice President of the United States.

NEA was proud to endorse Joe for President, and we are proud to stand with him because we know that as President, Joe Biden will be the honest, compassionate and highly capable leader that our students deserve. A President who will work to keep our schools safe, and make sure students have the resources they need to learn in the midst of this pandemic and beyond.

As the first woman, first Black woman, and first person of Indian descent to win national office, Vice President-elect Harris's presence shows every American that no matter how they look, or who they are, there is a place for them in the highest offices of the land.

And with Dr Jill Biden at his side, a fellow educator and NEA member, we will partner in laying out a vision for education that will strengthen and expand education opportunities for all Americans from pre-kindergarten to graduate school and beyond — no matter their race or what ZIP code they are from.

Now, with the support of educators, the Biden-Harris administration begins the hardest work of all: the work to repair deep divisions created during the last four years; to rein in the coronavirus, heal the economic wounds caused by the pandemic; and address the systemic racism that stands in the way of too many black, brown and Indigenous students.

We face trying times. NEA's vision is to transform public education into a racially and socially just and equitable system that's actually designed to prepare every student to succeed in a diverse and interdependent world.

That is our North Star. It is the light that will illuminate our path as we help the Biden-Harris administration repair our democracy and turn this nation back around.

Becky Pringle, President

AMERICAN FEDERATION OF TEACHERS



Americans came out, in the middle of a pandemic, and voted in record numbers to elect Joe Biden and Kamala Harris. Despite this decisive result, the country is bitterly divided over social issues, race and gender. Fully 56 per cent of Trump voters said they support him because he “stands up for America’s values, history and culture”.

That is incomprehensible to those of us who both love America and fight to make it fairer and more just. But our divisions mask an important commonality: we all want to feel safe — economically, emotionally and physically. In the midst of overlapping crises — a pandemic, a recession, a climate emergency and a reckoning with racial injustice — most of us don’t feel secure.

President-elect Biden will not only confront these crises, he will work to make the country more united, just and secure. President-elect Biden knows that to revive our economy and achieve any of our priorities, the United States must get the coronavirus under control.

Experts on the Biden COVID-19 taskforce are already at work on plans to reduce the spread of the virus, ensure vaccines are safe and implement basic virus control measures scientists have long begged for; a national system for testing and contact tracing, targeted closures when necessary, and promoting mask-wearing as both a safeguard and a patriotic act.

Protecting Americans from the coronavirus will make it possible to pursue other priorities, such as in education.

This has been the most challenging school year most of us have ever experienced — from the lack of consistent safety guardrails and guidance, to the shortage of resources, to the limitations of hybrid and remote learning, despite educators working harder than ever.

The American people have spoken. We want leaders who care about our wellbeing and will unify all Americans with better leadership, honesty and integrity, justice and equality, caring and respect. Joe Biden and Kamala Harris are the leaders we need.

Randi Weingarten, President