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Report to the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers on National Political Poll of Members

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Introduction

A national survey of members of the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers has found that a majority of IAM active members believe that the union should not stay on the sidelines but get actively involved in the current presidential campaign.

This followed upon a finding that a strong majority of IAMAW members believed that the union had no choice but to be actively engaged in the political process.

More specifically, a majority of IAMAW members support the idea of the union endorsing a candidate for President, and indicated that such an endorsement would be taken seriously.

While among both parties there are a total of more than 20 active candidates seeking the nomination for the presidency, the survey of IAMAW members found that one of them – Hillary Clinton – had a level of support that far surpassed any of the others.

Most importantly, from a practical political standpoint, Clinton was heavily supported by the most active political participants in the union.

The survey involved a random selection of 1,700 currently active IAMAW members, covering all regions of the country and all demographic groups in the membership (age, gender, ethnicity, length of membership, etc.)

The key findings of this extensive survey of the membership can be seen below:

“Get Involved in the Current Race for the Presidency Or Wait on the Sidelines?”

By a nearly 2-1 margin (60-31 percent), active IAMAW members felt that it was not a good idea for the union to wait on the sidelines until the two parties had chosen their candidates for president and then get involved, but rather “it was important that the union get involved in the presidential selection process early to make its full influence felt...and press the issues important to the Machinists and their members” (!!)

Support for early IAMAW involvement in the nominating process was felt widely throughout the union by all major demographic groupings – by age, gender, ethnicity, and all regions of the country.

Does That Mean Endorsing a Candidate?

In a more focused probe, IAMAW members were asked whether that meant actually endorsing a candidate for president.

The response:

By an overwhelming 3-1 margin (58-19 percent), members said they supported the idea of the union endorsing a candidate for president.

Importantly, those members most actively involved in participating in the political process were *most supportive* of such a union endorsement.

Thus, among those members who usually or always voted in party primaries or attended party caucuses (either Democratic or Republican ones !!), 63 percent indicated they would support the union endorsing a presidential candidate.

This high support figure for a union endorsement rose even further (to 69 percent) among members who contributed to the union's MNPL program, and to a full 72 percent of the members who had worked in union-backed or supported political campaigns in the past!

And those members who felt that it was "*very important*" that the union have a strong political program favored a union endorsement by a massive 76-9 percent margin.

Support for a union endorsement was found among all age, ethnic and regional groupings within the union.

(Not surprisingly, the *least* enthusiastic group in the union favoring a union presidential endorsement was self-identified Independents – although even among this generally more non-political group, a union presidential endorsement was supported by a 37-33 percent margin.)

Supporting an active union role in the political process was perfectly consistent with other findings of the survey.

Thus, an overwhelming majority of IAMAW members felt it was important for the Machinists to have a strong political program.

By a massive 78-13 percent margin, IAMAW members felt that it was either "*somewhat important*" (29 percent) or "*very important*" (50 percent !!) that the Machinists have a strong political program, while only 13 percent indicated they felt that "*it was not all that important.*"

Again, strong majority support for a strong Machinist political program was expressed by all age, gender, ethnic and other demographic and political groups in the union, including, interestingly, IAMAW members who were Republicans, among whom 74 percent felt such a strong program was important (with 44 percent saying it was "*very important*").

A suggested *alternative position that “some people say that the union spends too much time and effort on politics, and it should just deal with workplace issues,”* was substantially rejected by over a 2-1 margin (58-24 percent).

Choice for President

With a total of over 20 active candidates for the presidency (including at least five Democrats), Clinton was by far the preferred choice of members for president over any other candidate.

She outpaced the entire field by margins of well over 2-1.

Thus, even *combining* the choices for both Democratic and Republican candidates, Clinton received support for a union endorsement of nearly 50 percent (48 percent) of the entire IAMAW membership.

While Clinton is by far the preferred choice for President among the union as a whole, **she was particularly favored among members who are Democrats, and, most critically, among those IAMAW members who are the most active participants in the political process.**

Thus, among Democrats, the figures were quite dramatic.

Among IAMAW members who are Democrats, Hillary Clinton is the overwhelming choice for President, leading Bernie Sanders by a 6-1 margin.

Among all Democrats with a choice, the specific results were:

Clinton	71 percent
Sanders	11 percent
Biden	9 percent
Webb	3 percent
O'Malley	2 percent
Chafee.....	2 percent
Warren	2 percent

Perhaps even more meaningful *in terms of practical politics*, Clinton is more markedly supported by committed and activist Democrats in the union, including those most likely to participate in Democratic primaries and caucuses.

Thus:

-- Among IAM members who say they are **very strong Democrats**, Clinton gets 82 percent support as the preferred candidate, while Sanders gets 11 percent, and Biden 5 percent.

-- Among Democrats who **always or usually vote in Democratic primaries** or participated in Democratic Party caucuses, Clinton is the preferred choice, with 77 percent...while Sanders gets 14 percent, and Biden gets 8 percent.

How Important Would A Union Endorsement Be to IAMAW members?

Asked “*how important would the Machinist endorsement be to you if the IAM did endorse a candidate for President because they thought the candidate supported issues and positions important to IAM members,*” over 70 percent responded that such a union endorsement would be either “*fairly important*” (32 percent) or “*very important*” (39 percent) to them.

A Final Word: Perceptions of the Parties and the Workplace

The survey also included several basic tests of IAMAW members’ attitudes toward the parties and their basic positioning on workplace issues.

Regarding the parties, IAMAW members -- by a margin of over 2-1 -- believed that the Democratic Party “*better represented the interests of working people*” than the Republicans.

A similar Democratic margin of more than 2-1 over the Republican Party emerged when members were asked “*which party was more likely to be on your side at the workplace?*”

Interestingly, when focused on a **very specific set of possible workplace situations** in the future, such as “*which party was more likely to be on your side in a fight for a better contract or in trying to organize a new workplace?*”... the Democratic Party margin leaped to over 3-1 -- with even many self-identified Republicans indicating the Democrats were more likely to be on their side in that set of workplace-centered circumstances.

A “Sticking Together” Unity Message -- Does It Work?

Finally, while the main purpose of the survey was to identify levels of support for a union endorsement and to identify the favored candidate for such support, the survey also tested members’ attitudes toward the current political and economic situation in America – and whether message frames calling for worker and IAM unity resonated.

The result was highly positive.

By a massive 82-10 margin, members agreed “a lot” (**60 percent**) or “a little” (22 percent”) with the idea that “*the big corporations and their political allies always work closely together...so if regular working people want to get and keep anything decent for ourselves and our families, it’s important that we all stick together -- and that means sticking together as working people... and sticking together as IAM members.*”(!!)

The survey of 1,700 active IAMAW members was conducted by Fingerhut Granados Opinion Research between July 30 and August 7, 2015.

The selection of this large sample was randomized to ensure that the results reflected a representative sample of the active membership.