

Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez joins Biden-Sanders “unity task force” ahead of 2020 elections

Genevieve Leigh
14 May 2020

The presumptive Democratic Party presidential nominee, Joe Biden, and his former rival, Bernie Sanders, announced Wednesday the members of joint “task forces” that their campaigns will use to promote “party unity” ahead of the 2020 presidential election.

The task forces consist of six committees, each focused on a different policy issue: health care, immigration, education, criminal justice reform, climate change and the economy. The six committees will have eight members and are expected to meet ahead of the Democratic convention to prepare recommendations for the party platform.

The initiative was first announced during a joint online event in which Sanders gave his formal endorsement of Biden in mid-April.

Participating in the task forces are two members of the Democratic Socialists of America: New York Congresswoman Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez and Sara Nelson, president of the Association of Flight Attendants-CWA.

Ocasio-Cortez will co-chair the climate change panel with John Kerry, the former presidential candidate and Secretary of State under Obama. As a Senator, Kerry voted for the 2003 invasion of Iraq. As Secretary of State between 2013 and 2017, Kerry presided over the Obama administration’s regime change operation in Syria.

Nelson will co-chair the economy task force, along with Representative Karen Bass, from California. Bass is the chairwoman of the Congressional Black Caucus and endorsed Biden in early March.

The announcement of the task forces is the latest stage in the effort of Sanders and Ocasio-Cortez to try to convince workers and youth to support the Biden

campaign, who personifies the Democratic Party as a party of Wall Street and the military. Following Sanders’ endorsement, Ocasio-Cortez publicly offered her services to the Biden campaign and Biden has responded by accepting the offer.

The maneuver takes place under conditions in which workers in the US and around the world are being forced to return to work amidst the expanding coronavirus pandemic. The Trump administration is implementing a policy that it knows will lead to the deaths of tens of thousands of people. Republican and Democratic governors are attempting to engineer a rapid resumption of business which will provoke mass opposition in the working class.

For their part, the Democrats fully support the multi-trillion dollar bailout of Wall Street, which was unanimously endorsed by the Senate at the end of March, including by Sanders.

The collaborative initiative between Sanders and Biden is part of an effort to somehow contain popular opposition and direct it behind a “national unity” government under Biden, who is also appealing to sections of the Republican Party establishment concerned about the ability of the Trump administration to carry out the policy of the ruling class.

Given this context, the composition of the various “unity” committees is largely unsurprising.

While still quite new to Congress, Ocasio-Cortez has spent the last two years cozying up to Democratic Party leadership and faithfully toed the party line on all the fundamental questions, including the anti-Russia campaign and the drive to censor the internet. For her part, Nelson proclaimed her support for the corporate bailout of the airline industry.

Other notable appointments include Eric Holder, the former attorney general under Obama, who will co-chair the criminal justice committee along with Virginia Representative Bobby Scott. Holder's political legacy includes providing pseudo-legal sanction for assassination of US citizens, military commissions, incommunicado detention and shielding corporate criminals and Bush-era officials from prosecution.

Ohio Representative Marcia Fudge, a firm supporter of charter schools, is helping lead the education task force. The health care group will be overseen by Washington Representative Pramila Jayapal, head of the Democratic Party "Progressive Caucus," along with former Surgeon General Vivek Murthy.

Sanders and the various organizations who support him, such as the DSA, will use the initiative to promote the lie that they are "influencing" the Democratic Party platform and pressuring Biden to the left.

After a certain amount of fanfare, the task forces will likely agree to incorporate some of the meager reforms associated with the Sanders' campaign into the party platform, such as a \$15 minimum wage or elements of Ocasio-Cortez's Green New Deal. No doubt promises will be made regarding COVID-19 testing and ensuring a vaccine is available to workers.

Whatever is put in the platform, however, will be meaningless, as the platform is nothing more than window dressing. Many young people and workers will recall that Sanders carried out the same song and dance in 2016 when he endorsed Hillary Clinton after proclaiming that she and the party had adopted the "most progressive party platform in history."

If elected, a Biden administration, with the participation of many of those involved in the "unity" initiative, will preside over an increase in austerity, attacks on democratic rights and an expansion of war and militarism.

The seamless union of Sanders and Ocasio-Cortez with the Biden campaign is another clear demonstration of the fraud of their central claim: that the Democratic Party, the oldest capitalist party in the world, can be transformed into an instrument of progressive change.

As for the Democratic Socialists of America, it is nothing but a faction of the Democratic Party. The DSA's statement that it will not formally endorse Biden is a political fraud. Leaders of the DSA, speaking for privileged sections of the middle class, hope that by

offering their support for the Biden campaign they will get access to positions within any future Democratic Party administration.



To contact the WSWWS and the Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact