

# The Detroit News

SERVING MICHIGAN SINCE 1873

**LABOR VOICES | Opinion** *This piece expresses the views of its author(s), separate from those of this publication.*

## Labor Voices: Harris better for construction workers

**Tom Lutz** The Detroit News

Published 8:00 p.m. ET Oct. 29, 2024 | Updated 8:00 p.m. ET Oct. 29, 2024

Early voting locations are open. Election Day is approaching, and the ballots will be counted next week. Before we know it, the campaign ads will vanish, and we will be left with a president-elect charged with the responsibility of leading our country into the future. But, until that happens, the responsibility and the power to determine the shape of that future belong to us.

The contrast between Vice President Kamala Harris and former President Donald Trump was clear from the start, and the past few weeks only made the differences starker.

Harris has run a near-flawless campaign. In three short months, she collected a clear victory in the lone presidential debate, answered tough questions from traditional and alternative media outlets across the spectrum, laid out clear plans and policy proposals that center hardworking Americans, and assembled one of the broadest coalitions in the modern political era. If elected as president, she promises to unite our country based on common-sense solutions and our common values. She also plans to invest in small businesses, bring down housing prices by going after corporate raiders, build new supply, and support Americans' aspirations toward home ownership. She will bring down prices by putting an end to price gouging, protect our most sacred rights and keeping the government out of our private lives.

I trust Harris to do these things and the rest of the job because of what she's already done. As part of the Biden administration, she cast the tie-breaking vote to secure the American Rescue Plan, a critical law that put America on the path to a faster and stronger economic recovery.

Of course, inflation has been painful. But by investing in American infrastructure and industry, tackling green energy, going after drug costs, the other things included in the

Inflation Reduction Act and Infrastructure Law, America recovered with some of the lowest inflation and unemployment in the world. At the same time, her votes protected the retirements of more than 1.18 million families nationally, including more than 22,500 hard-working carpenter families in Michigan who faced devastating cuts after Wall Street greed sent the economy spiraling into the great recession.

Trump, on the other hand, has done little more than double down on hateful rhetoric designed to keep us divided so he can pursue an unpopular and dangerous agenda. He's called for using the military against American citizens and political opponents he labels as the "enemy within." That's not American, and it's certainly not worthy of the presidency. It also explains why an unprecedented number of his own former cabinet officials and advisors have sounded the alarm that he is unfit to serve.

And what about his plans if elected? He's also offered no real plans. Any concepts he has boils down to blaming immigrants for most of our problems and pretending tariffs can magically solve the rest. It'd be laughable if it weren't so serious.

And what about inflation, supposedly the reason to overlook Trump's obvious character flaws? The conservative Wall Street Journal warned this week that Trump's economic agenda, as is, carries a huge risk of driving high inflation, while his tax cuts for the wealthy would benefit no one but the wealthy.

We've come a long way in the last four years, and we have a long way to go. So, I'll leave you with this: After more than a decade marked by stagnation, we are seeing growth like never before in Michigan's construction industry. Membership among carpenters and millwrights is up more than 12% and work hours are up more than 19% since President Joe Biden took office. These good-paying jobs are only the leading edge of Michigan's resurgence. The infrastructure and factories we are building today will bring home tomorrow the stable, good-paying jobs that make for vibrant communities across our state.

*Tom Lutz is executive secretary-treasurer of the Michigan Regional Council of Carpenters and Millwrights.*

