

Labor Day shows political party divide

Republicans celebrate jobs report as Democrats support organized labor

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USA TODAY

Labor Day in a midterm election year is no day off for politicians, and their holiday messaging fell along partisan lines.

Democrats messaged support for unions and organized labor, whereas Republicans celebrated a recent win with the stronger-than-expected August jobs report, crediting President Donald Trump as a champion for American workers.

The latest jobs report came out on Sept. 4. The White House kicked off the weekend on Sept. 5, posting, “This Labor Day, we celebrate that more Americans are working than EVER before.” On Labor Day, it said, “President Trump will never stop fighting for MADE IN AMERICA.”

The August jobs report estimated that 162,000 nonfarm jobs were added to the U.S. labor market after employers added a now-revised 21,000 jobs in July. The unemployment rate remained at 4.1%, and labor force participation moved up 0.2 percentage points to 61.6%. The White House said after the report that so far during Trump’s second term, 1 million private-sector jobs have been created.

On its official social media accounts, the Republican Party posted a graphic saying that, “MORE AMERICANS ARE WORKING THAN EVER BEFORE THANKS TO PRESIDENT DONALD TRUMP” accompanied by the slang term “Jobsmaxxing.” The “-maxxing” suffix has been used online to explain doing something to the utmost degree possible. The party also spent the day promoting its first-ever midterm convention, which takes place Sept. 9-10 in Dallas.

Republican Party Chair Joe Gruters called Trump the “Jobs President” as he shared a White House post, writing himself, “More than 1 million jobs created during President Trumps second



Michigan Senate candidate Abdul El-Sayed, black shirt, marches with members of the United Auto Workers during a Labor Day parade in Detroit on Sept. 7.
REBECCA COOK/REUTERS

term!”

House Speaker Mike Johnson, R-Louisiana, said that the “American worker is WINNING again,” adding that “thanks to Republicans, hardworking Americans have more opportunities and can keep more of their own hard-earned money.” Johnson said Americans are experiencing bigger paychecks, no taxes on tips or overtime and a boom in U.S. manufacturing.

The president himself did not post about the successful job numbers on Labor Day, though he did the day before. Instead, he used the holiday to post a partisan attack, saying on Truth Social: “Happy Labor Day to all, including the Radical Left Lunatics, Communists, and Dumocrats who will do anything possible to destroy our Country. These De-ranged People, after fighting for 10 years, should finally acknowledge that your Favorite President (ME!), knows how to WIN! They should be exhausted by now but, sadly, they’re not.”

While Republicans touted the jobs report, Democrats appealed to union workers – a voter base that has been core to the party. Democrats have not completely lost that base, but there has been a trend of blue-collar workers moving away from the party, according

to a survey by Center for Labor and a Just Economy in collaboration with the Columbia Labor Lab. Notably, in 2024, the International Brotherhood of Teamsters broke ranks with its decades of tradition endorsing Democrats, choosing neither to endorse then-Vice President Kamala Harris nor to back Trump.

The Democratic Party took to social media the morning of Sept. 7 with a post including a graphic that read “Unions Built the Middle Class,” writing, “Thanks to our labor unions, America’s workers have stronger benefits, fairer wages, and safer working conditions.”

The social media messaging was similar from Democratic leaders across the country, from both the established faction and more left-leaning progressives, who have been at odds this midterm primary season. Here’s what some of them had to say:

● **Former President Joe Biden:** “I’ve said it my entire career: the middle class built America. And unions built the middle class. To every worker who’s ever punched a clock, worked a double, or walked a line for fair wages – and to everyone who stands up for them, at the bargaining table, in the statehouse, or on the shop floor: thank you. This country runs in large part because of you.”

● **Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer, D-New York:** “Happy Labor Day! Workers and unions are the backbone of our economy, and we owe them our gratitude today and every day.”

● **Former Transportation Secretary Pete Buttigieg, a Democrat who has signaled a likely 2028 presidential run:** “The 40-hour work week. The weekend itself. Lifesaving safety standards. Organized labor has changed our country for the better. This Labor Day, we recognize the achievements of our unions and the workers who make the American way of life possible.”

● **California Gov. Gavin Newsom, who is expected to run for president in 2028:** “Labor Day is a reminder of a simple truth: WORKERS built this country. But today, too many Americans are working harder, paying more and falling further behind – while Donald Trump gets richer and hands more wealth to the people at the very top. Working people built America. This November, it’s time to take our country back.”

● **Sen. Ruben Gallego, D-Arizona:** “We need to be for a pro-labor, pro-worker agenda. That starts with: Increasing the federal minimum wage from a poverty wage to \$20/hr. Doubling the pay for overtime. Requiring overtime pay on federal holidays. Protecting workers’ right to bargain for better pay, benefits, and safer workplaces.”

● **Abdul El-Sayed, Democratic Senate candidate in Michigan:** “The labor movement gave us weekends, 8 hour work days, and ensured that our kids can go to school rather than work. Honored to fight for unions every day. Happy Labor Day to all those who have fought for a fairer economy in the richest country in the world.”

Democratic socialist leader and Vermont Sen. Bernie Sanders is an independent – not a member of the Democratic Party – but he shared a similar celebration of union workers, posting: “On this Labor Day we give our thanks to the millions of trade unionists in our country who are leading the fight for economic, social and racial justice. Thanks to all of you for what you’re doing. Let’s go forward together.”

Contributing: Rachel Barber, USA TODAY



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