



INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF  
**Heat & Frost Insulators  
& Allied Workers**

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Office of the General President

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(Hand Delivered)

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi  
Democratic Leader  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Leader Pelosi:

I regret that I was unable to attend a recent meeting you had with my fellow building trades' leaders, but I would like to continue the family conversation about what I believe is necessary for the Democratic Party to communicate a winning message for 2018.

As we reflect upon Secretary Clinton's 2016 defeat, there was frustration among my members that our presidential candidate failed to communicate an effective economic message. As we prepare for the critical 2018 mid-term elections, it is imperative that we have a clear economic message and positive economic agenda to share with my membership, for it is not sufficient to simply "Resist." Hillary Clinton's campaign spent millions to define Donald Trump as temperamentally unfit to serve as president, but she failed to define herself as a champion for working Americans.

For 2018, I believe strongly that the unifying economic message for the Democratic Party is **Justice and Opportunity to Build Success (JOBS)**.

**Justice** - Democrats need a message that recognizes the fundamental economic injustice that exists today.

For far too long, union and non-union workers have suffered as a result of corporate power that has spent millions of dollars to weaken organized labor. From tax cuts for the wealthiest individuals and corporations and right-wing attacks on organized labor to undermine the National Labor Relations Act and the ability to organize, attacks on Davis-Bacon prevailing wages for building trades members and attacks against public sector workers, right-to-work (for less) initiatives, and bipartisan trade deals that have devastated communities, we have seen growing income inequality as the percentage of union workers in the workforce has declined.

How do we unify and generate enthusiasm for our party and win back Trump voters who previously supported President Obama? We communicate an economic message that demonstrates that our party understands the challenges that workers are experiencing.

Both Donald Trump and Bernie Sanders tapped into the economic anxieties of voters in the Midwest and across the country with a common message: the economy is rigged against you. We have a

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corporate culture where profits are distributed to shareholders and not the workers who are responsible for the corporations' success.

As you stated at the building trades meeting, for the first time since 2006, congressional Democrats have control of the message; so let's make sure that congressional Democrats have a clear message and detailed plan to address the economic challenges of working Americans.

While the Justice message should focus on economic issues, the Democratic Party also leads on political justice (voting rights, campaign finance reform, and gerrymandered legislative districts), civil rights/criminal justice reform/gender equality, health care justice, retirement justice, and educational justice.

**Opportunity** - We must remind voters that Democrats are the party of economic opportunity. For Democrats, education/skill development and the ability to join a union are the foundation for economic opportunity.

For the young men and women who enter our apprenticeship programs, they seek the opportunity to learn a craft to have the skills for a life-long career. Our members work hard to provide for their families, and their goal is to create additional opportunities for their children to be successful. A union job remains the best opportunity to a middle-income standard of living.

With respect to trade, American workers and businesses are not afraid to compete in the global economy, but we must give our workers fair trade policies that provide opportunities to win markets on a level playing field.

Our nation also provides opportunities for public service and skill development for those who defend our nation in our armed forces. Democrats believe that instead of unnecessary tax breaks for the top 1% of income earners, we support expanded job opportunities to the top 1% who serve in the military. The Insulators and building trades unions provide opportunities for military personnel to transition to careers in the trades through the Helmets to Hardhats program, and Democrats have consistently supported jobs for veterans.

Democrats must restore the promise of our nation as the land of opportunity in every corner of this nation; from our large metropolitan centers to the most rural areas of the country.

**Build** - In your presentation to building trades leaders, you stated the focus of the Democratic Party message is Build, and I could not agree with you more.

For many years, Democratic Party consultants would be frustrated that Republicans would use divisive social issues to appeal to traditional Democratic blue collar workers, and these consultants would state that these workers were voting against economic self interest.

What I and other building trade's leaders are concerned about today is that we and our members see a Democratic Party that is often hostile to our economic self-interest. Democrats have lost support because some Democratic elected officials believe that construction jobs should not be valued because those jobs are viewed as "temporary."

Democrats have lost support because some Democrats do not want to move dirt or favor an energy policy that is centered on "keep it in the ground." As a result, Democrats have lost support among our

members, especially in the key battleground states that have been crucial to Democratic presidential and congressional victories in the past.

We need significant investments to build infrastructure to move people and product that creates jobs today for our members and creates jobs for the future in agriculture, industry and manufacturing and commercial enterprises. It is unfortunate that our members have seen funders of the Democratic Party create unreasonable delays and cancellation in necessary infrastructure.

We need an energy policy that recognizes that our economy needs energy from oil, natural gas, coal and nuclear for today and tomorrow, and that energy infrastructure should be built by the best trained and most productive and safest construction workers. As General President of the Insulators, our members are the original green energy workers, and we utilize mechanical insulation to save energy each and every day. We need to utilize our energy resources efficiently to build America.

Building Trades members built America, and we stand ready to rebuild America, and we need a Democratic party that supports and values our contributions to America.

**Success** - In contrast to President Trump who sees the world in Social Darwinian terms between winners and losers, Democrats want each and every person to succeed. We want families to succeed, and we want our communities and our country to succeed. Democrats want shared prosperity, so that when a business is successful, the workers are rewarded for their success.

Our party will be successful when the forgotten voter sees Democrats fighting for economic justice.

Our party will be successful when voters see Democrats working for expanded economic opportunities, the dignity of work, and the opportunity to join a union.

Our party will be successful when voters see Democrats supporting infrastructure and energy projects to build America.

The Republican Party has developed a simplistic branding message that they have utilized for years: Republicans support less government, less taxes and a strong military.

By inference, the Republicans have also branded the Democratic Party as favoring more government, more taxes, and a weak military. We know that the facts do not support the Republican brand, but you have to give them credit for their message discipline.

It is long past time for Democrats to define ourselves in aspirational themes. In all candor, our party can do better than the "Better Deal." As we think about branding, perhaps our party should take a page from the Trial Lawyers Association who rebranded themselves as the American Association of Justice in 2006.

We are the party of Justice. In our national pledge, we express our support for liberty and justice for all, but for too many Americans, they do not see justice in our nation. They see economic elites grab our national prosperity while many families have suffered from a generation of stagnant wages.

We are the party of Opportunity. America is the land of opportunity, but for too many Americans, they do not see opportunities for themselves or their children. They see economic despair as a result of unfair trade deals and outsourcing, automation, capital flight and the attack on unions. They see families impacted by debt (medical, credit card, student loans) and the terrible scourge of poverty,



Leader Pelosi

Page 4

crime and addiction. Our party needs to offer these forgotten voters more than just hope or change or a better deal; they want an opportunity for a better life.

We are the party that Builds. From the leadership of President Roosevelt to create public works projects during the Great Depression to the efforts of President Obama and congressional Democrats to pass the Economic Recovery Act and the consistent support for Davis-Bacon prevailing wages, our party has traditionally supported infrastructure investments to build our nation.

We are the party of Success. President Clinton and Democrats repaired the economic damage of the Reagan-Bush years and led our nation to a successful economy and a federal budget surplus in the 1990s. President Obama and Democrats repaired the economic damage of the George W. Bush years and led our country to 75 consecutive months of job growth.

Thank you Leader Pelosi for leading the House Democrats into the 2018 elections, and thanks for your consideration to support the Justice and Opportunity to Build Success JOBS message.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "James P. McCourt". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large initial "J" and "M".

James P. McCourt  
General President

cc: General Executive Board Members  
Chuck Schumer, Senate Democratic Leader  
Tom Perez, Chairman, Democratic National Committee  
Building Trades General Board of Presidents  
Rich Trumka, President AFL-CIO