

# NEWS & VIEWS

PENNSYLVANIA
LABOR COMMUNICATIONS
Association

## LEHIGH VALLEY LABOR COUNCIL, AFL-CIO "UNIONS JOINING TOGETHER AS ONE"

November 2024

www.lehighvalleyclc.org

## **The 2024 Labor Ticket**

October 29, last day to apply for a mail-in ballot: November 5, Election Day. Polls open from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m.



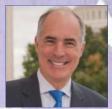
US House PA-7
Susan Wild



President
Kamala Harris



Vice-President
Tim Walz



US Senate Bob Casey



Attorney General
Eugene DePasquale



Treasurer
Erin McClelland\*



Auditor General

Malcolm Kenyatta



PA House 22nd Joshua Siegel



PA House 131st Meriam Sabih



PA House 132nd Mike Schlossberg



PA House 133rd Jeanne McNeill



PA House 134th Pete Schweyer



PA House 135th
Steve Samuelson



PA House 136th Robert Freeman



PA House 137th
Anna Thomas



PA House 187th Stefanie Rafes

## **Delivering for America's workers**Kamala Harris's proven track record

by the AFL-CIO



Kamala Harris Vice-President

ith Kamala Harris in the White House again, we'll have a chance at a real future for working people in America. Her record of stepping up for workers speaks for itself. From day one, Vice-President Harris has been a key partner in leading the most pro-labor administration in our

lifetimes. At every step in her distinguished career in public office, she's proven herself a tough and principled fighter for workers and a leader we can count on to deliver for us and uphold our values.

Below is a partial list of her pro-labor record. For more, visit: betterinaunion.org.

As vice-president, Harris:

Played a critical role in rebuilding our crumbling infrastructure, investing in good-paying union jobs, bringing manufacturing back to America, lowering prescription drug costs and raising wages;

Saved the pensions of more than one million union members and retirees. Led the Biden Administration's efforts to increase access to affordable child care and expand the child tax credit;

Championed worker organizing and chaired the White House Task Force on Worker Organizing and Empowerment, where she advocated for new worker organizing and training to create pathways to good union jobs.

As US Senator, Harris:

Introduced the Domestic Workers' Bill of Rights to guarantee domestic workers protections against harassment and discrimination, meal breaks, a guaranteed minimum wage, and overtime pay;

Advocated vigorously for workers' freedom to form or join a union and strongly supported the Protecting the Right to Organize (PRO) Act to reform broken labor law that stacks the deck against workers;

Walked the picket line in 2019 with the United Auto Workers at the General Motors facility near Reno, Nevada.

As attorney general of California, Harris:

Cracked down on corporate greed and took on the big banks after the 2008 financial crisis to deliver relief for struggling homeowners;

Protected the most vulnerable workers by tackling wage theft and other corporate crimes.

From taking on Wall Street and corporate greed to leading efforts to expand affordable child care and support vulnerable workers, Harris has shown time and again that she's on our side.

With Kamala Harris in the White House, together we'll continue to build the labor movement, expand the middle class and make our economy work for all of us.

## Get involved 2024 Labor Election Campaign

Want to become part of a historic election this year? Do you live in Berks, Carbon, Lehigh, Monroe, Northampton, or Pike counties? Call or e-mail Allen Fritz, labor organizer for our region, to find out how you can help.



Allen Fritz, Zone #3 political organizer 610-621-6268 afritzwit@gmail.com

#### Lehigh Valley Labor Council AFL-CIO www.lehighvalleyclc.org Phone 610-366-1358

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### Propaganda and the 2024 Election

Pennsylvania AFL-CIO delegates studied communication technique at Committee on Political Education conference

Mike Baker, Committee on Political Education co-chair Lehigh Valley Labor Council

Propaganda has reached new heights in recent years. Although its modern usage dates back to the nineteenth century, radio, television and the internet have fueled its rise more recently.



As we approach the 2024 Election, political parties and non-transparent groups have poured millions of dollars into media buys. Some of this includes propaganda bypassing the mainstream press and experts. Other propaganda pushes the notion that since truth is unknowable people need to follow a strong leader.

The study of propaganda, and its cousins misinformation and disinformation, headlined the sessions at the 2024 Pennsylvania AFL-CIO Committee on Political Education conference. The conference, held from August 17 to 18 at the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees Council #13 center in Harrisburg, also conducted sessions on internal union organizing with an emphasis on communicating with union members and getting them out to vote. I would like to share some of the highlights of the COPE conference.



**Edward L. Bernays, 1917.** An American pioneer and author in the field of public relations, his books examined crowd psychology and mass appeal. Critics argued that his research led to suppression of dissent. (*Credit*: Wikimedia Commons)

The first two sessions on August 17 included a lecture entitled "Disinformation: We Must Learn the Who, What, How and Why It Threatens Our Democracy," and a workshop entitled "Disinformation: We Must Sharpen Our Skills to Win People Back to the Truth and Strengthen Our Democracy." Mark McDermott, an economic justice and labor educator, led both the lecture and workshop. Both topics proved very timely.

McDermott said Pennsylvania matters in this election and there will be a lot of propaganda distributed. He said disinformation is a deliberate falsehood spread to deceive and includes the mass manipulation of emotions. It is also a subset of misinformation. Misinformation is a falsehood spread regardless of intent. McDermott noted that to move forward from disinformation people need to understand and defeat it, expand voting rights, "lovingly fight for the truth," restore civility, and combat attempts to divide and conquer.

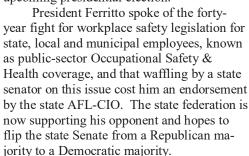
"Propaganda," a book written by public relations expert Edward Bernays in 1928, formed the basis for the study of public relations. Germany's Nazi Party based their communication techniques on Bernays's work. They were the first organization to use a technical device, the radio, to spread propaganda with the intent of depriving people of independent thought. His book drew intense criticism in America after its publication for its advocacy of mass manipulation. He argued that propaganda, used to exhaust the capacity to think and to annihilate

the truth, works best when those who are being manipulated are confident they are acting on their own free will.

McDermott said we need to win people back to the truth and to a more civil conversation. Communication, he added, needs to involve active listening, humor, finding points of agreement, asking questions and acknowledging concerns, and not yelling, shaming, ignoring or being offensive, in particular with coworkers and/or union members. Watch your tone and loudness, facial expressions and body language.

The next session, entitled "Legal Aspects of COPE and Elections," was taught by Atty. Irwin Aronson. He said too many people believe the big lies, and people should be able to register to vote and vote without fear or intimidation. He noted lawyers are lining up in Pennsylvania to make sure people can vote.

Pennsylvania AFL-CIO President Angela Ferritto and Secretary-Treasurer Maurice Cobb opened the two-day conference with welcoming remarks to those in attendance. They were joined by National AFL-CIO Field Director Amy O'Connor, Pennsylvania AFL-CIO Data Director Ryan McFarland and American Federation of Teachers Release Staff Denis McLaughlin. They presented an overview of the Labor 2024, which you can well imagine was on the upcoming presidential election.



Secretary-Treasurer Cobb said the state federation is trying to reach younger union workers to get out the vote and lobby legislators and is thankful for the release of some from their jobs to join full-time union staffers to get out the vote.

Pennsylvania AFL-CIO Data Director McFarland explained what legislative positions are up for reelection or election, on both the state and federal levels. He said a lot of pro-worker bills were approved by the state House but were not voted on by the state



Angela Ferritto President PA AFL-CIO



Maurice Cobb Sec.-Treas. PA AFL-CIO



Ryan McFarland Data Director PA AFL-CIO

Senate. He noted there has been a difference in enthusiasm by Democrats and independents since Vice-President Kamala Harris replaced President Joe Biden as the party's presidential nominee. McFarland added that if people come out to vote for candidates at the top of the ticket, they will vote for down ballot candidates, too, especially in Pennsylvania where voters cannot pull a straight party lever. He remarked that in southwestern Pennsylvania union voters vote more than non-union voters, and that the Pennsylvania AFL-CIO, as well as the Democratic and Republican parties, is using electronics to contact and persuade voters.

### Creative destruction

Joseph Schumpeter and capitalism's "fundamental impulse"

by Ron Ennis, Editor Lehigh Valley Labor Council

Philadelphia news reporter stopped M.M. Dolphin, president of the Order of Railroad Telegraphers, and asked him about the threat from William Truesdale. Is it true that Truesdale, president of the Delaware, Lackawanna & Western Railroad (DL&W), planned to eliminate hundreds of jobs by replacing the company's telegraph lines with telephones?



Fig. 1: M.M. Dolphin some of the open (*Credit*: The Railroad Telegrapher, October 1900) some of the open varia after they large crease. (*Fig. #1*)

It's a bluff, President Dolphin reportedly replied in an *Allentown Morning Call* article on August 20, 1901, meant "to frighten operators from making a demand for more wages." He had arrived in Philadelphia after leaving the union's head-quarters in St. Louis because of the "discord" between Truesdale and the union telegraphers. The railroad boss had escalated his threat when he discharged some of the operators in eastern Pennsylvania after they had proposed a wage increase (Fig. #1)

Truesdale had taken over the reins of the DL&W two years earlier and had immediately begun an

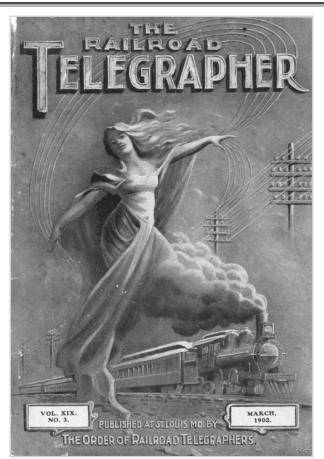
ambitious modernization plan, reversing many of his predecessor's policies and firing his associates. According to the union's newsletter, *The Railroad Telegrapher*, Truesdale announced that he would replace the company's telegraph system with telephones, ensuring that "the small army of telegraphers now employed can practically be done away with." (Fig. #2)

President Dolphin had noticed this pattern among railway bosses, like Truesdale. The telegraphers, similar to today's air traffic controllers, served as highly



Fig. 2: William H. Truesdale (*Credit*: National Park Service)

skilled communicators keeping track of the industry's transportation network. As soon as they began an organizing drive or asked for wage increases or workplace improvements, the bosses announced plans "to inaugurate a telephone system to supersede its telegraph department." The use of the telegraph on the railroads dated back to before the Civil War and Dolphin described the time-tested machine, unlike the newly-invented telephone, as "absolutely accurate in transmitting messages," an important safety feature in preventing rail disasters. He conceded that "anybody can work" a telephone, allowing the railways "to get the cheapest men it could." But, the union leader warned, it exposed the traveling public and train crews to unskilled labor "most prone to mistakes of carelessness or incompetency." (Fig. #3)



**Fig. 3:** The Railroad Telegrapher, March 1902. Printed in St. Louis, Mo., the monthly union publication reached roughly 10,000 members by 1901. The 1893 Depression had a severe impact on the railroad industry and led to confrontations between it and the Order of Railroad Telegraphers.

M.M. Dolphin and members of the railroad telegraphers' union faced a central concept in economics that few outside of academia fully understood on the eve of the twentieth century. Known as creative destruction, a term popularized in 1942 by Austrian economist Joseph Schumpeter, it explained the "fundamental impulse that sets and keeps the capitalist engine in motion," by creating new markets, revolutionizing methods of production and transportation, and reconfiguring new economic structures. But as capitalism created, it also destroyed by replacing workers with machines, causing economic repercussions and disrupting social stability. The telephone's invention provided Truesdale a cost-saving measure for his railroad but threatened the employment of Dolphin's members.

Creative destruction is as relevant today as when President Dolphin and his members challenged Truesdale and the DL&W Railroad. Thousands of workers at more than a dozen ports on the East and Gulf coasts went on strike earlier this month in response to threats to their job security by dock owners' continued deployment of automation. The dockworkers, members of the International Longshoremen's Association (ILA), began walking the picket line on October 1 holding signs declaring "Fight Automation, Save Jobs: ILA Demands Job Security," "Machines Don't Feed Families: Support ILA Workers," and "Automation Hurts Families: ILA Stands for Job Protection." The walkout was the first at all the East and Gulf coast ports since 1977.

"History validates" the ILA's "assumption that their bosses are embracing automation in part as a way to reduce costs," Peter S. Goodman wrote for *The New York Times* on September 29, 2024. Cost cutting by the shippers and port owners, however, have not necessarily been passed down as savings to consumers. President Joe Biden accused shipping carriers of contributing to inflation in his 2022 State of the Union speech and, according to Goodman's article, the carriers bankrolled more than \$10 billion in profits between April and June 2024.

Before the advent of container shipping in the 1950s, dockworkers loaded and unloaded an "ill-fitting assortment of goods" that often consumed several days, wrote Goodman. This gave union workers the "power over the pace of loading and unloading." But the inauguration of standard-size containers in April 1956 "simplified the process, while reducing the number of working hands needed to do it." Today's port operators, the Maritime Alliance, seek to expand driverless forklifts to move cargo, robotic cranes to stack containers, and automated technology to process trucks.

This creative destruction is occurring in ports around the globe, putting similar pressure on dockworkers overseas. As there is no practical alternative to transporting goods by container ships, dockworkers still maintain negotiating leverage. Neither air travel nor truck and rail are cheaper for moving products over long distances.

Both sides see automation as inevitable, but a few questions underlay the impasse between the ILA and the Maritime Alliance. Indeed, it underlies all creative destruction in the workplace: who controls the innovating, at what pace is the innovation introduced, and what guarantees will workers have should the new technology eliminate their jobs?

Dolphin and his union telegraphers also knew that workplace innovation was inevitable. "The telephone has shaken the old economic course of things," wrote *The Railroad Telegrapher* in October 1900, "as did the railway and the telegraph each in its day." As employees of the DL&W, they had seen their industry displace many occupations during the nineteenth century. After establishing a short rail line between Bath and Bethlehem in 1867, a small train crew began replacing dozens of teamsters and their muledriven wagons that made daily trips delivering roofing slates from the slate region to the Lehigh Valley. *The Bethlehem Daily Times* reported on September 9 that "when slate strikes the rail, the mule's occupation will be gone." The teamsters' jobs went, too.

Dolphin admitted, in the September 1901 *Railroad Tele-grapher*, that the telephone was "simply indispensable" when drilling cars in and out of a rail yard. He cautioned, however, against its use in overland transportation. "The telephone has its legitimate uses and also its limitations."

The Order of Railroad Telegraphers stalled the DL&W's introduction of the telephone, but had a hand in the eventual destruction of their own employment. Long working hours proved a source of irritation to the telegraphers, who successfully lobbied their congressional representatives that extreme work hours led to fatigued employees making fatal mistakes in communicating the whereabouts of trains. Congress passed the 1907 Hours of Service Act, which capped their workday to twelve hours. Neither able to find enough skilled telegraphers to meet the law's mandate nor willing to pay the increased costs, the railroad industry turned to the telephone. Joseph Schumpeter's rule re-emerged and the railroad bosses' adoption of the innovation eventually eliminated telegrapher jobs. As Dolphin had said in 1901, "anybody can work" the telephone. (Fig. #4)



Fig. 4: Railroad telegraphers often worked alone, enduring long hours, while handling multiple tasks that took their attention away from averting train wrecks. The company's *Employee's Rules*, posted on the left, included "Don't talk to Reporters." (*Credit*: The Railroad Telegrapher, October 1900)

## Before casting your ballot

Some final thoughts on the eve of November 5

by Ron Ennis, Editor Lehigh Valley Labor Council



In a letter released on October 12, Dr. Joshua Simmons summarized an exam given to one of his patients in April. The Army colonel and physician wrote that his patient was in "excellent health" and "maintains a healthy, active lifestyle de-

spite her busy schedule." His patient's "busy schedule" included being vice-president of the United States.

Vice-President Kamala Harris "possesses the physical and mental resiliency" required to serve as president, Dr. Simmons's two-page letter concluded. The vice-president's campaign hopes that the release of her medical report will draw a sharp contrast to her seventy-eight year old opponent. Donald Trump, who regularly questioned President Joe Biden's fitness, has released limited health information about himself, even after he was struck with Covid-19 in 2020 and after the attempt on his life in July.

Trump is the oldest major party nominee for president in history. Should he win next month, he will be the oldest president ever *if* he finishes another term at age eighty-two. Consider who would replace him should he become mentally or physically unfit to serve because of his age: JD Vance. (*Fig.* #1)

## Fig. 1: AFL-CIO Legislative Scorecard

(www.aflcio.org)

Lifetime Score on labor-backed legislation

US Sen. Bob Casey	99%
(2006)	
US Sen. Kamala Harris	98%
(2016-2020)	
US Sen. J.D. Vance	0%
(2022)	
US Rep. Susan Wild	99%
(2018)	
US Rep. Tim Walz	93%
(2006-2018)	

Bret Stephens, a *New York Times* columnist, recently wrote that Vance "is Trump with a brain, which is what makes him genuinely scary." While a second Trump term will mean more chaos, Stephens added, "it's Vance who has the wit and amorality necessary to do more serious damage to the system." Even *The Wall Street Journal's* editors, often supportive of Trump's policies, expressed fear in a July 8 editorial of "the young MAGA-in-a-hurry types like Sen. J.D. Vance." They described him as lacking "experience" should he assume the presidency. The possibility of Vance in the White House is alarming even if you are not a childless cat lady.

The US Senate race in Pennsylvania is another consideration in this year's election. US Sen. Bob Casey's re-election is vital to ensure a labor-friendly Congress that will support working-family legislation. Moreover, senators approve or reject a president's nominees to the federal judiciary. Should Casey lose and the senate falls into the GOP's hands, Sen. Mitch McConnell and his allies will stifle Kamala Harris' attempts to put a favorable judge on the US Supreme Court. Reversing the damage on the Court done by Trump will require both the election of Harris and the re-election of Bob Casey. (Fig. #2)

**Fig. 2:** US Senator Bob Casey remains one of the senate's strongest supporters for working-class legislation. His re-election is also crucial to reversing the US Supreme Court's anti-labor rulings. (Credit: *AFL-CIO*)



Perhaps the most important consideration leading up to Election Day is to ignore the polls. That advice came from Ezra Klein, another New York Times columnist, who pleaded with his readers on October 13 to "step off the emotional roller coaster" and stop following the daily polling numbers. "A week before the Harris-Trump debate in September," wrote Klein, "Harris led Trump by three points." He then listed tumultuous events that would have shaken previous presidential elections. "Trump turned in the second-worst debate performance in recent memory. Then came another attempted assassination of Trump, after the shooting at a campaign rally in July. Then the Federal Reserve cut interest rates by fifty basis points. Then Israel launched a ground invasion of Lebanon. Then came the vicepresidential debate. Then came a surprisingly strong jobs report. In this period, Harris released an eighty-two page booklet of policy proposals and Jack Smith, the special counsel prosecuting Trump in the January 6 case, filed a 165-page brief adding new details of Trump's efforts to overturn the results of the 2020 Election." Despite all that, Klein wrote, Harris remained only three points ahead of Trump as of mid-October.

There may be other considerations important to you as November 5 approaches. However, you can expect Election Day results will be close. Rather than fretting over the vicissitudes of polling numbers, donate money to your union's PAC fund, volunteer your time on behalf of the 2024 Labor Campaign, and make a plan to vote. "There is," Klein concluded, "nothing more the polls can do for you."

#### These politicians subverted democracy on January 6, 2021 Now, they want your vote on November 5

The following seven Republican Pennsylvania House members joined other GOP lawmakers on January 6, 2021 in refusing to certify the 2020 presidential election results and keep the losing candidate, Donald Trump, in power.

Dan Meuser (9th Dist.) Scott Perry (10th Dist.) Lloyd Smucker (11th Dist.) John Joyce (13th Dist.) Guy Reschenthaler (14th Dist.) Glenn Thompson (15th Dist.) Mike Kelly (16th Dist.)

(Credit: Washington Post, January 2, 2024)

### Propaganda and the 2024 Election

(continued from page three)

McLaughlin is serving as the state federation's communications director. McLaughlin said the Pennsylvania AFL-CIO is sending surveys to the commonwealth's union members, adjusting the scripts each week, depending on the issues those called bring up. The scripts are also adjustable for different parts of the state.



The survey's intent is to find people who are seen as a reliable source of accurate and truthful information in a community. McLaughlin noted the messenger often matters more than the message. A speakers' bureau of reliable and credible people is being developed by the state federation for the future.

The second day of the conference began with Mary Bellman, Director of Labor Education at Penn State University's School of Labor and Employment Relations, who conducted two sessions on internal organizing. Bellman asked attendees why they were taking part in Labor 2024 program and then went into detail on what that all should involve. She stressed outreach and conversations with fellow co-workers and union members who vote in higher percentages than non-union members. A workshop was conducted on practicing the outreaches. We need to uncover what others care about, ask questions, ask others to take actions, particularly in manageable tasks, and know why labor supports a candidate.

I thank the Lehigh Valley Labor Council and its delegates in supporting my attendance at the conference. The highlights I shared above prove that it was the best one I have ever attended.

#### Pennsylvania's 1910 Census & Immigration

Polls have shown immigration as an important issue in this year's election. The numbers below suggest that immigration presented far greater challenges to Pennsylvania in 1910 than it does today. While native-born residents comprised 55.1 percent of the commonwealth's population, the foreign-born and born of foreign and mixed parentage represented 42.4 percent of the state's total population.

Population of Pennsylvania in 1910

7,467,713 Percentage of Total

Native born 55.1 percent
4,222,727

Foreign born 18.8 percent 1,438,719

Mixed parentage or Foreign parentage 23.6 percent 511.039 1.295.228

Mixed parentage represents individuals with one foreign-born parent. Foreign parentage represents individuals with both foreign-born parents. Many of these recent arrivals were Catholic from southern and eastern Europe.

Blacks

...193,919 ...2.5 percent Only thirteen states, all formerly slave states, had a greater number of Blacks than Pennsylvania.

(Credit: The Pennsylvania State Police: A History of Service to the Commonwealth, 1977. US Census Bureau, 1910)

"

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"The political barrage of presidential candidates in the closing weeks of the campaign underscores the importance of the Pennsylvania vote in tomorrow's election. No Republican has ever won the presidency without carrying Pennsylvania, and it is generally conceded that the Democrats cannot pull an upset unless they win this state's electoral votes. In short, Pennsylvania could well hold the key to the presidency.

"Yet, there is a great deal of indifference among the voters. Those who plan to stay away from the polls argue that this political campaign offers the choice between two evils. Nothing could be farther from the truth. The fact is that the decision-making in this election is crucial to the very stability of our society.

"It is true other tickets have inspired more interest....
But the times are not perfect and neither are our ideals and virtues. Better men have stood for office during this country's great history, but so have less desirable ones. It is poor citizenship to run out on the country in this hour. In fact, if even a sizeable minority fails to vote, it could result in the kind of chaos never before experienced.

Meanwhile, the conditions for disaster are abetted by more than indecision. A third party candidate, George Wallace, has succeeded in adding a divisive element to the election. While he denies he is prejudiced against any race or color, he has skillfully managed to win a following of extremists, many of them associated with anti-Negro, anti-Semitic and anti-Communist groups of the far right.

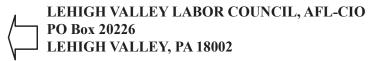
"If we are to preserve our democratic institutions, the vote tomorrow must not polarize our country so that the election outcome can be settled only by a desperate battle in Congress. It would be a tragedy for a nation which has survived a grueling civil war to be split asunder now by the appeal of a man who has managed to organize hate groups into a formidable coalition."

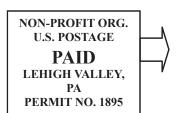
Bethlehem Globe-Times editorial, entitled "A crucial reason to vote," November 4, 1968. The 1968 presidential election featured Democrat Hubert Humphrey against Republican Richard Nixon. The editors warned of the "divisive" campaign of Alabama Gov. George Wallace, who ran as a third-party presidential candidate.

Gov. Wallace won notoriety for declaring in 1963 as Alabama's newly-elected governor that he stood for "segregation now, segregation tomorrow, segregation forever." Trump may not be a segregationist, but he provokes race-based controversy with a combative style that mirrors Wallace. Wallace made appeals to unionized blue-collar workers by railing against the federal government, describing foreign aid as money "poured down a rat hole," and demanding that NATO allies pay more for their defense against the Soviet Union.

Peggy Wallace Kennedy, who was eighteen-years-old when her father ran in 1968, said to *NPR* in April 2016 that Trump is exploiting voters' worst instincts, the way her father once did. "They both were able to adopt the notion that fear and hate are the two greatest motivators of voters that feel alienated from government."

Wallace won the electoral votes from five Southern states and remains the last third-party candidate to receive electoral college votes from any state.







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