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Working families score decisive win in local elections

Pro-worker candidates win 66 of 92 races; nine anti-worker incumbents ousted from mayor's office, city councils and boards in San Gabriel Valley

LOS ANGELES – A five-week intensive get-out-the-vote effort by working families pushed 14 pro-worker candidates to victory in the San Gabriel Valley on Tuesday. Nine anti-labor incumbents, including one mayor, were ousted.

Workers endorsed candidates in 92 suburban and exurban races this election year; 66 of them won. But intense grass-roots campaigning, which included door-to-door GOTV and phone banking, was concentrated in seven San Gabriel Valley cities: Baldwin Park, El Monte, La Puente, Lynwood, Montebello, Palmdale and Pico Rivera. Eighteen candidates were supported by workers in those cities in offices ranging from mayor and city council to school board. Only four worker-backed candidates lost. Seven Election Day winners had never held elected office before.

Pro-worker candidates in the San Gabriel Valley defeated nine incumbents, including El Monte Mayor Ernest Gutierrez.

"From Congress on down to local water board, every elected official should be a champion for working families," Los Angeles County Federation of Labor Executive Secretary-Treasurer Maria Elena Durazo said. "Many of these community officials serve the public on a part-time basis. But the decisions they make have far-reaching impacts. We need to make sure that all cities, no matter how large or small, promote good jobs with good wages, hire vendors who respect their workers and treat all municipal employees with dignity."

Four of six local measures supported by workers were ratified by voters in Palmdale, Huntington Park, Pico Rivera and Culver City.

The Election Day victory was produced by textbook grass-roots activism. More than 200 workers and community activists visited the San Gabriel Valley over the weekend to encourage them to vote for worker-friendly local candidates. About 50 more workers phone banked. They made 360,000 phone calls or door knocks and reached 19,000 voters.

The sprint toward Election Day represented the labor movement's most ambitious effort yet in down-ballot races in suburban and exurban cities that neighbor Los Angeles. The volunteers worked in a broad range of trades and industries, from firefighters and parks and recreation employees to sanitation workers and longshoremen.

The issues varied in each race. In El Monte, for instance, workers rallied behind mayoral candidate Andre Quintero after Gutierrez slashed services and laid off 100 municipal employees, including firefighters and police. The service cutbacks have hurt working families. Quintero, who is a deputy Los Angeles city attorney in the criminal branch, has a strong record of fighting against student fee increases as a member of the board of trustees for the Rio Hondo Community College District.

In the cities of Baldwin Park, El Monte, Montebello and Pico Rivera, workers backed city council candidates who will award municipal contracts to sanitation companies that treat employees with respect, pay living wages and live up to high environmental standards.

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*The Los Angeles County Federation of Labor, AFL-CIO, is the chartered Central Labor Council (CLC) of the AFL-CIO in Los Angeles County and is the second largest in the country, representing more than 800,000 workers through over 350 unions. Its mission is to promote a voice for workers so they can remain in the middle class, move themselves out of poverty by joining a union, encourage active participation in the political process by electing pro-union and pro-worker officials and to advance public policies that support workers and their families. As the coordinating center for labor's political activity, the Federation believes that in educating and mobilizing workers to be politically active they can create and sustain healthy communities, and **FIGHT FOR GOOD JOBS** that **REBUILD THE LOS ANGELES MIDDLE CLASS**. Visit the Federation at www.launionaflcio.org.*

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