

Tony Thurmond's Record Delivering for Working Families

Overview

Tony Thurmond has a consistent, proven record as a champion for unions and working families. From his time as Chair of the Assembly Labor and Employment Committee (2015–2016) to his current role as State Superintendent of Public Instruction, he has authored and passed landmark legislation to protect and uplift working families and taken bold steps to expand housing. His record provides powerful, concrete evidence to demonstrate viability and strong labor credentials in conversations.

Key Labor Accomplishments

As Assemblymember & Labor Committee Chair

- **100% Pro-Labor Voting Record (2015-2018):** Consistently backed labor priorities as Labor Committee Chair.
- **Blocking Anti-Union Legislation:** As Labor Chair, helped stop AB 1174, a right-to-work style bill that would have weakened union security.

As State Superintendent of Public Instruction

- **School Facilities Investments:** Longstanding support for bonds and local funding measures to modernize schools, creating union construction jobs in communities across California.
- **Career Technical Education:** Advanced partnerships between schools and labor apprenticeship programs to expand access to skilled trades training.
- **Apprenticeship Summit (2024):** Convened leaders from education, industry, and Building Trades to expand apprenticeship pathways, promoting “earn while you learn” opportunities for students entering the trades.
- **Supporting workers:** Supporting educators and education workers in efforts to organize to increase wages and benefits.

Ensuring Skilled and Trained Workplaces

- **AB 55 (2017):** Required oil refinery operators to disclose contracts not using a “skilled and trained” workforce, reinforcing the use of apprentices and ensuring high safety standards.
- **SB 984 (2024, sponsored):** Would have required state agencies to report annually on their use of PLAs for public works projects, including data on costs, workforce outcomes,

and project performance. to increase transparency and help evaluate how PLAs affect labor standards, project efficiency, and worker protections on public agency construction.

- **Prevailing Wage & Project Labor Agreements:** Supported bills requiring prevailing wages on subsidized housing (AB 199) and limiting Job Order Contracting to colleges with Project Labor Agreements (AB 618).

Safe Workplaces for All Californians

- **AB 2334 (2017):** Requires electronic submission of employer reports related to occupational injury/illness.
- **AB 2272 (2016):** Would have protected healthcare workers and patients from “surgical plume”, the airborne contaminants generated during certain surgical/therapeutic procedures, by requiring healthcare facilities to use plume scavenging systems and backing that up with regulatory standards through Cal/OSHA and the Standards Board. It was eventually signed into law in 2023.
- **AB 1978 (2016, co-author):** Requires janitorial employers to register annually with the state and mandates in-person biennial sexual violence and harassment-prevention training for janitorial workers due to rampant wage theft, exploitation, and workplace harassment in the property-services industry.

Combating Wage Theft, Misclassification, and Contracting Out

- **AB 1701 (2017):** Authored law holding general contractors liable for subcontractors’ wage theft. This landmark reform ensures workers can recover unpaid wages directly from prime contractors.
- **AB 2160 & AB 670 (2018):** Extended classified employee status to part-time playground aides in California’s merit-system school and community college districts, giving them the same job protections and benefits as other classified staff.
- **SB 820 (2020, sponsored):** Targets subcontracting at UCs by mandating that for the UC to utilize General Fund capital expenditures or state-funded buildings, “covered services” (such as cleaning, groundskeeping, food service, and maintenance) traditionally performed by UC staff must not be outsourced to third-party contractors.
- **Standing Up to UC Outsourcing:** Helped champion the effort to stop UC Berkeley from contracting out key service jobs, which [led to the university in 2016 insourcing nearly 100 subcontracted](#) custodians, parking attendants, and limited workers.

Protecting California Jobs and Expanding Workplace Benefits

- **AB 3224 (2018):** Requires that any decisions governing eligibility for assistance for Medi-Cal, CalWORKs or CalFresh that are made by a county pursuant to provisions relating to public social services shall be determined exclusively by a merit or civil service employee of the county, rather than a for-profit company
- **SB 63 (2017, co-author):** Requires California employers with 20–49 employees to provide up to 12 weeks of unpaid, job-protected parental leave.
- **AB 1066 (2016, co-author):** Established overtime protections for farmworkers, ensuring that agricultural workers have the same rights as other industries.
- **AB 2901 (2023, sponsored):** Would have provided for up to 14 weeks of fully paid leave for CA public school employees for pregnancy, miscarriage, childbirth, termination of pregnancy or recovery.
- **SB 1116 (2024, sponsored):** Would have ensured a worker who leaves work because of a trade dispute (like a strike) is eligible for unemployment benefits after the first two weeks of the dispute.

Fighting for Healthcare for All Californians

- **SB 562 (2017, co-author):** Would have delivered a comprehensive, state-financed, single-payer healthcare system for all California residents, regardless of immigration status.
- **SB 4 (2015, co-author):** Health Care Coverage Immigration Status, which expands access to healthcare coverage to undocumented Californian children.
- **SB 10 (2016, co-author):** Health Care Coverage Immigration Status, this bill directs the state to apply for a federal waiver to allow undocumented Californians to buy health insurance with their own money through Covered California

Expanding Affordable Housing Opportunities

- **2.3 Million Housing Units on Surplus Education Land:** Launched initiative to utilize 75,000 acres of school district and county office land for housing development. Studies show potential for 2.3 million new homes statewide.
- **\$500 Million Educator Housing Fund:** Secured a low income housing tax credit in the budget to build educator housing. Early successes, such as Jefferson Union High School District's 122-unit project, demonstrate proof of concept.
- **AB 1169 (2023, sponsored):** Would have streamlined the development of affordable housing specifically for educators and school employees by easing certain local zoning and permitting barriers to help school districts attract and retain staff by making it easier to build housing on or near school property.

- **Housing Summit (2024):** Brought together school leaders, developers, and unions to accelerate projects on surplus land, ensuring union involvement in planning and construction.

Standing Up Against Federal Attacks on Labor

- **AB 1565 (2017):** Authored legislation to preserve Obama-era overtime pay standards in California despite the Trump Administration rollbacks.
- **Post-Janus Union Protections:** Supported AB 119 and SB 285 to secure union access to employee orientations and prohibit employers from discouraging union membership after the Supreme Court’s Janus decision.
- **AB 288: (2025, sponsored):** Protects workers from federal attacks on the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) by granting the California Public Employment Relations Board (PERB) jurisdiction over private-sector labor disputes and union elections in specific circumstances where the NLRB is unable to provide a timely remedy.
- **“Trump-Proofing” Worker Standards:** Backed SB 49 to lock in workplace safety, wage, and labor standards at the state level against federal weakening.
- **Stopping “Right-to-Work” in California:** As Labor Chair, helped ensure right-to-work style legislation failed in committee.

Other

- **AB 800 (2023, sponsored):** Requires all California public high schools to hold an annual Workplace Readiness Week, during which students—especially juniors and seniors—are taught about their rights as workers.

Thurmond on the Picket Line (partial recent list):

- **Unite Here Hotel workers picket - Long Beach**
- **Unite Here Hotel workers picket - San Francisco**
- **AFSCME Local 3299 - UC Riverside**
- **SEIU - UHW - Oakland**
- **UNAC - Oakland**
- **NUHW - Fontana**
- **CSUEU - Long Beach**
- **Art Ctr College of Design - Pasadena**
- **Unite Here Hotel picket San Diego 2018**

- CNA Oakland Kaiser
- CNA Berkeley Alta Bates
- SEIU 1000 - Sacramento
- United Teachers Los Angeles
- CFT -Long Beach
- Writers Guild - Studio City August 2023
- SEIU 99 - Sept 2024 Los Angeles
- CWA - ASSOC Flight Attendants- San Diego July 2024