

Minnesota Governor Tim Walz Picked as Harris' Vice President

Key Takeaways

- Walz was not on the initial shortlist of VP candidates but rose to the top after being championed by organized labor. Describing the Trump-Vance ticket as “weird” in media interviews because of their positions, which has gone viral and led to Harris and other Democrats latching onto the moniker, also helped.
- Walz, who grew up in rural Nebraska, enlisted in the National Guard at 17, taught high school social studies and coached football, brings a folksy demeanor to the campaign that will resonate with rural and blue-collar voters.
- Walz served six terms in Congress before being elected Minnesota’s governor in 2018. As a two-term governor, Walz has signed into law a series of pro-labor measures, including establishing paid sick and medical leave, banning non-compete agreements and expanding protections for warehouse workers of large corporations such as Amazon.
- In addition to championing pro-worker legislation, Walz has supported a series of progressive priorities, including protecting abortion rights, legalizing recreational marijuana, restricting gun access and providing refuge to transgender youth whose access to gender-affirming and other medical care has been restricted elsewhere.
- Walz also has established an extensive network of influence across the country in his role as chair of the Democratic Governors Association, which will come in handy not only for fundraising but enlisting surrogates and other champions of a Harris-Walz ticket.

Implications For Business

- Walz will be a strong advocate for labor inside the White House. Expect him to champion pro-labor legislation such as the PRO Act, which would make it easier for workers to form unions and bargain with their employers, and other efforts that are top priorities for union leaders.
- As Governor, Walz has aggressively recruited industries in the medical technology, food and agriculture, environmental and higher education sectors. He also has led trade missions from Minnesota to the EU to try to lure companies to Minnesota. Expect him to continue to advocate for good, high-paying jobs for American workers.
- In Congress, Walz got high marks for his willingness to reach across the aisle. He received high ratings from groups such as the AFL-CIO, ACLU and Planned Parenthood but single-digit ratings from organizations like the National Taxpayers Union, Americans for Tax Reform and Citizens Against Government Waste.
- Throughout his political career, Walz has been a huge supporter of veterans. Expect that to carry over to the Executive Branch. He spent 24 years in the National Guard, reaching the rank of Command Sergeant Major.

Recommended Next Steps

- **Continue to Scenario Plan:** With so much on the line and potential scenarios still in flux, a comprehensive grasp of electoral processes and timelines, coupled with a strategic engagement plan, is essential for navigating the upcoming political shifts in Washington.
- **Keep Building Relationships:** Regardless of who wins the White House, November’s elections will usher in new Members of Congress in both the House and the Senate. It is imperative to continue relationship building efforts across both parties, prioritizing members where you have an economic footprint. This engagement should include D.C. office visits as well as state/district engagement with Members and/or staff. Companies also should be preparing materials that can be used in introductory meetings with new Members, focusing on the positive impact of commercial operations in their states and brief overviews of priority policies and company values.
- **Expand Your Ecosystem:** Beyond developing relationships with Members of Congress and Administration officials, companies should also identify opportunities to strategically engage with other organizations on

shared business and value priorities, such as business and trade organizations, advocacy groups and nonprofits, think tanks and academic institutions and congressional caucuses. Businesses and organizations can leverage the power of their brand to act as a convener to bring together diverse audiences to foster conversations and build alignment on key issues. These relationships can help amplify advocacy impact and help insulate when there are disagreements with policymakers.

How APCO Can Help?

- APCO's government relations and issues and crisis management colleagues can help you prepare your strategy, scenario plan and develop an engagement strategy to expand your network of allies and identify unique opportunities to leverage these in support of your policy objectives.

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