

Postal Workers Union Says They'll Deliver for Sanders in Hillary Battle

The U.S. postal workers union on Thursday endorsed Bernie Sanders in his bid for the White House, delivering a boost to the Vermont senator's underdog campaign against Democratic front-runner Hillary Clinton.

The American Postal Workers Union, which represents more than 200,000 postal service workers and retirees, praised Sanders as a champion for workers. The endorsement comes before Saturday's second Democratic presidential debate in which Sanders and Clinton will face off against one another.

Sanders, an independent and self-described democratic socialist, has been battling Clinton for support from labor unions, which provide valuable grassroots political support with their ability to get members to the polls.

"Politics as usual has not worked. It's time for a political revolution," said Mark Dimondstein, president of the postal workers union, citing Sanders' long record of fighting for workers and backing efforts to keep post offices and mail facilities open amid budget cuts.

"He doesn't just talk the talk. He walks the walk," Dimondstein said.

It is the second national union endorsement for Sanders, who also was endorsed in August by the National Nurses United, which represents about 185,000 members.

Clinton, who has a wide lead over Sanders in national polls, also remains ahead in the labor fight with endorsements from large unions such as AFSCME, the public employees union, the

American Federation of Teachers and others.

Sanders has battled perceptions that Clinton would be more electable in the November 2016 general election. Clinton, the former first lady, senator from New York and secretary of state, also enjoys longstanding ties with many national labor leaders.

Labor for Bernie, a volunteer group of union activists working to nominate Sanders, has sought to slow or even halt the flow of Clinton endorsements by national unions so labor leaders have more time to evaluate Sanders.

On Thursday, several members of Service Employees International Union, or SEIU, wrote to their union chief and international executive board members asking them to hold off on presidential endorsements ahead of the Democratic primaries beginning in February.

"It would not be the end of the world to endorse Sanders, or allow locals to go their own way in the primaries, or to sit out the primaries altogether," the SEIU members wrote.

Larry Cohen, a liaison between the Sanders campaign and organized labor, welcomed the postal union's endorsement, saying postal workers are "at the top when it comes to member involvement and union democracy."

©2015 Thomson Reuters. All Rights Reserved.