

POLITICS SEPTEMBER 7, 2026

Sen. Mark Kelly, others champion workers at Labor Day breakfast in Manchester

Sen. Mark Kelly urged New Hampshire union members to push back against Trump and support labor protections at the AFL-CIO's Labor Day breakfast in Manchester.



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U.S. Sen. Mark Kelly, D-Ariz., was the keynote speaker Monday morning during the annual New Hampshire AFL-CIO Labor Day Breakfast at the DoubleTree by Hilton in Manchester. DAVE PIERCE/UNION LEADER

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U.S. Sen. Mark Kelly, D-Ariz., told a large Labor Day breakfast crowd it is time to push back.

He blasted President Donald Trump and championed unions while delivering the keynote address Monday during the AFL-CIO of New Hampshire's annual event at the DoubleTree by Hilton in Manchester.

"Trump and his sycophants are failing in their most fundamental job, and that is that leaders should improve people's lives, and that's what this November is going to be all about," Kelly said.

Kelly grew up in New Jersey, the son of two union police officers. He told the crowd that the battles fought and won by organized labor movements on behalf of workers have improved lives and broadened the middle class.

When his mother was injured on the job, it was the union that saw her receive the benefits she was entitled to, Kelly said, before urging Congress to pass the Protecting the Right to Organize Act.

"The next generation of workers can have someone on their side, just like my mother did. At the end of the day, it means families can keep more of their own money and it means

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our kids can dream about their future and know that their hard work will actually pay off for them, just like it did for (her)," he said.

It's imperative now, Kelly stressed, for politicians to work on behalf of their constituents and alongside labor unions. He said the economy works for "the people writing the rules, the rich, the powerful, the predators in the Epstein files" and those who are in line with the Trump administration.

"Together we can lower costs for families, we can build new homes instead of protecting hedge funds. We can demand a say in how AI is going to change this economy, and we can make corporations pay their fair share," Kelly said.

U.S. Rep. Ro Khanna, D-Calif., represents a district in Silicon Valley and said wealth inequality is a fundamental and damaging issue in the country.

"You know how much wealth there is in my district? Too much," Khanna said. "\$20 trillion in a 50-mile radius. One-third of the nation's wealth is sitting in my district, one-third. We have 19 billionaires in America who have 12% of the GDP. It's three times the concentration of the Gilded Age."

Khanna said it's no longer the time for incrementalism and he criticized the "economic nostalgia and racial nostalgia" of Trump's administration. Khanna endorsed a 5% tax on billionaires.

"Start by taxing the billionaires in my district, try it out. Tax the California billionaires to pay for New Hampshire, it can't be that hard a message," he said.

Others who spoke at the event paid tribute to U.S. Sen. Jeanne Shaheen, a Democrat who is retiring at the end of the term. The senior senator from New Hampshire, she previously served as governor.

And state Rep. Mike Bordes, who is also the mayor of Laconia, paid tribute to two state lawmakers from Belknap County who died in 2026: Harry Bean of Gilford and Charlie St. Clair of Laconia.

"Harry Bean, who we lost, he was a steady partner and a deeply respected individual. He served with humility," said an emotional Bordes.

"We also lost Representative Charlie St. Clair," Bordes said. "He was a tireless advocate for Laconia Motorcycle Week, for tomorrow, for small businesses and for every constituent who ever needed his help. His passion for his community was unmatched."

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