



DAILY UPDATE

PA AFL-CIO 2024 CONVENTION

TUESDAY MAY 14, 2024

The general session on the first day of the 46th PA AFL-CIO Constitutional Convention began at 9:30 am when Tina Lynch, president of Harrisburg Region Central Labor Council, welcomed delegates to Hershey and thanked attendees for the work they do in the labor movement every day. Lynch introduced the executive council, including President Angela Ferritto and Secretary-Treasurer Maurice Cobb.

Following the presentation of the color guard, attendees who served in the armed forces were acknowledged. The Harrisburg Gay Men's Chorus sang the "Star Spangled Banner" and an invocation was given.



State Representative Tom Mehaffie then welcomed delegates to the sweetest place on Earth.. "I was born and raised in a union household," Mehaffie said. "I will never forget that. I know I was raised well and was provided the necessities to succeed in life because my dad was union." Mehaffie described his commitment to the working people of Pennsylvania and to passing legislation that means something to union members and their families - including Public Sector OSHA - a bill in the Senate that needs the help of union members to get to the governor's desk.

Mehaffie discussed the rich union heritage in Hershey. He acknowledged the Hershey Medical Center and its union nurses, local steelworkers, public sector teachers, chocolate workers, teamsters working at one of the state's largest facilities in the state, AFSCME members, and UFCW workers who "love to put libations into households."

President Angela Ferritto then read the code of conduct and Secretary-Treasurer Cobb read the convention call. Special guest Richard Trumka Jr. joined the convention to honor his late father and former national AFL-CIO President Richard Trumka. He spoke of his father's journey from the coal mines of southwest PA to the presidency of the AFL-CIO as a testament to what sons and daughters can do when given the opportunity. Trumka Jr. said Pennsylvania always remained at the heart of his father's identity. He then presented President Ferritto with the gavel that belonged to his father, describing the moment as a link between the present and the past. "This is a symbol of authority and the symbol of a legacy of someone who understood the power of unity and of standing up for what is right while breaking down barriers," said Trumka.

"Can you feel it? Can you feel that union energy?" President Ferritto asked the delegates in her opening remarks. She described the electrifying power of delegates joining together in the same place and of the progress made over the past two years. "We are on the right path," she said, "and no one works harder than a union member."

President Ferritto then introduced the Union Energy Initiative, a coalition dedicated to creating a sustainable and innovative energy economy today. Union Energy will drive policies that allow PA workers to work in union jobs with union benefits. By having a seat at the table, the coalition will bring about positive change and "the union energy we all love."

President Ferritto declared the constitutional convention officially open for business at 10:30 am to the sound of rousing applause. She encouraged delegates to lift their voices beyond geographic and local boundaries because the "energy we generate will propel us forward for the next two years."

TODAY'S SPEAKERS



STATE REPRESENTATIVE
TOM MEHAFFIE



GOVERNOR JOSH SHAPIRO



LEE SAUNDER, AFSCME
INTERNATIONAL PRESIDENT

CELEBRATE OUR 2024 COPE HONOREES!

WEDNESDAY 6:00 PM
COPE HONOREE AWARDS
RECEPTION
IN THE GREAT LOBBY

WEDNESDAY 7:00 PM
COPE HONOREE AWARDS
BANQUET
IN THE BLUE ROOM



"Women and men of organized labor, I consider you to be the backbone of our community, of our economy, and of course, of our Commonwealth," was how Governor Josh Shapiro kicked off his speech to the crowd of hundreds of union members representing over 140 locals and nearly 30 international unions Tuesday morning. "We are a people-powered economy, and you are the people power!"

Since taking office last January, Governor Shapiro has earned a reputation of being a man on a mission and ready to "get shit done." And on Tuesday morning, he reminded the convention just how he had earned that title by putting working people and their families at the forefront of a number of policy issues and practices.

Shapiro said since he took office, he has strived to ensure the Commonwealth is open and ready to work. He eliminated the needless barrier of a college degree for over 90% of Commonwealth jobs, which opened the door for many workers throughout PA to secure family-sustaining wages and union jobs. Additionally, the governor described the expanded use of Project Labor Agreements (PLAs) that ensure Commonwealth projects are completed with union labor as well as his budget proposal that includes historic funding for registered apprenticeship programs and vo-tech/trade schools.

When the eyes of the nation turned to Pennsylvania and Philadelphia last summer following the collapse of a section of I-95, it was union labor and ingenuity that the nation was watching. The hardworking men and women of the Philadelphia Building Trades worked non-stop for 12 days through rain and blistering heat to finish one of the most vital pieces of the interstate highways.

With the Governor's budget, and thanks to President Biden's historic Bipartisan Infrastructure Reduction Act, future PA union workers will have many opportunities open to them, including work at one of the two hydrogen hubs in the state or at one of the thousands of Governor Shapiro's clean energy union jobs. Throughout his speech, Shapiro emphasized how the Commonwealth is strong and ready to meet the challenges we face in the year 2024 with a diverse, competitive workforce fueled by union labor. "We are a people-powered economy, and you are the people power!" he said.

AFSCME President Lee Saunders then presented the facts ahead of 2024 election. "None of us should tell our members how to vote. It's a personal decision," he said. "But it's our job to make sure members have the facts about which candidates support working families and which ones want to stick it to us." Saunders underscored how the hope and aspirations of working people are on the ballot and President Biden was the first president to walk the picket lines and stand with workers. He also discussed the importance of local elections and the need to retake the State Senate and maintain gains made in the House in the upcoming election.

Saunders discussed how unions "raise hell for workers" and the "great awakening to the power of the union difference." He said he is proud to represent the 1.4 million everyday heroes of AFSCME. "When you take one of us on, you take all of us on. That's what being in a union is all about," he said. In his closing, Saunders alluded to the conference theme saying, "we won't just make 2024 the year of the worker... if we do our job... every single year will be the year of the worker."

Secretary Cobb announced committee chairs and caucus meetings. A partial credentials report was shared by the chair of the credentials committee.

The winners of the Boyer/Uehlein/George/Bloomingtondale (BUGB) awards were announced and called to the stage. Receiving the awards were the Allegheny-Fayette Labor Council and the Johnstown Regional Labor Council. Allegheny-Fayette Labor Council President Darrin Kelly accepted the award and emphasized the importance of the charitable work that the labor movement contributes. "We will always be an organization from the ground up, never the top down. We are a part of our community and a pillar of it," he said. The award for the Johnstown Regional Labor Council was received by Executive Vice President Dave Carey who spoke about their scholarship program and support for a local women's shelter. "Without you guys, we can't do this, it's such a proud thing. Thank you very much," he said.

Secretary-Treasurer Cobb then made announcements, and President Ferritto recognized the USW International President David McCall who was in attendance. The opening general session recessed at 11:45 am and will reconvene at 9:00 am on Wednesday May 15th.

