



CONVENTION **REPORTER**

A DAILY REPORT FOR DELEGATES TO THE FLORIDA AFL-CIO BIENNIAL CONVENTION

Monday, October 05, 2009

President Cindy Hall called the meeting to order at 9:03 AM.

Chaplain (MAJ) Rabbi Stanley H. Schwartz (RET-US Army), offered the Invocation.

The Colors were presented by the **Air Force Junior ROTC, Maitland High School**.

Secretary-Treasurer Dwayne Sealy led the chamber in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Todd Parrish, United Memorial Bible Services led the delegates in singing the National Anthem.

Volusia County Commission Frank Bruno welcomed the delegates and thanked the Florida AFL-CIO for our decision to hold this convention in Daytona Beach Shores. He encouraged them to enjoy all the benefits of his community, support the local restaurants and spend money to help this area weather the downturn in the economy. He spoke of a recent trip to Washington D.C. with Congresswoman Kosmas to honor World War II veterans. He mentioned that he would be heading to Orlando to meet with Congressman Mica and Congresswoman Brown about commuter rail. He recognized Brother Andrew Spar for his dedication to the area's public schools and shared information about Volusia County's decision to spend all of their lobbying resources during the last session to push for increased funds for teachers and schools and thanked Brother Spar for his efforts during that time. He invited everyone to come visit his community again soon.

Central Florida AFL-CIO President Paul Wilson brought greetings to the convention delegates. He spoke about the importance of the Florida AFL-CIO and its work to support working people and elected officials who will work to enact positive policies for union members. "As we interact over the next few days, I welcome each of you to participate in the activities as they are made available to you. The Florida AFL-CIO is a work in progress...one that can propel the labor movement to be a cornerstone in every community with the support of its affiliate labor unions and constituency organizations. I encourage

each and every one of you to use this convention as a chance to engage with the Florida AFL-CIO and the Central Labor Council from your region to support the building of an aggressive labor movement and state federation that will support it.

Brother Dwayne Sealy conducted the roll call of the officers at 9:50 AM.

Committee Reports

Credentials Committee

Dan Reynolds, President, Federation of Public Employees and Co-Chair of the committee, reported that the Credentials Committee met at 7:00 AM on Monday, October 5th at 7:00 am. He reported that 103 pre-registered credentials that were received prior to the September 15, 2009 on-time date were reviewed and found in good order. 5 pre-registered credentials that were received after the September 15, 2009 were reviewed and found in good order and 11 on-site credentials were reviewed and found in good order. The committee recommended the seating of the 103 on-time pre-registered delegates, the 5 late received pre-registered delegates, the 11 on-site delegates for a total of 119 voting delegates and 1 fraternal delegate. The committee carried a motion to adopt the report which was seconded by **Steve Hall, IUPAT Local 1010**. The motion carried.

Rules Committee

Clara Cook, AFT 3616, Co-Chair of the committee delivered the report. The committee met via conference call at 11:30 am on September 25, 2009. The proposed rules had been previously sent to committee members. She reported that a copy of the committee's recommendations could be found in the convention books. She moved that the delegation accept the committee's recommendations. The motioned was seconded from the floor and carried with a voice vote.

President Hall reviewed some of the committees that would be meeting during the convention and encouraged the delegates to get involved and attend their assigned committees.

Resolutions Committee

Steve Williams, IBEW 756 Co-Chair of the committee delivered the report. The Resolutions Committee had its initial meeting at 10:00 AM on Sunday, October 4, 2009 to review all filed resolutions to date. The committee reviewed the resolutions to assess appropriate committee assignments. Resolutions 9 and 12 were assigned to Communications and Outreach Committee in addition to their assignment to Legislative Committee. Resolutions 20 and 21 were removed from the Political Action Committee and assigned to the Legislative Committee. Resolutions 1 – 21 were timely filed, while Resolutions 22 – 28 were received after the September 15 deadline. Brother Williams moved that these resolution

committee assignments be accepted by the convention. The motion was seconded from the floor and carried with a majority vote.

Resolutions 22 – 28 were late filed and will require a 2/3 vote of the delegates to accept these resolutions. Brother Williams moved that these resolutions be accepted by the convention for consideration. **George Bayer, Central Florida AFL-CIO** seconded the motion. The motion carried with a voice vote. The committee stands in recess until Tuesday afternoon, or upon the call of the President.

President Hall recognized **Senator Dave Aronberg**, candidate for Florida's Attorney General.

Eddie Acosta – National Worker Center Coordinator, AFL-CIO

Brother Acosta spoke about immigration reform, an important labor issue that tends to be divisive and as such often not addressed. He articulated that as our unions focus on the Employee Free Choice Act, health care reform and climate legislation they must also focus on immigration reform. He shared that the AFL-CIO and its affiliated unions have been working on a position for the past eighteen months that can achieve a consensus by all unions, both AFL-CIO and Change to Win. He stated that immigrants come to this country to work or to be with people who are working. As such, the immigration issues impact many different areas of work and social policy. People leave their home countries to find a better life. He stated that nobody wakes one day and decides to come to the U.S. Trade policies like NAFTA have everything to do with the current migration of workers from Mexico and other nations. Globalization is happening, but not in a way that benefits workers. In this light, all workers are victimized; both those who come to this country and those who are displaced by the influx of new workers. Corporate driven trade policies are creating a race to the bottom, one that has created the current problems. These policies have lowered the standards in both the developing world and here in the U.S. Immigration from Mexico has doubled since the passage of NAFTA and corporations are using those people as “throw away” workers who do not enjoy the same protections as others. This places downward pressure on standards for U.S. workers. Brother Acosta briefly laid out the AFL-CIO's plan for immigration reform that will help all workers and eliminate the under the table, black market for workers that has hurt union members and immigrants. The plan, which was adopted in April of this year, is comprehensive and includes provisions that 1) deal with those immigrants currently in the country 2) stops undocumented workers from coming in the country illegally and 3) creates a full-proof system for worker authorization. Copies of the plan were distributed to the delegates.

Representative Franklin Sands – Minority Leader, Florida House of Representatives

Rep. Sands thanked the delegates and President Hall for the opportunity to be at the convention stating that it was “always a pleasure to address union members.”

He spoke of the difficult times facing Florida's workers as they try to deal with an economy in free-fall and the wholesale loss of jobs in a state where 1 in 10 workers are unemployed. He spoke about people's fear of loss of health care and the dwindling prospects for workers to be able to afford to send their children or grandchildren to college. He promised that there is reason for hope and that his overall message is a message of hope. He spoke about the many times that Democrats in the Florida House stood with Labor over the past year on issues like the Employee Free Choice Act, elections law and unemployment insurance reform. He promised that the members of his caucus workers' would maintain a "laser-like focus" on the issues impacting workers during these difficult times. He argued that Republican leaders, especially in the House are openly hostile to union members and that they tried to block the Employee Free Choice Act and unfairly tax state workers. He stated that House Democrats worked against these and other attacks. He pledged to ensure that the Democratic Caucus would work hard to make the changes necessary to draw down the half-billion dollars in federal unemployment insurance money provided in the stimulus legislation. He said, "I and my colleagues recognize, value and respect the labor movement." He stated that each time they have stood up for our movement they have paid a price and lost more support from the business community. He said that our financial help is needed now more than ever. He also urged the delegates to fully support the current effort to change Florida's Constitution to create a fair process for political redistricting. He pledged to stand side-by-side with labor against those forces that are trying to diminish workers' roles in politics and the economy, destroy beneficial social programs and "peddle outdated philosophies that have failed time after time."

President Hall selected an Escort Committee from the delegate body. The committee included **Pat Emmert, Palm Beach-Treasure Coast Central Labor Council; Clara Cook, AFT 3616; Gary Waters IUOE 487 and Darryl Payne, ILA 1526**. The committee escorted **AFL-CIO Executive Vice-President, Arlene Holt-Baker** to the podium. She was introduced by President Hall who recognized her as a "sister and friend."

Arlene Holt-Baker – Executive Vice-President, AFL-CIO

Sister Holt-Baker congratulated President Hall on her upcoming retirement, acknowledging that she, like President John Sweeney would most likely remain active and in fact continue to serve as President Emerita. She also thanked Brother Dwayne Sealy for his incredible activism and service to the labor movement. She brought greetings from AFL-CIO President Richard Trumka. She talked about how much she enjoyed talking and listening to Florida's labor leaders the prior evening and that Florida was home to some of the most dedicated labor activists in the country, whose tireless service to working people was a testament to our movement. She spoke about the fact that now 2/3 of the leadership team of the AFL-CIO were women. She reported on the historic AFL-CIO convention recently held in Pittsburgh and her recent travels on a listening tour to Ohio, New York, Pennsylvania and Georgia. On this tour she spoke with

workers about the future of the labor movement and what we needed to do to get people working again and return people to the path to prosperity. She shared stories of struggle from this tour and the critical need to resolve the challenges we face as a nation. "We must be a national movement and our strength will come from each of you," she said. She spoke about the Employee Free Choice Act and how it will strengthen our movement and allow us to better serve America's workers. She spoke about Florida's commitment to solidarity and that we were a truly unified movement. She spoke about the critical need to increase training opportunities for officers and key staff across the entire movement to strengthen our efforts. She said that national federation and affiliates expected "excellence, accountability and bold leadership on expanding our diversity and political activities." Union members' hard earned money must be respected and used effectively, efficiently and with care. She spoke about Florida's successes under New Alliance, including a 23% increase in affiliation. She charged all the delegates to continue this important work. She encouraged the state federation and local unions to use new and emerging technologies to their maximum potential to help spread the union message. She spoke about the need to increase online activism as a critical component of future success. She also celebrated the continued growth of our movement's diversity, pointing out that 43% of the delegates to the 2009 convention represented people of color and women. "The progress we are seeing started and will continue with you." She spoke about the need to bring young workers to the movement. She spoke about efforts in states like New Jersey to develop programs that foster the involvement of union members in seeking political office. "My challenge to you today Florida...let's set a goal here in Florida so that you can start electing your own to office. I want to see a parade of Floridians who have been elected to office." She also spoke about some of the grim statistics that illustrate the reality of Florida's troubled economy, such as 10.7% unemployment and one of the highest foreclosure rates in the country. She gave an update on health care reform in Washington D.C., proclaiming that we will decide whether or not legislation passes that helps workers or the insurance industry by our determination and our hard work. She reiterated Labor's commitment to the public option, universal coverage and a rejection of new taxes for hard working Floridians benefits. She said, "I am so glad to be your partner in this work...together I know we can...together I know we will. Thank you, Florida!"

Cindy Hall – President, Florida AFL-CIO

President Cindy Hall delivered her last officer's report as President of the Florida AFL-CIO after eight years of service to Florida's unions. She spoke about the difficult work that made up the New Alliance restructuring. She praised everyone's dedication to making it happen and the major successes we have seen since that time. As the only state with a unified per-capita system, she reported on many of the strides made by our Central Labor Councils. Before New Alliance, the CLC's averaged 20% affiliation and did not have the resources necessary for field work and political organizing. Since 2006, the CLCs have grown by over 90,000 new members and our political programs helped elected

nine new Democratic members to the Florida House. She discussed the major victory of securing Florida's 27 electoral votes for President Barack Obama. She said, "I will always remember hearing an analyst on CNN on election night saying that if Obama wins Florida he has the labor movement in the state to thank for it. I knew then that it would happen and I now that it was thanks to all of you." She spoke of the many challenges facing us during the 2009 Legislative Session with the union busting CSX rail deal, the constitutional amendment aimed at blocking the Employee Free Choice Act and the most anti-democratic elections bill in Florida history. "Together, thanks to our new unified program and a more coordinated labor movement, we beat back these attacks and others like never before." She shared thoughts on the coming attempts to use the controversy over ACORN to pass elections changes that will keep working people, communities of color and others from being able to vote or otherwise participate in the political process. She called on the delegates to ensure that the same political misdirection that was used against President Clinton is not used against President Obama in an effort to keep him from accomplishing our goals for working families. "We have big challenges ahead and your new officers are going to need each you...your support and your help. They say politics is not a spectator sport...Labor is not a spectator sport either. Do everything you can to participate and help to keep this movement strong and growing." She committed to doing everything she can to ensure a smooth transition for the new leadership. She encouraged everyone to push forward with the strategic plan (found in the convention books). She also invited all of her labor allies to contact her whenever in Tallahassee.

Dwayne Sealy – Secretary-Treasurer, Florida AFL-CIO

Brother Dwayne Sealy delivered his last report as the Secretary-Treasurer of the Florida AFL-CIO. "The real deal...it has been an honor and a privilege to serve all of you and your members," he said. "Years ago, the Florida AFL-CIO was a labor social club in Tallahassee...I assure you it is not that anymore." He recalled how this year, after a wave of business interests and legislators came after us, labor and our allies were the ones with the tables outside of Clyde's in downtown Tallahassee and how we were inundated with Republican and Democratic supporters, congratulating us on "kicking ass" and beating back all of the major assaults on our movement. He encouraged all of the delegates to continue to strive for the highest levels of involvement in this movement, reminding everyone that there is still much to do. "You will fight this fight every day...you will teach it to your kids...you will teach it to your grandkids. Never stop fighting, never give up" he said. "Brothers and sisters it has been a hellava ride...thank you very much...work hard...don't stop...thank you."

President Hall called the meeting to recess at 11:18.