

AFL-CIO drops out of big role at Democratic convention

Unions to rally in Philly Aug. 11 to promote second 'Bill of Rights'

WASHINGTON, D.C. (PAI) — The AFL-CIO has dropped out of a big role at this year's Democratic National Convention, opting instead to host its own large rally and campaign for a "second Bill of Rights," on Aug. 11 in Philadelphia — the birthplace of the Constitution and the Bill of Rights.

The AFL-CIO is the second large labor group to pull back — or out — of the Democratic National Convention, slated Sept. 4-6 in Charlotte, N.C.

Earlier this year most unions affili-

ated with the Building and Construction Trades Department decided they wouldn't attend.

The primary reason for the pull-back is that North Carolina is a right-to-work state and the least unionized state in the nation. Charlotte has no unionized hotels. Unions were not only unhappy with the choice, but with how it was made. According to Ed Hill, president of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW), union members, who make up about a quarter of Democratic convention delegates, were not consulted at any step of the way as to the location of the convention.

AFL-CIO President Richard Trumka, in a July 9 memo to all international union presidents, said he will go to Charlotte, but only to lead a Sept.

4 meeting of union members and retirees who are convention delegates. The national labor federation, Trumka said, will not rent skyboxes, donate money, or send a large staff.

By contrast, Trumka had a speaking slot at the 2008 Democratic convention in Denver, televised on cable TV just before the headliners. Unions gave or spent millions of dollars on sponsorships.

This year, Trumka wrote, "Our resources will go instead to our core political work and to investing in a long-term labor movement structure to build power" for all workers. "The priority in this cycle is to register and protect voters — together with our allies — and to educate and mobilize working-class voters to stand up for themselves and their families and elect leaders who'll stand with us."

That's why labor will launch its own campaign — Workers Stand For America — with a mass rally in Philadelphia on Aug. 11, Trumka added. The event is timed to precede both the Republican and Democratic national conventions. [The Republican National Convention is Aug. 27-30 in Tampa, Fla.]

"Our goal is to refocus the national discussion on the imbalance in our country's national priorities," Trumka said. "To that end, we will be launching America's second Bill of Rights in conjunction with the rally, and we will be asking candidates who seek our

support to pledge their support for the document."

The AFL-CIO will push to have both the Democratic and Republican parties include the second Bill of Rights in their party platforms, and will seek signatures from President Barack Obama, a Democrat, presumed Republican challenger Mitt Romney, and other candidates.

The second Bill of Rights the unions are pushing has five points. They are:

- **The Right to Full Employment and a Living Wage:** All Americans willing and able to work have the right to safe, gainful employment at a fair and livable wage. We call on the public and private sectors to invest in America's infrastructure and promote industrial development, maintaining job creation as a top policy priority.

- **The Right to Full Participation in the Electoral Process:** Recent initiatives to disenfranchise citizens seek to reduce the rolls of eligible voters and empower money instead of people. We believe these actions constitute an assault on our nation's democracy and history of heroic struggle against voting restrictions based upon property ownership, religion, race and gender and call for reinforcing our fundamental right to vote.

- **The Right to a Voice at Work:** All workers have the right of freedom

of association in the workplace, including the right to collectively bargain with their employer to improve wages, benefits and working conditions.

- **The Right to a Quality Education:** Education is a fundamental bedrock of our democracy ... quality, affordable education should be universally available from pre-kindergarten to college level, including an expanded use of apprenticeships and specialty skills training to prepare Americans for the workplace.

- **The Right to a Secure, Healthy Future:** Americans have the right to a baseline level of health care, unemployment insurance and retirement security, all of which have been badly eroded by the disruption of the social compact that served the nation well for decades. We call on government and private industry together to confront the issues of declining access to health care especially for children, weakening of unemployment coverage, and inadequate pension plans that undermine the ability of working men and women to retire in dignity, even as Social Security and Medicare are under strain and threatened with cutbacks.

(Editor's Note: For more information about the Workers Stand For America rally in Philadelphia, go on line to www.workersstandforamerica.com.)

Labor Candidate School launched

Are you a member of a union thinking about running for public office?

If so, you should consider applying to attend the Oregon Labor Candidate School (OLCS). The school will offer union members training on how to successfully run for public office.

The Oregon Labor Candidate School was created by a coalition of unions — including AFSCME Council 75; Oregon Education Association; Oregon School Employees Association; American Federation of Teachers; Oregon Nurses Association; Oregon State Fire Fighters Council; Service Employees International Union and the Oregon AFL-CIO. Its goal is to increase the representation of union members in elected office who will support policies that focus on uplifting the middle class.

"OLCS provides the support and resources for our members to successfully run for office to sustain the values of middle-class working families in Oregon," said Coordinator Sara Ryan. "Electing labor champions not only benefits union members, it benefits all Oregonians."

The Oregon Labor Candidate School will hold classes one weekend a

month at various union halls in Portland starting in September and continuing through December. Additional non-classroom activities are planned for January and February 2013.

The deadline to apply to the school is Friday, July 27. Applications will be reviewed and finalists will be interviewed, with 10 to 12 participants selected for the program.

For more information or to apply, go on line to: www.oregonlaborcandidate.school.org.



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