

...National AFL-CIO convention in St. Louis

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who chained the doors shut when he showed up accompanied by a large crowd of supporters carrying Black Lives Matter signs. Hearing what happened, convention-goers led by former AFL-CIO Executive Vice-President Arlene Holt-Baker marched out to join Franks and his group and escort them back inside.

St. Louis, Missouri, is where the Black Lives Matter movement began in nearby Ferguson, and the city is also on the front lines of labor's fight for survival. Missouri's Republican-led Legislature passed a so-called "right to work" law earlier this year, making it illegal for any union contract to require represented workers to pay dues or fees to the union. But unions collected over 300,000 signatures to refer the right-to-work law to Missouri voters, which means the law is suspended until it goes on the ballot in November 2018.

Most of the convention was taken up with discussion and passage of resolutions. Forty-two resolutions were adopted, including:



"This wasn't a convention about celebrities," says Oregon AFL-CIO President Tom Chamberlain, above, who attended as a delegate. "This was a convention about workers, about struggles, and about what our priorities are." On Day 3 of the convention, Chamberlain took part in a panel to showcase the Oregon AFL-CIO's efforts to help affiliates organize internally in order to get ready for an anti-union Supreme Court decision in a case called *Janus v AFSCME*.

- **Health Care For All** Support legislation to guarantee health care as a human right through an improved Medicare for All.
- **Climate Change** Support comprehensive energy and climate legislation to create good jobs and address the threat of climate change; urge the United States to remain in the Paris Agreement; and support robust funding of research to bring new energy technologies to market, including renewables, carbon capture and advanced nuclear technologies.
- **Prioritize Rehabilitation** Support criminal justice reform, including efforts to reduce mandatory minimum sentencing laws, support "ban the box" laws and restore rights of the formerly incarcerated.
- **War Is Not the Answer** Promote a foreign policy based on international solidarity, bring the war dollars home and prioritize rebuilding this country's crumbling infrastructure
- **Immigration and Citizenship** Encourage union-led programs to help immigrant members become citizens
- **Postal Financial Services** Support

efforts to compel the Postal Service to provide basic financial services such as paycheck cashing and electronic funds transfer, as a step toward establishing nonprofit, public postal banking.

All the resolutions that made it to the convention floor passed on a voice vote. The only one to spark controversy was the resolution on climate change. It was a compromise forged from resolutions brought forward by Postal Workers, National Nurses United and CWA, and modified in committee for the sake of consensus. But Mark McManus, general president of United Association of Plumbers and Pipefitters, faulted the process and complained that the sponsoring unions didn't have jobs at stake.

"Unicorns and Easter bunnies are more real than the U.S. being powered by renewables alone," McManus said.

But others, including delegates from other building trades unions, rose to speak for the resolution, and it passed without opposing votes.

ONLINE EXTRA

You can see the full text of all resolutions, and watch floor proceedings from any part of the four-day convention at www.aflcio2017.org

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Union presidents join Trump task force on apprenticeship

Three labor union officials have agreed to serve on President Trump's Task Force on Apprenticeship Expansion, the U.S. Department of Labor announced Oct. 16. Joseph Sellers, president of the International Association of Sheet Metal, Air, Rail and Transportation Workers (SMART); Douglas J. McCarron, president of United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners of America; and Sean McGarvey, president of North America's Building Trades Unions (NABTU) will serve alongside 17 other appointees, including the heads of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, National Restaurant Association, and the president of the Associated Builders and Contractors, an anti-union organization of open shop contractors.

The mission of the task force is to identify strategies and proposals to promote apprenticeships, especially in sectors where apprenticeship programs are insufficient.