

APWU NEWS

Bulletin

AMERICAN POSTAL WORKERS UNION, AFL-CIO

WILLIAM BURRUS, President MYKE REID, Editor

APWU Endorses Barack Obama *Unanimous Convention Vote Follows Live Video Address*

More than 3,200 APWU delegates unanimously endorsed Sen. Barack Obama after the presidential candidate delivered an inspiring message to the union's convention over a live satellite video feed.

"It's time to bring about the real change that working families need," Obama said, adding that it's time to elect an administration "that doesn't choke on the word 'union.'"

Obama's live address was introduced by APWU President William Burrus, whose comment that the convention was about to hear from "the candidate for change" received raucous applause punctuated by several refrains of "Yes We Can!"

Obama thanked the APWU membership for its "commitment to help us win in the fall."

"You and I share a vision for this country," said the senator from Illinois. "We believe that Americans should have a fair shot at life. That after a lifetime of hard work, you should be able to retire with dignity, and security."

"We all have mutual obligations to one another. We rise and fall in this country together," he said.

"But we know that for the last eight years we've had a whole different concept in the White House. They

called it the ownership society, but what they really meant was, 'you're on your own.'

"If you're a worker and you've been laid off from your job, tough luck: You're on your own.

"If you're a single mom trying to find healthcare for your kids, tough luck: You're on your own.

"If you're a senior whose pension got dumped, tough luck: You're on your own."

Obama told APWU members that they are currently living with "the most anti-labor administration in our memory. It's not just that this administration hasn't been fighting for you; they've actually tried to stop you from fighting for yourself."

"It's time for something new," Obama said. "It's time to turn the page. It's time to bring about the real change that America's working families need. That change is building an economy that rewards not just wealth, but work – and the workers who create it."

"Change is a president who stands up for working families by strengthening the Family and Medical Leave Act. Who doesn't denigrate public service by privatizing good public jobs every



Barack Obama thanked the union for its support.

chance he gets. A president who protects your wages and the quality public service that American all across this country depend on. Change is a president who's walked on picket lines."

"Who lets unions do what they do best, and organize our workers," he said, then adding, "and who will finally make the Employee Free Choice Act the law of the land."

The Obama comment on the legislation drew perhaps the loudest and most sustained applause. When he completed his speech moments later and the chants of "Yes We Can!" had died down, President Burrus asked Tara Woods, chairperson of the Formal Resolutions Committee, to introduce Resolution 147, "Endorse Barack Obama for President."

After she proposed that the APWU assembly in Las Vegas endorse Barack Obama, the delegates voted in voices loud and unified.

"And there are none opposed," Burrus said.

"It is unanimous. So ordered."



Obama received several standing 'O's.

Convention Adopts Changes To the Union Constitution

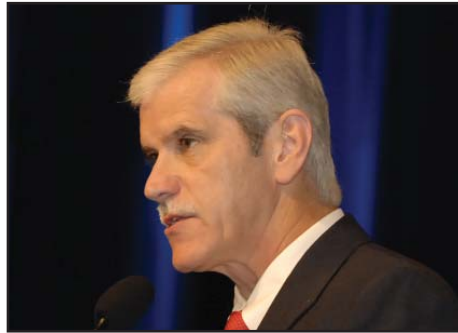
Delegates to the union's National Convention voted to strengthen representation Aug. 20, approving a constitutional change that would eliminate non-functioning locals and require them to merge with other locals or become members-at-large. The controversial resolution had been debated extensively in pre-convention meetings in the days leading up to the vote, and it was rewritten and amended several times before it was adopted.

"Our goal was to do away with locals that are not effectively representing their members," said Constitution Committee Chairman Kevin Gallagher, of the Scranton (PA) Local. "Initially we focused on the smallest locals – those with fewer than 10 members – but as convention delegates pointed out, some of those small locals are very effective and some larger locals are not.

"We rewrote the resolution to focus on how well locals function – not on their size.

"The core duty of our union is representation," he noted. "Locals must meet that responsibility or face consequences.

"Locals that have been floundering without leadership will be encouraged to join with better functioning locals. If that



Constitution Committee Chairman Kevin Gallagher presented the report.

is not feasible, their folks will be encouraged to become members-at-large of their state organizations. The locals that meet their responsibilities – regardless of their size – will be able to continue as they are presently chartered."

Military Leave

Delegates voted overwhelmingly to protect the union status of members on military leave if their pay is insufficient to cover dues.

"APWU members who have chosen to serve their country should not be required to suffer or forfeit their right to union membership," the resolution declared.

"There is no reason someone serving our country should not be accommodated if their dues lapses," said Jerry

Sirois, president of the Minneapolis Area Local. The delegates overwhelmingly agreed. In other action, delegates voted to require union members who are on the rolls of OWCP (Office of Workers Compensation) to pay their fair share of dues.

Convention delegates also approved a measure to change the titles of the Legislative Director and Assistant Director to Legislative and Political Director and Assistant Director, so that the titles would more accurately reflect the duties of the positions.

Contrary to the recommendation of the Constitution Committee, delegates voted to increase the dues of members

of the union's Retirees Department from \$2 per month to \$3 per month.

Delegates also adopted several amendments affecting the Support Services Division, changing the title of the National Business Agent to Support Services Division Director; adding the director to the union's National Executive Board, and approving a motion to include postal nurses, who recently joined the APWU, in the division.



Jerry Sirois

Exhibit Hall Activities: Good for You, Good for The Union



Legislative Department Presents Briefing On Grassroots Preparation for Fall Elections

Presiding over a post-convention-day meeting under what will be their new titles, APWU Legislative and Political Department Director Myke Reid and Assistant Director Steve Albanese surveyed the political landscape and briefed delegates on the union's action plan for helping to put Barack Obama in the White House and elect more legislators who will stand up for working families.

Particular attention was given to the need to meet the union's COPA fundraising goals, and to get more members involved in the AFL-CIO Labor 2008 program.

The union legislative department's five grassroots coordinators, hired early this year, introduced themselves to the delegates and gave summaries of their political activities.

Aaron Carmella, the grassroots coordinator for the Southern Region, said that he was excited to be taking part in Labor 2008. Carmella is based in Tampa, and he noted that it was a particularly interesting time in that part of the country.



Several hundred delegates attended the political action briefing after the convention session on Wednesday.

"For once, we're being proactive in the South," he said. "It's not all damage control."

In the Central Region, Donna Dean is based in Dayton, but says she did a lot of



Myke Reid

traveling early in her tenure, attending APWU state conventions as far away as North Dakota.

"I was in that state while we were working on fighting the proposed changes to the Family and Medical Leave Act," she recounted. "While there, I was part of the campaign to get members to send comments to the Department of Labor Web site. I was hoping to get 70 percent of the convention delegates to take part, but APWU activists urged me to get everyone involved.

"We came close," she said, "with 98 percent of the attendees writing to Labor in opposition to the changes to FMLA."

Long-time APWU member Janice Kelble is the grassroots coordinator for the Northeast Region, and is based in New Hampshire.

"I've always been a strong proponent of affiliation with the AFL-CIO labor bodies," she said. "I like how the APWU has been encouraging locals to participate in the central labor councils and have seen the effect on elections in my home state."

"Labor Federation affiliation is just another example of how when we all

work together, I think we can move mountains."

Michael Points, the newest member of the coordinator program, works the Western Region from a base in Pasadena, in Southern California.

"Among the campaigns I'm working on are for the Udall brothers." Tom Udall is running for the U.S. Senate in New Mexico and Mark Udall is trying to win a Senate seat in Colorado.

"It's a chance to replace two anti-labor Republicans with two pro-labor Democrats," Points said.

Grassroots coordinators are tasked with gathering support for pro-labor legislation, and Points noted that the Udalls,



Steve Albanese

both currently members of the U.S. House of Representatives, were two of the earliest to sign on as co-sponsors of H.R. 4236, the

Mail Network Protection Act.

As the union's Eastern Region grassroots coordinator, Ian Stublarec works in an office at APWU headquarters in Washington, DC.

Stublarec expressed enthusiasm for the Legislative and Political Department's E-Team. "This is a great way to get our union mobilized," he said of the e-mail alerts that APWU E-Team members receive on issues of importance to them and to other workers.

Reid stressed the importance of getting everyone involved, outlining for convention delegates the APWU's plan to get volunteers to take part in *Labor 2008*. "We need to get as many people as possible out into the neighborhoods, talking about Barack Obama and other pro-worker candidates," he said.

Private-Sector Success Story in Cincinnati

Two of the APWU's newest activists received a strong ovation from the union convention on Monday and were collectively congratulated for their work in helping to organize and negotiate a collective bargaining agreement with the privately operated Cincinnati Mail Transportation Equipment Service Center (MTEC).

"This is a very good agreement for a first contract," said Mark Dimondstein, the APWU's lead field organizer.

Dimondstein introduced two MTEC stewards, David Dixon and Jani Coffey, who he said were active in both the organizing campaign and the contract negotiations.

"The story was all too typical," Dimondstein said. "A story of how difficult it is – but how achievable it is – to orga-



David Dixon, left, and Jani Coffey listen as Mark Dimondstein talks about their struggle for a first contract.

nize, unionize, and sign contracts.

"It was a seven- to eight-year struggle," he said. "They faced firings, threats, intimidation, lost elections, overturned elections, new elections ... all with a company that would not negotiate until forced to in court."

The agreement, ratified in May, went into effect July 1 and covers approximately 120 workers. It is the fourth of 22 privately-operated MTEC's to have

its workers represented by the APWU.

"Every one of those places has a collective bargaining agreement that the workers can be proud of and are proud of," Dimondstein told convention delegates. "And you'll be very proud of this: Every one of them is a closed union shop, where everyone pays union dues."

"This struggle encompassed a period of three different local presidents in Cincinnati," Dimondstein added, "but each made this organizing work a priority, and the national APWU never let up in its support."

"The achievement of a contract is a tribute to these workers and their resiliency and determination," he told convention delegates, "and to everyone here today."

POWER Holding Strong



Post-Convention Workshop Registration

The APWU Research and Education Department is offering 32 workshops on Saturday, and it is not too late to register for many of them.

You can still sign up for the Post-Convention workshops today and tomorrow, from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.



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Credentials Committee

As presented by Chairperson Geneva Greenlee of the Indiana APWU, the preliminary report of the APWU Credentials Committee for Wednesday, Aug. 20, is as follows:

The 19th Biennial Convention's 3,218 delegates represent 415 locals, 50 states, Guam, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands. Also in attendance are 85 national officers and five Retirees Department delegates.