Delegates Rally at Trump Hotel

More than 2,000 AFSCME delegates took it to the streets Wednesday, standing in solidarity with Culinary Workers demanding a fair contract at the Trump International Hotel.

Local 226 and Bartenders Local 165 members who work at the Trump International Hotel won their union elections last December, and the National Labor Relations Board certified their victory in March. Yet Trump International has refused to begin contract negotiations and has conducted an aggressive anti-union campaign, including firings and intimidation of union supporters.

Though several members experienced discomfort from the excessive heat, AFSCME delegates demonstrated that we won’t stop fighting for all workers’ rights — whether ours or our sisters and brothers from other unions.

“I’m so happy to see you guys,” said Geocnda Arguello Kline, who started out as a hotel worker and is the secretary-treasurer of Local 226.

Kline said of Trump “He doesn’t respect working people...who make him money every single day. These workers here, they had an election. They won. We’re going to fight and we’re never going to give up. He’s been refusing and denying the rights of the working people... Mr. Trump, you’re fighting against the immigrants... you’re fighting against this country. And right now, the country will fight against you too.”

IVP Kathryn Lybarger pledged AFSCME’s support. “It’s the heat we’re turning up on Donald Trump. AFSCME is proud to stand in solidarity with you,” she said. “As long as Trump continues to undermine basic fairness for working people, the 1.6 million members of AFSCME stand with the Culinary Union to urge Trump to treat his employees with respect and negotiate a fair contract.”

Rev. Dr. Barber: “I Came to AFSCME to Call Code!”

The Rev. Dr. William Barber II challenged public workers and their labor unions to be part of the moral revival of our nation.

“I’m here with you today because we need a moral revolution of values to address the moral crisis at the heart of our democracy right now,” he said.

That crisis is nothing new, Dr. Barber said, recalling the Civil Rights struggle led by Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Dr. King knew that racial and economic injustice are intertwined, and he stood with AFSCME striking sanitation workers just a few days before he was killed.

“Bue the achievements of the Civil Rights movement produced a backlash. Some people...developed code language to talk about race without talking about race,” Dr. Barber added.

For nearly 50 years, the strategy was to blame minorities for our country’s problems, Dr. Barber said. And Donald Trump’s fearmongering continues that. So do steps taken by state legislatures, with the help of the U.S. Supreme Court, to suppress the minority vote.

“They’re trying to suppress the vote “because they know the power of us coming together.” Referring to recent outbreaks of gun violence, Barber said, “We have to stand against violence and death, period.”

If our moral crisis is like a heart problem, he concluded, we need to “call code,” that is, revive the moral heart of our nation. And AFSCME can play a role in that.

“I came by AFSCME to call code!” Barber said. “It’s time for the labor movement and the Civil Rights movement ... to realize we are the moral defibrillator of our time.”

Resolutions

Delegates on Wednesday passed five resolutions:

Strengthening Long-Term Services and Supports (14); Preventing Workplace Violence (16); Repeal the ACA’s Excise Tax on High Cost Health Plans (23); Increase the Minimum Wage (3); and AFSCME and SEIU: Unstoppable Unions that Never Quit (53)

AFSCME Dumps Trump

AFSCME stood in solidarity with their sisters and brothers of the Culinary Workers Union.

HIGHLIGHTS
Our Voices

Determination. Pride. Commitment. That’s what you hear when you listen to our “Our Voices,” a program featuring AFSCME members fighting for fairness and justice in their communities.

Deb Hussey, a 911 call operator and member of Local 189 in Oregon, talked about the problem of understaffed 911 centers. “When you’re fielding 911 calls, there’s no worse feeling than having to put people on hold,” she said. “But understaffing at our Multnomah County 911 center has forced us to, putting lives at risk.”

Quentin Hutchins, a school bus operator and a member of Local 1644 in Atlanta, speaks out because fighting for fairness is in his heart and soul. He discussed Georgia’s voter ID law, one of the strictest in the country. “Thousands of voters were given the wrong information about where to vote,” Hutchins said, adding that those who arrived at the correct voting site were not allowed to vote, even if they were in line before the polls closed. “We cannot sit silent while the forces against us try to chip away at the progress that was made,” Hutchins said.

Local 3437 sister Sharonda Johnson, of Flint, Michigan, knows firsthand about the importance of making her voice heard. She spoke about her city’s unsafe water, and the danger it poses to children. “You know what happens when children are exposed to lead, what it does to their brains?” she asked. “They can’t control their emotions. Their IQs can drop. It affects their school work, their families.”

“Why did this happen?” asked Johnson, referring to the root causes of water contamination in Flint. “Because the same people who want to tear down our union because they don’t like public service workers put an unelected, unaccountable manager in charge of the city where I live with my family.”

“We have to fight,” she said, “and we have to win.” Hussey said.

Royal Flush Winner

Aida Diaz Ramos of Local 3889 (PR Council 95) is our Royal Flush Winner. She collected an ace, king, queen, jack and ten over the course of the week and won a $100 gift certificate to the PEOPLE Booth.

Change Lives with the Gift of Food

Join us Friday at 8 a.m., in rooms N101 – N102, to package meals for the children of Southern Nevada. Three Square’s BackPack for Kids program provides a lifetime for hungry children by supplying a bag of shelf-stable ready-to-eat meals and snack options for children who might otherwise go without during weekends and long breaks from school.

AFSCME’s Got Talent Finalists:

Immediately after Convention recesses, come on over to the AGT stage for the contestants’ final performances. Vote for your favorite performer! The final contestants are Sharice McCain, Local 3800 (MN Council 5); Nilsa Gómez Jiménez, Local 3889 (PR Council 95); Cedric Williams, Local 4041 (NV); Bert Woods, Local 2218 (NJ Council 71); Bert Reynolds, Local 970 (WA Council 28); and Rhonda Buchanan, Local 843 (WA Council 28). The winner will perform during tomorrow’s Convention!

Trivia Notice

It’s time to test your political IQ! We’ll have some fun in the Convention hall today playing AFSCME Political Trivia. If you want to join in, you’ll need your cell phone so you can text your answers. Just text the word “QUIZ” to 237263, and you’ll be ready to go when the game starts!