



afterwords

CONVENTION 2016

WEDNESDAY JULY 20, 2016

TODAY @ CONVENTION

- ◆ 100th Anniversary Tribute
- ◆ Professionalism Task Force
- ◆ UFT President Michael Mulgrew
- ◆ Baltimore Mayor Stephanie Rawlings-Blake
- ◆ Election of AFT Officers
- ◆ Women's Economic Agenda Forum

Frank talk about race and justice

SPEAKERS CHALLENGE CONVENTION TO ADDRESS ISSUES HEAD-ON



RICHARD FRANKLIN, who is black, has been pulled over by police officers more times than he can count, even when his wife and children are with him, he told the convention audience Tuesday. “Do you have any guns or drugs in the car?” the officers will ask. Of course Franklin, president of the Birmingham (Ala.) AFT, does not.

So when these sorts of traffic stops turn into deadly shootings, as they did for Philando Castile, the impact for Franklin is personal.

“We need to stop making excuses in this country when these things happen,” he said, listing the tragedies: Orlando, Baton Rouge, St. Paul, Dallas. “It doesn’t matter whether they’re police officers or whether they’re African-American males, we cannot stand for these senseless murders.”

“It is fear that divides us,” said Franklin, urging members to fight that fear. “We must have hope and faith, and we must not just sit

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PHOTO BY RUSS CURTIS



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back and not fight.”

We also need activists like Rashad Robinson, who founded Color of Change, an online group on the frontlines protesting the violent deaths in the black community as well as voter suppression and restrictions on internet access.

Robinson contrasted zero-tolerance school discipline policies, applied to “kids who make mistakes and make some bad decisions as they’re trying to figure themselves out or cope with the un-copeable conditions in their lives,” with the endless tolerance for “bankers who destroy our economy, employers who break commitments to employees, and politicians who advance long-disproven ideas.” And he blamed mounting violence and discord on a failure to build alliances, address racism and curb corporate power. Robinson said innovation is key to imagining how to change the paradigm and see our way to a more just world.

“I believe that black folks and people of color are the solution,” he said. “I challenge us all to imagine race as a way to win, not some-



Richard Franklin

PHOTO BY MICHAEL CAMPBELL

thing to avoid. And to imagine the power of our unity—civil rights organizations and unions—as both possible and necessary to achieve.”

Delegates endorse Hillary for president

AFT DELEGATES on Tuesday voted overwhelmingly to endorse Hillary Clinton for president.

“Like so many of our members, Hillary Clinton has spent her entire career fighting for children and families,” said AFT President Randi Weingarten. “Last night, Hillary reiterated her commitment to stand with us. Today, our members made it clear that we stand with her, too.”

In June 2015, the AFT became the first national union to endorse Hillary Clinton during the Democratic primary.

“We endorsed Hillary today for the same reasons we endorsed in the Democratic primary,” Weingarten said. “She is a tested leader

who shares our values. Over and over again, our members have seen Hillary demonstrate the compassion, courage and commitment it takes to achieve real-world change.”

A number of delegates spoke enthusiastically in favor of the resolution. “She is probably best candidate we’ve ever had for public education and for unionized workers in America,” said United Federation of Teachers President Michael Mulgrew. “With the fights we face ahead, I want Hillary Clinton leading our army.”

“We need champion in the White House, and Hillary is that champion,” said Melissa Cropper, president of the Ohio Federation of Teachers.



PHOTO BY ROB LEVINE

A poignant tribute to gun violence victims

DELEGATES TOOK TIME Tuesday to participate in a poignant, heartfelt vigil for the victims of gun violence across America and to pledge action that can help stem this national scourge.

One by one, delegates took to the microphones in the morning session to name scores of American cities and towns where bullets had claimed family members, colleagues and neighbors. Leading the tribute was Kimberly Colbert, a St. Paul English teacher at the high school Philando Castile attended. Castile was gunned down July 6, one of the latest victims of unchecked police shootings of young black men.

“I am here today to say the name of Philando Castile,” she declared, describing him as a co-worker in the school system and a union brother, and pointing out that his story has become tragically common today in America. “As we sit in the hall today, another family mourns the loss of a loved one. Since the start of this year, 7,218 families have held funerals due to gun violence.

“We can and must do two things: take a stand against the hateful rhetoric that is seeping into American life, and address the easy availability of weapons that transform haters into murderers,” said Colbert.

AFT Secretary-Treasurer Lorretta Johnson underscored Colbert’s message and the urgency of the moment. “We as a nation will never see our full potential as long as there is hatred in our politics, racial divide in our cities and violence on our streets,” Johnson said. “We must meet our brothers and sisters not with clenched fists, but with open arms.”

Following the morning session, Sybrina Fulton, who lost her 17-year-old son, Trayvon Martin, to gun violence in 2012, was honored with the AFT’s 2016 Bayard Rustin Human

Rights Award at the Human Rights Luncheon.

Fulton has channeled her loss into advocacy and dedicated herself to ending gun violence and fighting hatred and fear. In giving Fulton the award, AFT President Randi Weingarten praised her as someone who epitomizes Bayard Rustin’s values. “Sybrina stands in Bayard’s shoes and has made them larger.”

Fulton encouraged the audience to get

involved in their communities. “There are a lot of problems happening in our country, and you can’t just turn your head. We all need to play a part to help our communities and our country,” she said.

“If you can make a change and you don’t, you’re part of the problem,” she warned. “I encourage you all to continue to fight for your children and your community.”



PHOTO BY MICHAEL CAMPBELL



Sybrina Fulton

PHOTO BY RUSS CURTIS



Kimberly Colbert

PHOTO BY MICHAEL CAMPBELL

More work to do in the fight for LGBTQ rights

PAT CRISPINO IS A LEADER in the fight to break down barriers against racism, xenophobia and homophobia. As an openly gay woman on the national board of the AFL-CIO’s Pride at Work Program, Crispino works to bridge the gap between working families and the LGBTQ community. She addressed convention delegates on Tuesday.

Crispino acknowledges that being gay in the labor movement hasn’t been easy. “Many LGBTQ labor members still face discrimination in the union hall, at the worksite and at work functions.”



Pat Crispino

PHOTO BY RUSS CURTIS

But Crispino’s resolve comes from the knowledge that the AFT “has held at its core these three things—fairness, democracy and economic opportunity—no matter your creed, color, citizenship, sexual orientation or sexual identity.”

The AFT has been in the trenches for generations, fighting discrimination, said Crispino. “We’ve made progress but, sadly, there’s still a lot of hate out there.” Crispino called on the AFT and its members to recommit to the fight for human rights—“not because it is fun or easy, but because it is the just thing to do.”



PHOTOS BY RUSS CURTIS

AFT joins national movement with AROS

KERON BLAIR IS FIRED UP about educational justice and convinced that building coalitions is the best way to achieve it. That's what the Alliance to Reclaim Our Schools, where he is director, is designed to do.

AROS, which includes 10 national organizations representing some 7 million people, is a unified, authentic voice for education and the driving force behind the school walk-in demonstrations, when students, parents and community members join together on designated days to "walk in" to their public schools to demonstrate their commitment to high-quality education and public services.

"We are fighting for the schools that all our children deserve, and we are focused on achieving racial justice and racial equity for black and brown students who have not gotten the resources they need," Blair said at Tuesday afternoon's general session. Specifically, AROS works against overtesting, disinvestment, privatization and the school-to-prison pipeline.

"AROS gives us the opportunity to use local activism to build a national agenda," said Alex Caputo-Pearl, president of the United Teachers Los Angeles, where walk-ins drew thousands of participants last year.

UTLA has accomplished much by working closely with parents and the community, said Caputo-Pearl: It helped elect school superintendent Steve Zimmer, whose pro-public education speech wowed the convention Monday. It hijacked Eli Broad's museum opening to demonstrate against the billionaire's school privatization efforts. And it used contract negotiations to gain public-good measures like small class sizes and better support for high-need schools.

Caputo-Pearl strongly supported the resolution titled "Building a National Movement for the Public Schools All Our Students Deserve with AROS and Through ESSA Reauthorization," which passed unanimously shortly after his presentation.

Cecily Myart-Cruz, also from UTLA, spoke in favor of the resolution, saying it "reshaped the narrative" for struggling Los Angeles schools. She called on every local represented in the convention hall to participate in the next walk-in, Oct. 6. "We can connect parents, students and communities, and build a national campaign for the schools all of our students deserve," she said.

Taking action on the promise of the Every Student Succeeds Act

DELEGATES OVERWHELMINGLY approved a major AFT resolution that is designed to help turn the promise of the Every Student Succeeds Act into a reality for schools—one that resets the test-and-punish climate that burdened students, educators and schools under the No Child Left Behind Act.

The resolution, "Taking Action on the Promise of the Every Student Succeeds Act," is a rallying cry for immediate engagement of rank-and-file members and affiliates in the fight to implement ESSA wisely. That means support for safe, welcoming neighborhood schools, including strong prekindergarten connections, and wraparound services that meet students' social, emotional and health needs. It also means continuing the fight to elevate the voice of teachers and paraprofessionals in schools, and the meaningful involvement of frontline educators in decisions surrounding the rollout of ESSA.

The policy statement also points to ESSA as a chance to win meaningful professional development, along with trust-based evaluation systems that are designed both to engage

teachers in discussions of their practice and to feature supportive and timely feedback.

Strong parent and community partnerships also factor into the resolution's call to action, along with an accountability framework that includes support, engagement and opportunities to learn as indicators of success. Wise ESSA implementation also means continuing the "fight for fewer and better assessments of student learning" and new opportunities for performance-based assessments, authentic student tasks, and competency-based assessments, including teacher-developed formative assessments. And the resolution stresses that ESSA, done well, means the "development and implementation of intervention strategies, in partnership with educators, that provide flexibility to address the particular needs of schools and their students." These measures should be designed to improve teaching and learning through such vehicles as community schools.

This resolution is a valuable extension of AFT policy dealing with school accountability,

noted New York State United Teachers President Karen Magee, who urged delegates to support it. In education, "support-and-improve is where we need to go," and the strategies detailed in the policy statement can help get us there.

ESSA "gets us out of the blame-and-shame game," said Florida Education Association Vice President Fedrick Ingram, who voiced support from the convention floor. Implemented wisely, the law "gets us one step closer to where we need to go" in public education.

ESSA resources

ESSA implementation was center stage at divisional meetings, and a PowerPoint on the topic from Linda Darling-Hammond of the Learning Policy Institute was a big hit with delegates. It is featured on the AFT's new online community to help state and local leaders work effectively on ESSA implementation. For details, email Emily Kopilow in the AFT educational issues department, ekopilow@aft.org.

Continuing a strong partnership with the United Steelworkers

THE AFT and the United Steelworkers have a long history of working together on issues that affect our members and the broader labor movement. On Tuesday, USW President Leo Gerard spoke to convention delegates about new ways to expand that partnership to address some pressing issues that affect schools and communities.

Noting that many school buildings in the country are 50 or more years old, and a growing number of school systems are dealing with lead in the water and other health threats, Gerard proposed that our unions work together to retrofit public schools so they are modern, with clean air, clean water, and comfortable, humane environments for educators and students.

The Steelworkers, which, like the AFT, represents healthcare workers, was part of a recent effort by a coalition, including the AFT

and other unions, to push the Occupational Safety and Health Administration to issue standards on workplace violence in health-care and social assistance settings.

Gerard, whose union also has endorsed Hillary Clinton for president, urged AFT delegates “to work our hearts out” for the fall election.

Earlier in the session, delegates heard from Erin Covell, a guidance counselor and president of the Massena Federation of Teachers, who helped rally her community in northern New York—including the Steelworkers—to help keep open an Alcoa plant that employed 500 people.

“I believe that our example of coming together and standing tall in support of our community can serve as an example for others,” she said. “We’re moving forward, and it’s simply because we don’t give up.”



Randi Weingarten and Leo Gerard

PHOTO BY MICHAEL CAMPBELL

Convention resolutions adopted on July 19

Resolution 27
Racial Equity

Resolution 28
Against Deportation

Resolution 29
School Safety and Educational Opportunity for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer and Questioning (LGBTQ) Students

Resolution 1
Taking Action on the Promise of the Every Student Succeeds Act

Resolution 2
Building a National Movement for the Public Schools ALL Our Students Deserve with the Alliance to Reclaim Our Schools and Through ESSA Reauthorization

Resolution 6
Introduce Exploratory Career and Technical Education (CTE) Courses in the Middle School Grades, and Restore and Expand CTE in All High Schools

Listed in order of passage.

We need you!

Will you help us push back against Donald Trump and the right-wing smears we'll face from now to Election Day?

Join the **#AFTeam**, our rapid response network, and help defend our candidate and our values online, on the ground and in our communities.

Stop by the **You Got Schooled** table in the AFT Action Fair (Hall D) to learn more and sign up.



Minnesota Gov. Dayton urges investment in education



PHOTO BY MICHAEL CAMPBELL

MINNESOTA GOV. MARK DAYTON—himself a science teacher in the 1970s and member of the United Federation of Teachers when it was led by Al Shanker—offered his greetings to AFT conventiongoers on Tuesday afternoon.

“Being a teacher was the toughest job I ever had until this one,” Dayton said. He lamented the fact that most critics of education have not been in a classroom in decades and pointed out that most teachers today are being asked to do more with less.

“Our country isn’t doing enough to address the underfunding of public education,” he said. In Minnesota, however, Dayton has made it a point to invest in education. His education policy has included funding to establish all-day kindergarten, and he is currently pushing for universal pre-K.

“We are working with teachers as allies because our country’s future depends on you,” he said. “Thank you for your commitment.”

Delegates approve per capita increase

CONVENTION DELEGATES on Tuesday overwhelmingly approved changes to the AFT constitution and bylaws that will provide additional resources to affiliates, spur new membership and underscore the union’s long-standing policy of working for people from all backgrounds.

Under an amendment adopted by delegates, effective Sept. 1, 2016, each local will pay a per capita of \$19.03 per month (an increase of 80 cents over the current per capita), of which \$1 will be dedicated to a special AFT response fund to engage members and to assist locals in crisis. Effective Sept. 1, 2017, locals will pay a per capita tax of \$19.28 per month, of which \$1.10 will be dedicated to this special response fund. The AFT offers a reduced per capita for lower-income members, and delegates also voted to index that income threshold for inflation to help ease the burden on these members.

Extra revenue will enable state and local affiliates to build capacity and to fight attacks on members and the institutions in which they work, several delegates said.

Also approved was an increase from 60 cents to 65 cents to the AFT Militancy/Defense Fund and an increase of 10 cents to the Solidarity Fund, effective Sept. 1, 2016. The Solidarity Fund helps states defeat anti-union ballot initiatives and legislation, and it supports AFT and affiliate work in the legislative and political arena on behalf of members.

Delegates also backed constitutional amendments that clarify and expand the mission of the AFT standing committee on civil and human rights. This body is specifically tasked to provide materials and strategies to African-Americans, Asian-Americans, Latinos, Native Americans, Arab Americans and other racial, ethnic, religious and underrepresented groups.

Building on the success of the AFT associate membership program, delegates voted to establish a “friends of the AFT” membership. It is open to individuals who wish to support the AFT mission but are not eligible for regular or associate membership. Friends of the AFT will not have voting rights or other membership benefits, but they will be able to actively participate in the union.

WHAT’S YOUR GLASS CEILING?

When Hillary Clinton clinched the Democratic nomination, **we shattered a glass ceiling** and marked a historic moment, one that reaffirms the American dream that anyone—**regardless of gender, race or religion**—can reach for the stars in our country.

But women in America still face barriers in the workplace, in our society and in our government.

Join us for “**What’s Your Glass Ceiling? Breaking Down Barriers Women in America Face**,” a conversation on women’s issues with a lineup of strong, rock-star women to discuss issues, including **equal pay, reproductive rights, paid family leave, running for office, gender discrimination and bullying**.

**Wednesday, July 20, at 6 p.m.
Ballroom B**



A young voice rings out for social justice

CALLING AFT PRESIDENT Randi Weingarten “inspiring,” and declaring it a privilege to address our convention, Israeli activist Stav Shaffir told AFT delegates the story of how she became the youngest female member ever elected to the Knesset, or parliament.

“It would have been more natural for me to stand here with you as a teacher,” Shaffir said. “That was my original plan.”

Five years ago, her plan suddenly changed. Shaffir’s ancestors had hoped to build a home in Israel “based on true solidarity and social values.” For example, the right to free education became one of Israel’s first laws in 1949. Its leaders knew back then, she said, that public education is “not just a basic right, but a necessity.”

However, under mostly right-wing governments, Israel has changed, she said, from a country founded on social justice to one with terrible income inequality.

“This inequality made us ever more divided,” Shaffir said. “Many people our age were despairing over our future.”

A champion of public services, affordable housing, LGBTQ rights and democracy, Shaffir is perhaps best known for calling out Israel’s conservative politicians. Along with several others, she led a series of public demonstrations in which more than half a million Israelis took to the streets in 2011. Shaffir even was arrested for exercising her right to protest.

“Imagine what optimism, what hope” those demonstrations showed, she said.

In 2013, Shaffir declared her Labor Party candidacy for the Knesset and was elected at age 27. Her main accomplishment in her first term was forcing greater financial transparency in the proposed Israeli budget for 2013. Outmaneuvered in the legislative process, she amassed a team of volunteers via Facebook to study the budget and win a compromise.

“Politics is not really about politicians. Politics is about possibilities,” Shaffir said, declaring her intention to build a new national leadership, to “shape our own destiny through collective action. We’ll make sure that our money is invested in schools, in hospitals, in social workers and in child care. Loving one’s country means taking care of all of its citizens.”



PHOTO BY RUSS CURTIS

Stav Shaffir

Ellison lauds AFT for long history of support for equality

U.S. REP. KEITH ELLISON, who represents the Minneapolis congressional district that includes the convention center, celebrated the work that educators—“love specialists,” as he called them—do every day with children despite a growing array of obstacles.

For 40 years, he noted, our elected leaders have cut taxes, eliminated regulations and starved public institutions of resources. “We as a society made the decision not to invest in our people,” he said. “Then we turn to teachers and say ‘fix it all.’ Doesn’t the rest of society have some responsibility too?”

Ellison, the first Muslim ever elected to Congress, also pointed to the importance of school staff such as custodians and cafeteria workers—including Philando Castille, the St. Paul food service manager recently killed by police—in helping students succeed.

He praised the AFT for our long history in supporting civil rights, including the union’s brave stand to expel segregated locals in the 1950s. “You’ve been fighting for equal opportunity for a long time; you didn’t wake up to it last night.”

Today’s Black Lives Matter movement is a continuation of that fight for equality and justice. When young activists started saying black lives matter a year ago, he said, some people took it wrong.

“Black lives have not mattered, so it’s important for people to assert that they matter as much as everyone else,” he said. “It’s not an insult to others.” It’s a call to extend compassion to the entire human family, he added, to make sure everyone counts, including black people. “We have to stand together.”

Credentials Report #1

CHAIR—DAVID KAZANSKY
UNITED FEDERATION OF TEACHERS (NEW YORK CITY)
LOCAL 2

REGISTRATION AS OF 5 P.M., JULY 18, 2016

TOTAL DELEGATES.....2,608

locals represented—454

state federations—24

councils—0

executive council ex-officio—6

total alternates—18

TOTAL ELECTION VOTES.....774,572

(includes 31,896 sequestered votes)

TOTAL ALTERNATES.....42

Scavenger Hunt Clue

Sandra Feldman



Keith Ellison

PHOTO BY RUSS CURTIS

Breakfast Sampler



PHOTO BY MICHAEL CAMPBELL

Martha Hamilton

Tax evasion steals trillions from public services

A LOSS OF TRILLIONS in public money through tax evasion came to light this spring through the biggest leak of insider information in history—a leak known as the Panama Papers. At the AFT Public Employees Jim Garvey Memorial Breakfast, investigative journalist Martha Hamilton quickly reviewed how prominent figures hired a company in Panama to manage secret bank accounts.

These crimes are matters of social justice because that money should have gone to build and maintain schools and bridges, and to fund vital services. The enormous levels of tax

evasion and other crimes are estimated to cost between \$7 trillion and \$21 trillion, Hamilton said, “money that could have been put to better use than yachts.”

People tend to think of financial fraud as a victimless crime. “But it’s not,” Hamilton said. “It’s money taken away from public services. That’s why it’s important to pull back the veil on tax evasion.” She urged AFT activists to help spread awareness of the Panama Papers and increase pressure on our elected officials to close tax loopholes.



PHOTO BY RUSS CURTIS

Barbara Bowen

Higher Ed division honors outstanding members

THE AFT HIGHER EDUCATION DIVISION turned its convention breakfast into an awards ceremony to recognize its members’ outstanding work. Members of the Professional Staff Congress, representing faculty at the City University of New York, received the Norman G. Swenson Militancy Award for their fierce fight to “give CUNY a raise” (President Barbara Bowen is pictured at left).

Other awards presented:
◆ Leadership Award—**Art Hochner, Temple**

Association of University Professionals

- ◆ Louis Stollar Award for Advancing the Rights of Contingent Faculty—**Non-Tenure Faculty Coalition, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign**
- ◆ Organizing Award—**Union of Rutgers Administrators**
- ◆ Lawrence Gold Professional Issues Award—**AFT-Wisconsin Higher Education Council**
- ◆ Staff Award—**Linda Cushing (1946-2016)**, AFT national representative



PHOTO BY MICHAEL CAMPBELL

Yoseñio Lewis

Advocacy makes a difference

YOSEÑIO LEWIS has spent most of his life in search of homeostasis—an internal balance in the face of external change. Lewis is a female-to-male transsexual and social justice activist. At the AFT Nurses and Health Professionals Breakfast, he shared his quest to channel his frustration over his treatment as a transsexual into positive action.

“The desire for balance is a battle, because I thrive in the uncomfortable. It’s an opportunity for me to make a difference in others’ lives,”

Lewis said. And over the years, he has made a difference by educating people, especially those in healthcare, about transgender people with a goal of dispelling misinformation and fear.

“We can make lifesaving changes simply by changing the way those in healthcare interact with people like me. The more you allow people to stand up for themselves and advocate for themselves, the more change will happen.”



PHOTO BY ROB LEVINE

Lorretta Johnson

Johnson highlights PSRP organizing history

AT THE AFT PSRP BREAKFAST, AFT Secretary-Treasurer Lorretta Johnson spoke about the legacy paraprofessionals and school-related personnel are inheriting in organizing and uplifting their professions.

Johnson wanted them to know their history so they could see how far PSRPs have come. But, she stressed, they need to realize they still have progress to make to gain the respect and dignity they deserve.

Johnson urged them to stick to the fundamental ideals of the division’s organizing efforts: PSRPs are the workers, the neighbors

and the community that schools and colleges are built upon. “PSRPs are often the first to arrive before school starts and very often the last to leave and lock up,” she said. “We know our schools, and we know our community.”

She also addressed the ongoing violence and division plaguing our country, saying, “America is one America, and we have to come together to stop the violence.” To do that, Johnson urged the PSRPs to get involved in this year’s elections and to redouble their efforts to talk to colleagues, family members and friends about what is at stake.