



# 41st Pennsylvania AFL-CIO Convention News

Final Edition



## President Rich Trumka moderates roundtable discussion on organizing

By John J. Rudiak, AFSCME, Subchapter 8401

Four brave union organizers/workers joined President Rich Trumka in relating their experiences with union organizing in Pittsburgh. Ms. Rebecca Taksel, Adjunct Professor, Point Park University, Ms. Meredith Maloney, banquet server, Rivers Casino, Mr. Fred Lapka, Waiter, Rivers Casino, and Mr. Louis Berry, UPMC worker, all related how workers are being intimidated, watched, inundated with anti-union propaganda, and some ultimately fired unjustly. The workers are organizing with USW, Unite Here, Teamsters, and Operating Engineers.

Some workers are afraid to join the organizing drive because of intimidation and terminations. UPMC is one of the most blatant in intimidating employees and even broadcasting anti-union messages on monitors throughout the hospitals, but claim they have no employees. One important message is that workers need to organize for better wages, better working conditions, protection from unjust and arbitrary discipline and terminations, but mostly for respect. Respect is what all workers deserve and they simply want employers to do the right thing. According to Mr. Berry, UPMC is one of the largest hospital employers and that other large hospitals are watching UPMC's anti-union activities. Ms. Taksel noted that organizing efforts at other institutions of higher learning have been successful. The public is learning that people are paying more for university degrees, while adjunct professors are being paid poverty wages. Ms. Maloney and Mr. Lapka said workers are terminated unjustly for joining unions, but they have managed to get their jobs back in some instances.

President Trumka thanked everyone and noted how proud the AFL-CIO is of all the organizers and their organizing activities to the applause of the convention delegates.



President Richard Trumka

## President Trumka's Priority Is Raising Wages and Jobs!

By Don Shaffer, USW Local 3657

There was no hidden innuendo in Richard Trumka's speech Thursday morning. The AFL-CIO President spoke clearly and directly about his top priority.

"We want to raise the minimum wage to at least - at least - \$10.10 an hour and index it to inflation," Trumka said. "Work should raise people out of poverty, not trap them in it."

Too many of us feel trapped by the work we do."

Trumka broke it down even further, stating, "raising wages for workers is our top agenda item. We're not putting politics first anymore, raising wages comes first."

"America is in a weak recovery, and raising wages is the solution," Trumka said. "Workers are the solution and more than just doing the right thing, this is essential."

"There is a ground swell of support going on around the country in support of raising the minimum wage. Today, that ground swell comes to Pittsburgh," Trumka said. "That's the beauty in all of this: America wants real progress, It wants real solutions. Labor cannot afford to be ignored one day longer."

## Rep. DiGirolamo Speaks and Receives Endorsement

By Stu Bass

Rep. Gene DiGirolamo, serving Bucks County since 1995, is the Republican Chairman of the House Human Services Committee. He has a record of standing with workers and opposes right to work for less legislation and selling off Pennsylvania's state-run liquor stores. "I stand here as a Bucks County Republican who ran 10 times with the PA AFL-CIO endorsement."

He asked, "Why does it seem so hard for Republicans to support working families?" He cited the opposition to his re-election from right wing non-profit organizations that distribute hate mail. "These aren't the Republicans in the party that I grew up with." He said that legislation against paycheck deductions is actually "pay check destruction."

On April 14, DiGirolamo introduced legislation to modernize Pennsylvania's Wine and Spirits Stores. Modernization will generate \$185 million in additional revenue for tax payers, protect safety and health, and keep 5,000 good jobs.

His bill to expand Medicaid has almost 100 co-sponsors. Expansion will bring an additional \$10 million a day in federal

funds that are now just sitting in Washington DC. The Medicaid expansion will create thousands of jobs in the healthcare industry and help insure thousands of uninsured workers. He said that Pennsylvania must also address the epidemic of prescription opiate painkillers which lead to heroin addiction.

PA is the only state that does not have a drilling tax on Marcellus Shale. DiGirolamo is proposing a tax to generate an additional \$400 million above the impact tax. "Wouldn't that look nice if we invested that in schools and human services?" DiGirolamo said that Bucks County alone lost over \$200 million in human services in the past few years.

DiGirolamo also supports the increase of minimum wage and protection of the prevailing wage. "I may not be a union member, but you adopted me. So, I can call you brothers and sisters. Let's continue to work together to make Pennsylvania the best place to live and work." The delegation approved the endorsement for Rep. DiGirolamo's re-election.



Rep. Gene DiGirolamo  
Pennsylvania House  
of Representatives





Strength  
in  
Unity!

## 41st Pennsylvania AFL-CIO Convention

### Democratic Leader Frank Dermody Wants Labor to Help Him Make 102 For YOU Instead of 92

By Meghan Martin, Penn State School of Labor and Employment Relations



Rep. Frank Dermody  
Pennsylvania House of  
Representatives

Representative Frank Dermody, Minority Leader of the Democratic Caucus in the Pennsylvania State House, spoke about the strength we gain in numbers. “I ask that each of you do two things, the one is you need to organize many more workers because there really is strength in numbers not only in bargaining improvements in living standards but also in electing more candidates that support working people and the middle class.”

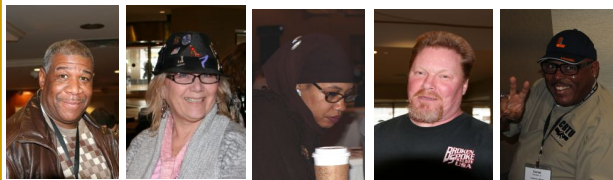
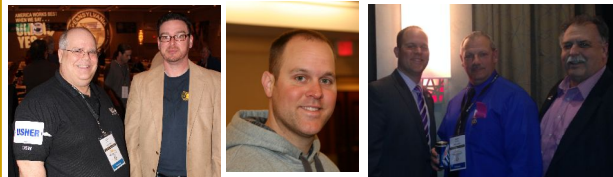
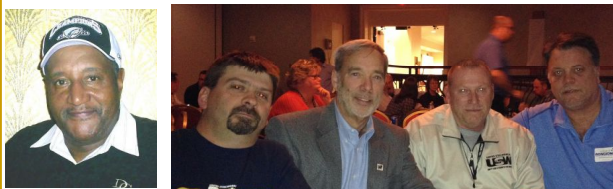
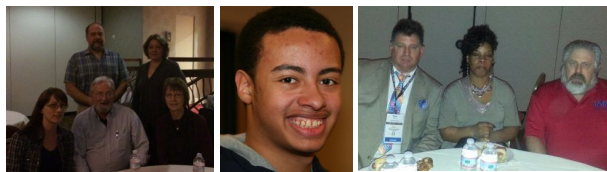
The second is in electing more Democratic legislators to Harrisburg and Washington, D.C. to fight for and to represent the interests of working families and more opportunities for the children of workers not just the very wealthy. “If you really want to improve conditions for your members and all workers, we need to elect more Democrats.”

In speaking about his good friend, Republican Eugene DiGirolamo, who spoke before him, Dermody said that they both agree that there should be more emphasis and bi-partisanship on problem solving as opposed to political attacks on jobs, paychecks, and worker rights.

Drawing attention to his title: “Democratic leader”, a more accurate title is “Minority leader”, a description not to his liking nor to working families. Under Republican control you’ve seen passage of privatization of Wine and Spirits in the State House – if it ever passed it will lead to the destruction of 5,000 good jobs. Right to Work legislation in the state of Pennsylvania, for the first time in history, is a clear and present danger. Instead of job creation and raising the minimum wage, we are fighting attacks everyday on prevailing wage, pensions, expansion of Medicaid, adequate funding of public education and human services/policies that improve opportunities and expand Pennsylvania’s middle class.

He compared the attack by billionaires against the labor movement today to the attack by the Pinkerton’s in the past. “Common sense says we have an operation here that we can improve, we can make better.” In the democratic caucus you’ve got 92 strong, we need to work together to make it 102.

### Convention Pictorial



AFSCME International President Lee Saunders administers the oath of office to the Executive officers, Vice-President and alternates of the PA AFL-CIO

### Thank You For Making This A Successful Convention

Rick and Frank extend special thanks to our Auditors and our Vice Presidents for their leadership and contributions to a successful and enjoyable Convention. We congratulate our newly elected Vice Presidents and Alternates. We thank all of the leaders and the members for serving on the resolutions, escort, and ushers committees. A special thanks to the volunteers who staffed the exhibit tables, the convention news staff, our audio/visual crew, members of IBEW local 5 and IATSE local 3, and Three Rivers Entertainment and Productions for their expertise in bringing this convention up close for everyone. We also thank the AFGE for staffing the First Aid station. And last but not least we thank the delegates for their participation in setting the direction we take in protecting our gains and building more progress for the working people of Pennsylvania. We thank the delegates and the affiliates for giving us the honor and the privilege of serving and leading your State Federation for another four years. This was your convention and this is your Pennsylvania AFL-CIO. Thank you for supporting and building a stronger labor movement for workers in Pennsylvania. As we work together, remain active and unified, we will succeed in making sure that it is the best state for workers to live and to raise their families.

### Convention News

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