

PEF REGION 2

S/W PAC Report

On August 18, 2014, a delegation of PEF members and staff attended the AFL-CIO Convention in New York City, I was honored to be a part of this delegation and my notes from same follow.

NYS-AFL CIO President Mario Cilento

- This is the Largest NYS-AFL CIO Convention ever with 2010 union members in attendance, representing New York State's 2.5 million Union members.
- Speaks to our differences, amongst Unions, and urges for more unity so as to make the most of our numbers. "Our enemies must not see daylight between us." Cited that internally we have had many successes such as last year's unemployment increase and workers Comp. increases. "Things don't just happen, you have to make them happen". Our members must play defense against wage cuts, benefits cuts, and erosion of working conditions. We are judged by the services we provide others, we are not Alabama, Arkansas, or Texas! Unions are about more than just members, it's about family. It's not just about the present, it's about the future, and the future that pensions can secure for our families. Mario closed with a personal truth about his own father's Union benefits contributing to the college fund of the grandchildren he never met.

NYS Comptroller Tom DiNapoli

- Introduced as true friend of Labor by Mario, whom defined Friend as someone who is there for you in good and bad times but especially is someone who is there for when you do not ask for their help.
- Tom speaks to the importance of, and his mindfulness to, the worker conditions of companies in which the NYS Pension Fund invests.
- Cites that there is \$180 Billion in the NYS Pension fund and that it is 890% funded.
- Cites that there is absolutely no reason to talk about retreating from our defined benefit plan, to some retirement 401K plan.

Endorsements

The assembly began the process of political endorsements. Full Convention outcome is available here: <http://nysaflcio.org/new-york-state-afl-cio-announces-endorsements-in-state-senate-and-assembly-elections/>

Lunch Break

Mario Cilento

- Job creation, Union members voted 10% higher in favor of casino than the general public.
- NYS AFL-CIO promotes more funding of Public Services
- NYS AFL-CIO supports candidates that support the issues concerning workers of NYS.
- References the fact that the MTA awarded a \$235 million project to China for the Verrazano Narrows bridge when there are American workers ready, willing and able to perform the task. See: http://nysaflcio.org/verrazano_made_in_china/
- Presented an instant action item for the assembly to text BUY USA at 877.877.

Eric Schneiderman, NYS Attorney General

- “The struggle for Labor Rights is the Struggle for Human Rights”
- ” . . . other states should be jealous of the NYS labor Movement” based on size of our membership and successes at Political Action.
- “Labor Laws are not optional” Companies do not have the right to decide to not pay overtime. “We, (his office), stands up for everyone, non-unionized, non-english speaking”. His office has secured \$16 Million in wage restitution from thousands of employers, *whom decided the law did apply to them.*
- Spoke on his investigation of banks as he is President Obama’s appointed Co-Chair to the Task Force on Bank Misconduct. He cited the following cash settlements secured to date:
\$13 Billion from JP Morgan
\$7 Billion form Citibank
Seeks Equal Justice Under Law
- “I thoroughly investigated the economic crash and found no Public Employees at the scene of the crime.”

Steve Israel – Long Island

- Promotes tax forms to have a \$3.00 dollar check for Vets akin to the \$1.00 check-off for Presidential Election Campaign
- Visits a school every month
- For the first time in American history, working parents are worried that that they can’t provide a better life than they had for their children”
- Spoke on Congressional hypocrisy, as Congress declares women’s wages are a workplace issue, but then votes on Abortion Coverage.

Tim Bishop- Long Island

- Acknowledges Labor as electing him and cites that he had 1000 mostly union members person walking the street campaigning for him in 2002.
- Leads caucus to raise the minimum wage. Not one republican has voted in favor of raising the minimum wage.

Kathy Rice

- “We have never needed union more.”
- 100% conviction rate!

Sean Patrick Maloney

- Comes from a (1) income family wherein all 6 kid went to college. Can't do that anymore.
- "This government used to support working families."

Endorsements continued.

Note that while most all of this convention's E-Board members remained seated up at the Dias, Sue Kent, PEF President, joined her members whom her seated amongst the General Assembly, and is quoted as stating, "It's a lot more fun back here".

On August 24, 2014, PEF Region 2 PAC members Dan Loven, Chuck Whitford & myself attended a Republican Party Fund Raiser at Watkins Glen International Raceway. PEF endorsed Republicans in attendance included Tom O'Mara, NYS Senate, & Phil Palmesano, NYS Assembly. The PEF delegation was well received at this very informal event. These elected officials are fully aware that some of the best jobs in this economically repressed region are those held by Unionized workers such as PEF members. All attendees were afforded opportunities to ride or drive a lap on the Race Course!

On August 26, 2014, after learning of Zephyr's Whistleblower Tour, Division 175 invited Zephyr to Hornell on any day of her choice to address PEF Region 2 members. Unfortunately we never received a reply from Zephyr's Team.

On September 7, 2014 Martha Robertson attended the PEF Region 2 Family Day at Eldridge Park, Elmira. This annual event was planned by Region 2 Coordinator Bonnie Wood and was well attended by PEF members from various state agencies. Also in attendance were PEF staff members Mike Farrell, Ellen Coyne and PEF Membership Benefits Rep. Paige Faddegan.

On September 13, 2014, NYS Comptroller Tom DiNapoli visited Hornell for a fund raiser to which I was invited, *and attended*, by Hornell City Mayor, Shawn Hogan, (longest tenured Mayor in NYS). The Mayor shared that a donation of \$500.00 was being requested from PEF. The Mayor was advised that PEF has already donated its lawful amount to the Comptroller. At this point in time, consideration of donating \$500.00 to the Steuben County Democratic Committee is in play.