

# RWDSU

UFCW

FALL 2022

R E C O R D

Vol. 70, No. 2

ORGANIZING, SOLIDARITY THE FOCUS AS MEMBERS MEET IN ATLANTA

## RWDSU CONVENTION: UNION SETS AGENDA

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**STRONG NEW CONTRACTS at  
Housing Works, SLS Car Wash**



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Members at Housing Works have won their first contract.

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Department Store Union, UFCW  
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Stuart Appelbaum  
President

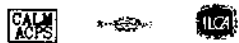
Robert Layng, Jr.  
Sec.-Treasurer

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Communications Director, Chelsea Connor

Lenore Miller  
President Emeritus

The objectives of the Retail, Wholesale and Department Store Union are to unite into this organization all workers employed in its jurisdiction in order to advance and safeguard their economic and social welfare...The Retail, Wholesale and Department Store Union will strive to preserve democratic processes, protect civil liberties, aid in the adoption of legislation which will promote the economic and social welfare of its members and that of labor in general and to improve the educational, social and cultural standards of society as a whole. *Through unity of purpose and action, through collective bargaining and legislation, the Retail, Wholesale and Department Store Union is dedicated to the ideal of making the jobs of its members the best jobs that can be devised from the point of view of wages, hours of work, physical conditions and human relations. Preamble RWDSU Constitution.*



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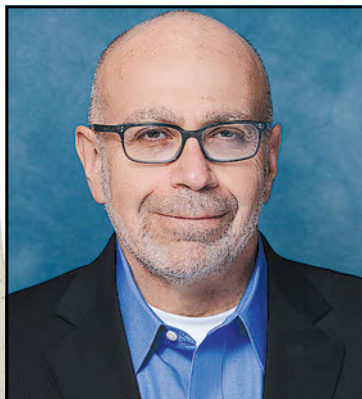
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**MESSAGE FROM  
YOUR OFFICERS**

President  
Stuart Appelbaum  
Twitter: @sappelbaum

Secretary-Treasurer  
Robert Layng, Jr.



# We Lit the Spark, Let's Build the Movement!

In this issue of the Record, you'll read all about our recent convention and strong new contracts for workers at SLS Car Wash and Housing Works, all of which emphasize this exciting moment that the RWDSU, and the entire labor movement, is experiencing right now. Across the country, workers are organizing at huge companies that have long operated without unions.

**Amazon workers in Bessemer, Alabama, have inspired countless workers and activists to join our movement.**

At the RWDSU, we've seen REI, Inc. retail workers win their historic union campaign. Workers at an Amazon warehouse in New York City have formed a union, and hundreds of Starbucks stores across the country are now unionized, with many more organizing campaigns moving ahead throughout the coffee chain. Amazon workers organizing with the RWDSU in Bessemer, Alabama, continue to make their voices heard, which has inspired countless workers and activists – including those at Starbucks and that New York Amazon warehouse – to join our movement.

Union approval ratings are at their highest since the 1960s and we owe it to this new wave of organizing for shifting this narrative. We are currently in a moment where young workers are fighting back and actively leading campaigns that are inspiring working people across the entire nation. Young workers who have lived through the pandemic are tired of being treated as dispensable by employers who are making billions of dollars off their backs. It's up to us in the labor movement to work together with newer generations to reinvigorate our labor movement to be one that can grow through strong worker militancy, for many decades to come. It's up to us to seize the momentum and build upon this new era of activism and organizing.

## Midterm Elections Demand Our Attention

We've seen before, many times, how important our elections are for our ability to organize, negotiate strong contracts, and keep our workplaces safe. Since the election of President Biden, we've seen a sea change in the attitude of our government towards working people. We now have the most pro-union President we've ever seen; he even recorded a special video announcement supporting the right of all Americans to join a union without intimidation or interference, and he even shone the spotlight on Alabama, where RWDSU members were organizing at Amazon.

**It's important that we have elected officials who understand our issues and will fight for us.**

None of this would have been possible without workers voting in the 2020 elections. And it reminds us how important it is that we all vote in the upcoming midterm elections. We need to support pro-worker candidates in the House, Senate, and Governor races. It's important that we have elected officials who understand our issues and will fight for us. Your union can help you learn about election deadlines, find out about voter resources, and plan your vote. Visit the RWDSU election hub at [www.rwdsu.info/rwdsu2022electionhub](http://www.rwdsu.info/rwdsu2022electionhub) for more information. Vote! And help us keep our movement's momentum. ■

# RWDSU A VOICE FOR WORKING PEOPLE

## Solidarity Brings Change at Last at Housing Works

**W**hen workers at Housing Works, the sprawling social service provider in New York City, conducted their groundbreaking organizing campaign in 2019, the reason most often cited was “change.” And while they wanted change, quickly, our nation’s outdated and unfair labor laws caused delays and frustration while the seasons changed and the years advanced. Now however, thanks to the workers’ solidarity and dedication to making their jobs and their lives better, that change is finally here; the over 600 medical professionals, thrift shop retail workers, counselors, legal professionals, social workers and janitorial workers employed by Housing Works throughout New York City have won their first ever union contract with the RWDSU.

The contract raises pay, improves benefits, addresses numerous workplace issues

**Housing Works employees in New York City are celebrating their first union contract.**



that were important to workers, and brings six paid holidays – up from zero paid holidays workers had when they began their campaign.

Most importantly, the contract realizes the potential to change their jobs that workers saw when they sought to organize with the RWDSU. For the first time ever, employees at

Housing Works have a voice on the job, a say in their workplace, and guaranteed pay and improvements in writing. And they’ve proven what they said all along; together, they are stronger, and through the RWDSU, they are making their jobs better for themselves and the people they care for.

“When I started at Housing Works four

years ago, morale was low. It was the kind of job people didn’t want to come to, people didn’t show up, people left. Now, with our union and our contract, I feel like this can change this into a workplace where people like to come to work and where they feel valued,” said Ilana Engelberg. “It’s been a long road, but hopefully things will be a lot better moving forward.”

## RWDSU Continues to Make a Difference for Carwasheros

**T**he RWDSU’s WASH NY campaign began over a decade ago to change an industry rife with worker exploitation, stolen wages, and general poor treatment. In the time since, New York’s car wash industry is a very different place for workers, with unionized car washes, and passage of laws requiring proper licensing for car wash operators and doing away with the once-abused “tip credit” system that saw car wash employees losing money to wage theft and previously allowed subminimum wages. And, RWDSU members employed at the city’s car washes continue to see the benefits of union representation.

At SLS Car Wash in Bushwick, Brooklyn, New York, the new contract negotiated by an RWDSU member-led bargaining committee is one of the best we’ve seen in the industry. Big wage increases, benefits, and working condition improvements are highlights of the new agreement, which includes raises for car wash workers of over \$1.75 per hour, and brings important safety equipment such as an eyewash station and rubber boots and gloves.



**Workers at SLS Car Wash in Brooklyn, New York, won management bonuses to the tip box among other improvements.**

And, in a huge win, whenever the day shift washes 600 cars in a day, management will add \$400 cash to the tip box to be shared by the workers. The night shift will see an extra \$200 in the tip box for washing over 300 cars in a night. This is the only car wash in New York City with this benefit.

Workers in other departments won

additional gains; drivers will receive an extra \$1.50 per hour, and mechanics will earn an extra \$2.50 per hour.

“With other car wash contracts coming up, the workers at SLS set a great example with their solidarity and determination. They won a great contract,” said RWDSU Representative and Negotiator Danie Tarrow. ■

The contract brings guaranteed improved wages, along with paid lunch breaks, to all Housing Works employees. Each of the 135 job titles covered by the CBA also now have an associated minimum rate of pay, most of which are well over the \$17 organization-wide minimum. In addition, the contract brings an annual \$1,000 bonus for all workers with over five years of tenure, with numerous additional bonuses for accredited educational advancement and added workloads. To address issues that workers have long had with their employer, nearly all discipline expires after one year, and the employer cannot change workers’ job or workload without negotiating with the RWDSU. And, the union can grieve any unreasonable changes or new duties assigned to workers.

The new pact also implements a \$350 ratification bonus for every worker plus additional guaranteed annual raises of 3 percent, 2.5 percent, and 2.25 percent for each year, plus the option for additional merit-based raises on top of the guaranteed minimum raises.

“The entire fight to organize and then win a strong first contract really shows the value of the support we had from each other as a union and from the RWDSU as a whole,” Brian Fleurantin said. “But most importantly, now I’m empowered to use my voice at work, to speak up, and help make things better for all of us. My co-workers and I now have confidence, a voice, and the power to be heard.” ■





# THE RWDSU 24TH QUADRENNIAL CONVENTION

ATLANTA, GEORGIA | JULY 26-29, 2022

**T**hey came from around the country, and across the globe; hundreds of RWDSU delegates, alternates, and guests, traveled to the historic civil rights city of Atlanta to join together for the 24th RWDSU Quadrennial Convention.

This convention focused heavily on the union's commitment to bringing workers across America a union voice through organizing, even in places and industries viewed as challenging to unionize. The convention highlighted the union's activities in politics, social justice, health and safety, contract negotiations, and global solidarity. Speakers from throughout the labor

movement and political world shed light on the issues that concern all working people.

And, the convention showcased how the RWDSU has helped light the match that has the entire union movement aflame right now. Together, we've secured some important organizing wins since our last convention, including General Mills cereal workers in Iowa, nonprofit workers at Housing Works, storeworkers at REI, Inc.,

*The convention showcased how the RWDSU has helped light the match that has the entire union movement aflame right now.*

the first ever unionized farmworkers in New York, Tensor manufacturing workers in Georgia, and airport workers in Hawaii.

Most importantly, over the course of four days, the RWDSU Convention showed what

makes us Union Strong; our commitment, our diversity, our solidarity, and the fact that while we live in different places and work in a wide range of different industries, we have one goal: lifting each other higher. Together, we make the difference in each other's lives, and the lives of tens of thousands of working people, and the entire labor movement as a whole. Together, we are Union Strong. ■

## CONVENTION VIDEOS!

Watch all of the RWDSU 24th Quadrennial Convention videos online here: [www.rwdsu.info/rwdsu\\_24th\\_quadrennial\\_convention](http://www.rwdsu.info/rwdsu_24th_quadrennial_convention)



(l to r) RWDSU Recorder Joseph Dorismond, President Stuart Appelbaum, and Secretary-Treasurer Robert Layng, Jr.

## RWDSU Officers to Serve New Four-Year Terms Appelbaum, Layng, Dorismond Elected

**R**WDSU President Stuart Appelbaum, Secretary-Treasurer Robert Layng, Jr., and Recorder Joseph Dorismond were elected at the convention to serve new four-year terms as the leadership team for the union.

President Appelbaum grew up in a union household in Hartford, Connecticut. His dad worked as a clerk at the Hartford Post Office for more than 40 years. He received a scholarship from his father's union, APWU Local 147, which helped make it possible for him to afford his education. After finishing school, Appelbaum decided he wanted to devote his life to working people and the American labor movement. He moved to Lansing, Michigan where he went to work for the

Michigan AFL-CIO, and joined the RWDSU in 1987, serving in a number of different positions until becoming President in 1998. He also serves as a Vice President of the national AFL-CIO, Executive Vice President of the UFCW, chair of the Amazon Global Alliance, and the President of UNI Global Commerce (the federation of unions around the world that are involved in retail and commerce).

Secretary-Treasurer Layng was elected to his current position as Secretary-Treasurer by the RWDSU Executive Board in January, 2022. He joined the RWDSU as an intern in 1996 and was hired full time as Assistant Comptroller and Operations Manager in 1997. Layng held that position until 2003 when he was promoted to Comptroller, the

union's third person to hold that position in its then 66-year history. In 2015, Layng was asked to serve as Executive Assistant to the President, a position he held until becoming Secretary-Treasurer.

Recorder Dorismond is an immigrant from Haiti. After working at a hotel in Florida, he moved to the New York area to work for the RWDSU. In 1990, Dorismond became a union organizer, bringing a voice to poultry workers in the south and spearheading the New York City supermarket deliverymen campaign that resulted in a multimillion dollar lawsuit settlement on behalf of exploited workers. He helps train RWDSU organizers at numerous locals, and has directed the ground operation for the

union's historic car wash campaign. He is a member of RWDSU Local 108.

Dorismond has also been active in the Haitian community. He produced a radio show for 13 years that helped educate the Haitian population across the U.S. about worker and civil rights issues. ■

### Executive VPs Re-elected

**A**t the convention, RWDSU Executive Vice Presidents Tina Buonaugurio from Massachusetts and John Whitaker from Alabama were re-elected by the RWDSU Executive Board. ■

## Labor Secretary Walsh Addresses Convention

**S**ecretary of Labor Marty Walsh spoke to the convention about the ways in which the Biden-Harris Administration is committed to promoting union membership, helping lift up working people, and protecting workers' rights.

Walsh discussed how under his leadership, the Department of Labor has rescinded many rules and policies of the previous administration that hurt working people and unions and gave too much power to employers. He said that the Biden Administration's official policy is to encourage union organizing and good faith collective bargaining.

And he made it clear that now, as Secretary of Labor, workers' rights will always be a priority.

"We need to make sure that RWDSU members – that all working Americans – get a shot at the dignity and respect that they deserve," Walsh said.

He also passed along some important words from the administration.

"I am delivering a message directly from President Biden, Vice-President Harris, and the entire White House to the RWDSU and all working people: we have your back," Walsh said.

Walsh praised the organizing work of the RWDSU and discussed efforts the administration is making to aid organizing, make sure Americans know about their union rights, raise pay, and add jobs (with over 9 million added as of the Convention).



Secretary of Labor Marty Walsh accepted a gift of an RWDSU Local 224 produced Monopoly board game from Executive Vice President Tina Buonaugurio.

"When we support each other, we win. When we fight for each other, we win," Walsh said. "And after decades of attacks on unions and the middle class, the administration and unions are supporting each other to rebuild both." ■



Buonaugurio



Whitaker

# UNION STRONG



(l to r) Moderator Kim Kelly, Steve Buckley (REI, Inc), Amy Albrecht (MedMen), Tim Sarver (General Mills), and Brian Fleurantin and Ilana Engelberg (Housing Works) participated in the convention organizing panel.

## Seizing the Moment Through Organizing

**T**he RWDSU has helped ignite the flame of organizing throughout the labor movement. At the convention, the spotlight shone on some of our most important wins and campaigns of the last four years.

### Organizing Panel Brings Together Activists

A panel brought together new RWDSU members to discuss why they fought to join a union at their workplaces, detailing the misleading, union-busting tactics that workers too often face when they try to organize. The panel was moderated by author and activist Kim Kelly, who was in Bessemer, Alabama during the Amazon campaign there.

"It was amazing to be with those Amazon workers and the RWDSU, watching history be made in real time," Kelly said.

Joining Kelly were REI, Inc., worker Steve Buckley and MedMen cannabis worker Amy Albrecht from New York, Tim Sarver from General Mills in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, and Brian Fleurantin and Ilana Engelberg from Housing Works in New York. The panelists from REI, Inc., Housings Works, and General Mills detailed the union-busting tactics they had encountered; mandatory captive meetings where management spread lies and misinformation about the union, propaganda, false promises, and empty bribes. The panel showed workers



(l to r) Alabama Amazon employees Kenneth Carter and Isaiah Thomas, joined Mid-South Council Organizer Michael "Big Mike" Foster to discuss their campaign to bring a union voice to Bessemer.

will win when they are prepared for these tactics and are supported by smart and resourceful union organizers like those at the RWDSU.

REI, Inc.'s Buckley described how he and his co-workers saw through the propaganda.

"Management did everything organizers told us they would do, along with some new things that even they hadn't seen. Along with the usual meetings and mis-truths about the union, REI created an hour-long anti-union podcast and told us all to listen to it," Buckley said. "But we were ready for all of this nonsense!"

And when workers are allowed to choose a union without interference or intimidation, like at cannabis facilities in New York (as a result of political action of Local 338) they will enthusiastically organize, as Amy Albrecht detailed.

"The Labor Peace Agreement signed by the cannabis companies in New York is a game-changer. When I joined MedMen, they said we have a right to speak with union organizers. The industry is new, and has inconsistent pay and benefits. Joining Local 338 was just what we needed to ensure we would be treated fairly," Albrecht said.

For Tim Sarver, the union difference is clear, and so are the reasons for helping other workers organize.

"People want to ask me why we organized at General Mills in Cedar Rapids, and I always have an easy answer," Sarver said. "I've been there since 1982, and now, four years after joining RWDSU Local 110, things are much better. We have representation, a seat at the table, and a contract that ensures we get the benefits and pay we deserve."

"It's really powerful to sit down with management as their equal, and that's what we get with RWDSU representation," REI, Inc.'s Buckley added. "The only thing that will guarantee us improvements and a safer workplace is a union contract."

### Amazon Campaign Takes Center Stage

Another panel featured organizers of the historic Amazon campaign and some of the courageous workers who stood up to one of the most powerful corporations on the planet and forced them to take notice. "Big Mike" Foster, a former chicken plant worker who helped bring the Amazon workers a voice, electrified the convention with a sermon-like recounting of what it's like to be an underpaid, exploited worker in the South, and applauded the efforts of the Amazon workers.

"The labor movement is on fire now, because you showed the world we can fight back," Foster said.

Amazon workers Kenneth Carter and Isaiah Thomas described working at Amazon, and how the company invested millions trying to crush their campaign with union busters and propaganda, rather than trying to improve life for workers there. But they won't stop fighting.

"We just want to improve our lives, and they want to destroy what we are building. We won't give up," Thomas said. ■

# RWDSU 24TH QUADRENNIAL CONVENTION

## Demonstrating Solidarity to All Workers

### RWDSU Activists Inspire Starbucks Workers

**T**he Starbucks Workers United campaign is one of the most exciting organizing campaigns in the U.S., with workers at over 200 Starbucks stores voting to unionize since December, 2021. The Starbucks organizing drive has spread like wildfire, and according to those involved in the historic campaign, the RWDSU lit the spark. At the RWDSU Convention, Starbucks barista Casey Moore, and Organizer Richard Bensinger, an architect of the campaign, spoke to attendees about how baristas are making history.

Moore, who became one of the first unionized Starbucks workers in the country when her Buffalo, New York, store organized, spoke about how she and her co-workers were inspired to take on the corporate behemoth by the RWDSU Amazon campaign in Bessemer, Alabama. She said it helped convince her to join the organizing committee, rally her fellow workers, and ultimately vote yes to in her union election.

"What we saw with the RWDSU in Alabama proved to us baristas that there's no unorganizable workplaces – there's only workplaces that haven't been organized yet. If you can get a good union campaign going at Amazon, you can do it at Starbucks too," Moore said.

Moore said Starbucks baristas hold some of the most demanding jobs in the service industry, and that's why baristas are now demanding a seat at the table. She likened their campaign to that of another RWDSU organizing drive, the victory at REI, Inc. in New York City, and said all workers want the same thing: a say in their workplace, and the dignity and respect that comes with union membership.

Bensinger thanked President Appelbaum and RWDSU organizers, calling them American heroes. He said the Amazon campaign shifted the paradigm when it comes to how the public views anti-union tactics.

"Prior to Bessemer, it was socially acceptable to be a union-buster. But no more, thanks to the RWDSU," Bensinger said.

With Moore's Starbucks store – and many

others – now organized, the fight for these stores moves on to winning good union contracts. She turned her phone on herself and the entire RWDSU Convention, leading attendees in a rousing chant of "No contract, no coffee!" for the Starbucks Workers United TikTok.

President Appelbaum called the Starbucks workers' campaign inspirational and groundbreaking, and called upon attendees to pledge their support for the Starbucks



Richard Bensinger and Casey Moore told the convention how the RWDSU helped motivate organizing Starbucks workers.

campaign by "adopting" a local store and taking action whenever baristas call for

solidarity. Delegates, alternates, and guests enthusiastically endorsed the campaign. ■

### Supporting Organizing by Delta Flight Attendants as We Fly Home from Convention

**S**ara Nelson, President of the Association of Flight Attendants – CWA (AFA-CWA), delivered a stirring address at our convention, speaking about the struggles of workers everywhere and the inspiration she found in visiting Bessemer, Alabama, to show solidarity with Amazon workers there who were organizing with the RWDSU. "Amazon workers, still struggling during the pandemic, showed bravery and courage to force a union election. Their campaign inspired Delta flight attendants to believe that they could do it too; they could demand a union voice and force their employer to recognize them," Nelson said.

Many of us flew through Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport on our way to and from the convention. It is an enormous Delta Airlines hub. Fiercely anti-union, Delta is the last major airline in the U.S. to



Sara Nelson brought organizing Delta flight attendants on stage as she discussed their organizing campaign.

not have unionized flight attendants.

With our union convention being held in Atlanta, Nelson knew she could count on hundreds of us flying through Atlanta to help organize Delta's flight attendants. And the RWDSU took up the charge, showing our support when we flew.

Nelson shared that 23,000 Delta flight attendants are tired of having their concerns ignored about staffing levels, scheduling issues, stress and passenger abuse, and that it's their turn to take on the fight. Delta has spent tens of millions of dollars on union-busting campaigns against flight attendants, while the company is earning near-record profits and their CEO is making \$2.5 million more than those at Delta's competitors. Delta can clearly afford to do better by their flight attendants. She said their campaign is about standing up for workers everywhere against union-busting employers, and that she's proud to have the RWDSU's support. ■



Take Action

**TAKE ACTION:  
Support Delta Flight  
Attendants' Fight!**

# UNION STRONG



# RWDSU 24TH QUADRENNIAL CONVENTION

**JULY 26-29, 2022**

**ATLANTA, GA**



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# ANNUAL CONVENTION



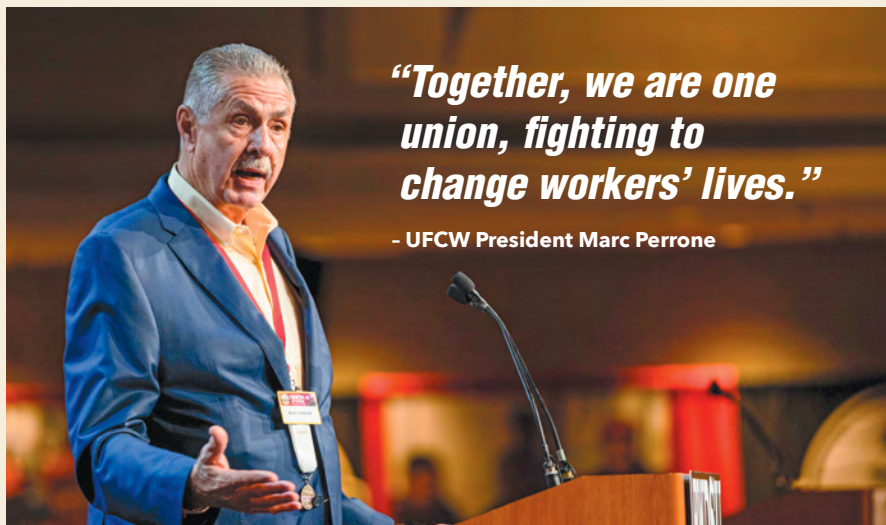
# UNION STRONG

## UFCW is in the House

**T**he RWDSU was joined by a number of leaders from the United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) at the convention.

UFCW President Marc Perrone applauded the work the RWDSU has done together with the UFCW. "Our work together has been incredible. It's the power of unity that has bridged the culture between our two unique organizations and created a truly powerful union," Perrone said. He discussed the pandemic, the explosion of corporate greed, and historic wealth inequality, and how during these challenging times, our union has stood up to defend workers. "Your organizers and leaders have redefined what we can do in organizing; we saw it in Bessemer, and beyond. It's changing Americans' attitude towards unions. The RWDSU provides a light of hope to workers who need it most. Together, we are one union, fighting the same battles, to change workers' lives," Perrone said.

Echoing this commitment to organizing was UFCW Executive V.P. and Director of



**"Together, we are one union, fighting to change workers' lives."**

- UFCW President Marc Perrone

National Bargaining Milton Jones, who said that as unions, we can't rest on our laurels, and always need to focus on the future, and praised the RWDSU's focus on this goal. "Historically, the RWDSU has always looked for unique organizing opportunities. I commend you, and thank you, and say, keep it up!"

UFCW Vice President and Director of the Legislative and Political Action Department and former RWDSU Political Director Ademola Oyefeso discussed how the power of

political involvement helped the union win \$600 federal payments for meat and poultry workers across America to compensate them for the sacrifices they made while keeping our facilities moving – and food on our tables – during the pandemic.

UFCW Acting Organizing Director and Director, National Strategic Retail Department Dave Young discussed the national organizing effort at REI, Inc., and how the UFCW is working to build on this moment to organize throughout the UFCW. ■



**UFCW Vice President and Director of the Legislative and Political Action Department Ademola Oyefeso**



**UFCW Executive Vice President and Director of National Bargaining Milton Jones**



**UFCW Acting Organizing Director and Director, National Strategic Retail Department Dave Young**

## AFL-CIO President Stresses Organizing and Solidarity

**A**FL-CIO President Liz Shuler is a trailblazer, the first woman to be President of the AFL-CIO in its 66-year history.

Under Shuler's leadership, the AFL-CIO is adapting to the changing world at work, and embracing the diversity that is making the modern labor movement a powerful force for societal and economic change. She's provided the RWDSU with the support we needed to tackle historic campaigns like Amazon in Bessemer, Alabama, and she is helping to reinvigorate the labor movement at a time when it has an unprecedented opportunity to grow through organizing.

President Shuler addressed the RWDSU Convention, speaking about the power of solidarity and how it can help us organize and seize this moment – a moment where unions have a higher profile and more momentum than we've seen in decades. She said that the labor movement must continue innovating and trying new approaches similar to what the RWDSU did with Amazon, REI, Inc., and Housing Works. She praised the coalition of union activists who came to Bessemer, Alabama, to help assist the Amazon workers

there and said that it serves as a model of the kind of strategies we need to see in the labor movement.

**"The second you stood up and stood together, it was already a victory."**

"We had almost 20 unions, central labor councils, and state federations who put more than 100 organizers on the ground in Bessemer, Alabama, and that kind of collaboration has never been done before. The second you stood up and stood together, it was already a victory," Shuler said.

"There are more than 12 million of us in 57 unions in every state, in every zip code, in all industries. Think about what we could do if we harnessed all that power and used it to take on companies or whole industries together," Shuler said. "So let's keep working. Let's keep fighting. And let's keep winning. When we organize together, we rise together." ■



**AFL-CIO President Liz Shuler praised the RWDSU's organizing efforts, and said together we can work to greatly increase the numbers of workers winning union membership.**

## RWDSU 24TH QUADRENNIAL CONVENTION

# RWDSU Activists Joined by Civil Rights Leaders

An opening reception was held at the National Center for Civil and Human Rights in downtown Atlanta, giving hundreds of RWDSU attendees the opportunity to learn about the Civil Rights movement of the past and today. It's a struggle woven into the fabric of the RWDSU; our union has a long and well-documented history of social justice activism, from marching on Selma in 1965, to becoming the first union to win Martin Luther King Jr.'s birthday as a paid holiday in a contract, to helping oversee the first free elections in South Africa, and to supporting social justice movements today through activism, organizing, and contract negotiations. Through

organizing campaigns at places like Amazon and Housing Works, the union is fighting to bring a voice to those who have too long suffered inequality and discrimination.

The RWDSU was joined by civil rights leaders, who emphasized the work and goals of union activists and how civil rights are intertwined in the fight for economic and social justice.

Nina Turner, who helped bring important worker and social justice issues to the forefront of the 2020 presidential race as the co-chair of the Bernie Sanders campaign, praised the RWDSU for fighting to bring workers economic equality. And she rallied



Nina Turner and Bishop Dr. Jamal Bryant addressed the RWDSU during the special convention event at the National Center for Human Rights.

**“Stand up, and stand for the people!”**

- Nina Turner

attendees to “get pumped” for the convention, and for future activism.

“Thanks to the efforts of the RWDSU and the labor movement, in this moment of social activism and change, workers across the country are realizing the power of a union,” Turner said. “Stand up, and stand for the people!”

Bishop Dr. Jamal Bryant, who leads one of the largest predominantly Black churches in Georgia and the country and is a leader in the fight against voter suppression in

the state, spoke about the importance of fighting for equality and for our communities. He noted that everybody at the event has a role to play, and applauded the RWDSU for being a crucial ally in the movement for justice.

“There’s an African proverb. You have two important days in your life: the day you are born and the day you find out why you were born. If you are in this room, welcome to your second day. You are key voices in our struggle,” Bryant said. ■

## NY Attorney General Stands with RWDSU Members

New York Attorney General Tish James opened the third day of the RWDSU Convention with an electrifying address. James has a long relationship of working with the RWDSU to help lift up New York’s communities and working standards in the Empire State. She has helped keep the pressure on Amazon to treat their workers better, and was a key partner in the successful effort to keep Wal-Mart out of New York City when they refused to ensure they’d create good jobs and give back to communities. Her office has secured millions of dollars in restitution for workers in wage theft cases in New York.



New York Attorney General Tish James addresses the RWDSU Convention.

She applauded the resilience and strength of RWDSU members and their union. James has lent a powerful voice to many RWDSU campaigns, rallies and picket lines, making it clear that she has the RWDSU and workers’ backs.

“You’ve seen and felt so many threats and challenges over the past few years; a global pandemic, layoffs, closures, illness, and tragedy. It’s been a time of testing, but we’ve survived it and all of you remain united in your fight for what you deserve, and I’m proud to be right there with you,” James said.

James discussed her office’s work to win back hundreds of thousands of dollars for car wash workers in New York, and her lawsuit against Amazon for its dangerous workplace conditions. She said she’s always there to support the RWDSU, and was proud to stand with the union at rallies demanding fair contracts at Macy’s, Bloomingdale’s, and H&M, to name a few.

“The true passion and power behind this movement is each and every one of you, and all of the members of the RWDSU. Bottom line, I will always stand with workers, and I will always stand with the RWDSU,” James said. “I will always stand with labor, for all that you do for workers across the entire country.” ■

## VP Harris Speaks of Power of Solidarity

Vice President Kamala Harris thanked President Stuart Appelbaum and the entire RWDSU for the work the union has done for the nation during her video address to the convention. It was a stirring message from the most pro-union Administration of our lifetime.

Vice President Harris said that for the Administration, the RWDSU and the American labor movement’s fight is their fight, and that we can win real change for working people if we work together.

“RWDSU members have provided a lifeline for so many Americans during the pandemic. And through it all, the RWDSU has never stopped fighting for the rights of working people, and to make sure workers are treated with dignity and respect,” Harris said. “We can’t do it without you; together we are charting a course for a new era of labor, in which all Americans have the opportunity to benefit from the power of solidarity.” ■



Vice President Kamala Harris spoke to the RWDSU Convention about the Biden Administration’s dedication to supporting unions and working people.

# UNION STRONG

## Lenore Miller Award Honors Ukrainian Labor Activists

**T**he Lenore Miller Award, named after RWDSU President Emeritus Lenore Miller, who served as RWDSU President from 1986 to 1998, honors people and organizations who embody the spirit of her life spent fighting for working people. This year's award honors brave union activists who live up to that ideal. The 2022 honorees of the Lenore Miller Award are the Confederation of Free Trade Unions of Ukraine and the Federation of Trade Unions of Ukraine. The award recognizes the members of these organizations for risking their lives every day to provide food and emergency shelters to those impacted by Russia's war of aggression against the Ukrainian people.

Accepting the award was Natalia Levitskaya, Deputy Chairperson of the Confederation of Free Trade Unions of Ukraine. She appeared via Zoom to address the RWDSU Convention. She discussed the terrible toll being inflicted on Ukraine, and how working Ukrainians are sacrificing their safety to help their country.

"Many Ukrainian union members are working under

dangerous, deadly conditions due to the war. Unionists are helping to aid children's hospitals, and providing aid and assistance to all of those affected by the Russian aggression," Levitskaya said.

"I'm honored to receive this award on behalf of countless courageous Ukrainians. We are all grateful for your solidarity and aid. Your support and assistance keeps us going, and helps save lives. This solidarity and support will help us win freedom, and restore peace to all of Ukraine."

President Emeritus Miller spoke to the Convention via Zoom after Levitskaya accepted the award that is named after her.

"Natalia, I wish you peace, health, and a good future for all of the people of the Ukraine," Miller said. ■

**President Emeritus Lenore Miller spoke about how the situation in Ukraine parallels her own family history.**



**Natalia Levitskaya accepted the Lenore Miller Award on behalf of all working people in Ukraine.**

## Winning Through Global Solidarity

**T**he RWDSU believes in global solidarity; working people should stand together no matter where they live. And, the RWDSU represents thousands of workers employed by global corporations, such as H&M, Zara, Pepsi and Coca-Cola. The greatest impact in dealing with these employers – including negotiating the strongest contracts – is by engaging with them on a global level.

That's why the RWDSU is deeply involved internationally and works with global trade union federations, including UNI Global Union on commerce and the IUF on food processing. Representatives from these organizations were at the RWDSU Convention to discuss global trade unionism with attendees.

Ruben Cortina, President of UNI Global Union, said that the militancy of the RWDSU, and the union's fight against inequality, greed, and exploitation, sets an international example and inspires unionists



**IUF General Secretary Sue Longley (left) spoke about solidarity between the world's Coca-Cola and Pepsi workers. UNI's Mathias Bolton (right) spoke about how global solidarity is helping to make workplaces safer across the globe.**

worldwide. "Just to see first-hand what you've done at Amazon gives us all hope for the future," Cortina – who flew from Argentina to support Amazon workers in Alabama first hand – said.

UNI Global Union Head of Commerce Mathias Bolton, who once worked at a New Jersey warehouse

as an RWDSU member and is still a proud card holding member of the union, spoke of how to build union power and influence across the globe. He discussed how the RWDSU's global involvement helped establish the Accord on Fire and Building Safety in Bangladesh, which has helped change one of the most dangerous places for garment workers to work into one of the safest.

"No matter where I go around the world, nothing makes me prouder than when people ask me where I come from; the RWDSU," Bolton said.

Sue Longley, General Secretary of the IUF, praised the RWDSU's global involvement, and pointed out the importance of global labor alliances in navigating the modern international economy. She pointed to the relationship between Coca-Cola workers around the globe, and the importance of the RWDSU's engagement with Coca-Cola workers worldwide. ■

# RWDSU 24TH QUADRENNIAL CONVENTION



RWDSU Convention attendees were excited to hear from Georgia activist and gubernatorial candidate Stacey Abrams.



Stacey Abrams discussed defending voting rights in Georgia.



Raphael Warnock (left) with RWDSU President Stuart Appelbaum.



Atlanta Mayor Andre Dickens welcomed the RWDSU to Atlanta.

## Stacey Abrams, Rev. Warnock, Mayor Dickens Welcome RWDSU to Georgia

### Speakers Stress Political Involvement

The hundreds of delegates, alternates, and guests who came to Atlanta, Georgia, for the RWDSU Convention were welcomed by Atlanta Mayor Andre Dickens, and addressed by Georgia gubernatorial candidate Stacey Abrams and Senator Raphael Warnock. All stressed the importance of political involvement and defending voting rights, which is especially critical in the South, and touched on the themes of solidarity, worker rights, and civil rights that were at the forefront of the RWDSU Convention.

Atlanta Mayor Andre Dickens opened the very first session of the convention, welcoming attendees and discussing how unions have helped countless families such as his own.

"My mother was a union member for three decades, and her strong union job helped support my family. I was a union member at a Kroger supermarket, and that helped support me through my education at Georgia Tech. Unions are part of the Dickens family lifeblood," Dickens said.

Dickens stressed that we all need to prepare for

the midterm elections, and that in Georgia, democracy itself hangs in the balance as we fight to protect the right to vote.

"We've got to get out to vote, to support our values, our candidates, our communities, and our futures," Dickens said.

Gubernatorial candidate Stacey Abrams noted her friendship and work with the RWDSU, and detailed how as governor, she would focus on safety, justice, and opportunity for all Georgians. She said that Georgia is becoming a shameful leader in voter suppression, and that the state needs a governor who believes in the right of all people to vote, regardless

of who they vote for. She said that under her leadership, she'd fight to make Georgia a beacon of opportunity for all.

"You shouldn't have to fight for dignity and to be treated right in the workplace. Our communities need to be lifted up, not stepped on," Abrams said.

U.S. Senator Raphael Warnock, who is currently running for a new term, discussed the ways he's fighting for working Georgians in Washington, D.C. Warnock talked about the fight to cap costs of medication and pass the PRO Act, which would level the playing field for union organizers by holding employers accountable if they intimidate their workers and interfere in union campaigns. Warnock stressed that he is laser focused on standing with working people in Georgia, and applauded the work of the RWDSU and the labor movement.

"I believe in dignity at work, and the dignity of workers. People who work hard ought to share in the prosperity they help create," Warnock said. "The work the RWDSU does brings a voice to those who otherwise would be left behind. I'm here to say thank you; your commitment to improving jobs and working conditions gets us closer to creating equality in our economy and our communities." ■

### CHECK OUT THE RWDSU 2022 ELECTION HUB

Learn more about all the election deadlines, options and resources to plan your vote in the 2022 election.

Snap to visit now!



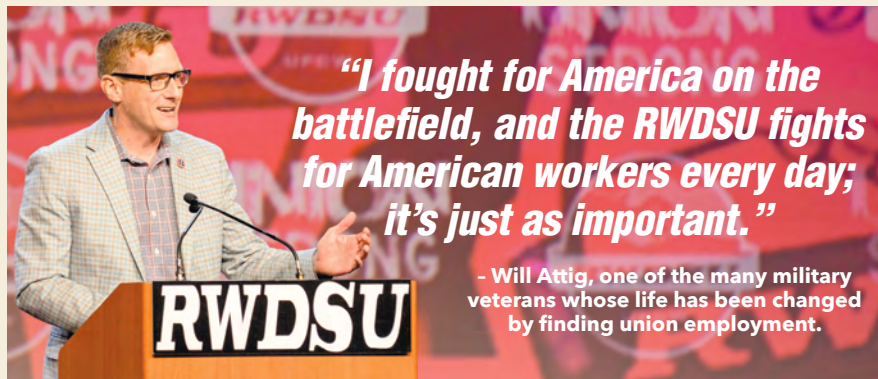
# UNION STRONG

## Supporting Vets with Union Jobs

**W**ill Attig, Executive Director of the AFL-CIO Veterans Council, gave a stirring presentation at the RWDSU Convention about the hardships many returning veterans face when they come home, and the difference unions can make in their lives. Attig recounted the challenges he faced after five years of combat service in Iraq and Afghanistan, and the trouble he had in finding a good job. He had no college degree, and he found door after door closed in his face, despite the fact that he was a heavily-decorated combat veteran who had served his country and displayed his leadership abilities. It's a story far too many veterans face; studies show that 35 percent of U.S. military veterans earn less than \$31,000 a year.

Attig's life changed forever when the "Helmets to Hardhats" program helped him begin a union career as a pipefitter.

"When I came home from four years in Afghanistan, there was a recession, I didn't have a college degree, and I couldn't get a job, and my dignity was stripped away. That all changed when I



got my union card," Attig said. "I fought for America on the battlefield, and the

RWDSU fights for American workers every day; it's just as important." He

discussed the work of the AFL-CIO Veterans Council, and how unions are helping veterans restore their dignity, and even save lives. The Veterans Council reaches out to vets to help them find union jobs, and also supports policies and legislation that lifts vets up and helps them realize their piece of the American Dream at home. The council's work and purpose is backed up by statistics; on average, a veteran with a union job earns over \$12,000 a year more than their non-union counterparts. ■

## Invocations Highlight RWDSU's Work

**M**onsignor Kevin Sullivan, Executive Director of Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of New York, paired his invocation opening the Wednesday session of the convention with praise for the RWDSU's efforts to support workers throughout the world.

"The RWDSU has stood up for workers in South Africa, met with bottling workers in Central America to affirm their human rights, and has fought for the safety of garment workers in Bangladesh. It's an example for all of us to fight not only for our-

selves, but others," Sullivan said.

During his invocation on Thursday, Rev. Richard Witt, Executive Director of Rural Migrant Ministries, praised the RWDSU's historic work in bringing a union voice to New York's farm workers.

"The RWDSU played an instrumental role in righting a 400-year wrong in which New York's farm workers were denied their basic rights. And our work continues in fighting to bring farm workers union contracts which can change their lives. Our partnership is helping to create a just world," Witt said. ■



# RWDSU UNION STRONG



▲ It was a beautiful day in New York City.



▲ Family fun at the Labor Day Parade in New York City.



▲ Larry Seigel and the Larrytones, fresh off their rousing performance at the RWDSU Convention, entertained the crowd in New York City.

## UNION PRIDE for Labor Day

**T**his Labor Day, we all celebrated a labor movement that is seeing more workers organizing than in decades. And, the RWDSU came out in force to mark the occasion.

It was a gorgeous September morning in New York City when the Labor Day Parade made its long-awaited return after a two-year pandemic-related hiatus. And New York's union members were chomping at the bit to get back onto Fifth Avenue and show their union pride once again; it was one of the most exciting, energized parades in years, with a huge turnout of over 40,000 enthusiastic marchers. Members from RWDSU Locals 1-S, 3, 338, 670, and 1102 joined together for the march up Fifth Avenue and past Central Park, and to celebrate the solidarity that makes all of us stronger.

In Newark, New Jersey, Local 108 was proud to march through the city in the Essex West Hudson Labor Council 31st Annual Celebration of Labor Parade. The local joined other unions and activists for the march along Broad Street from Newark City Hall to Washington Park.

In Indiana, Locals 835 and 810 joined other Indiana unions in Fort Wayne for the return of the Indiana Labor Day Picnic. RWDSU families enjoyed hot dogs and chili, and a gorgeous afternoon with their union. ■



▲ RWDSU Indiana Joint Board President Lloyd Schaper distributes RWDSU-made Prairie Farms dairy products at the Labor Day Picnic.



▲ Local 108 showed their union pride in Newark, New Jersey.



▲ There was hot dogs and chili for all in Fort Wayne, Indiana.

▼ Hundreds of RWDSU members marched up Fifth Avenue in New York.



# RWDSU HEALTH AND SAFETY GUIDE

## Seizing the Moment for Safer Workplaces

**W**e know that our power and ability to create a better future for ourselves and our families depends on our union strength, and the vibrancy of the labor movement.

We know we must significantly expand union membership if we are to survive. These are extraordinary times of challenges and opportunities for us. A recent poll indicated over 70 percent of the American public support unions. This is the highest level in decades. At the same time corporations are fighting hard to prevent a leveling of the playing field for organizing and winning first contracts, and they continue to vigorously promote and finance politicians and judges openly hostile to workers' rights.

The pandemic put a spotlight on many important issues. We, the workers in food processing, health care, and retail were among the essential workers who continued to provide vital services in the face of serious on the job health risks. When RWDSU members saw that many of our employers were unwilling to make basic, meaningful commitments to protect our health, we went public and sounded an alarm which was heard across the nation. Unorganized workers saw the importance of a union and reached out to us for help. When we took on Amazon – the most powerful employer in the world – we truly inspired other workers. And the number of new organizing campaigns around the country has exploded, thanks in large part to us.

Workplace health and safety has become a core issue during the pandemic. We have learned about the most effective means of reducing our exposure to hazards and helping prevent disease and injury. But workplace health and safety goes far beyond one infectious disease. It includes all hazardous exposures, workplace conditions, production

procedures, and corporate policies and practices which have a negative impact on our physical and mental well-being. It is a universally shared expectation that when we leave for work we will come back home alive and well. This is why health and safety is such an important core issue in organizing and building our union membership.

**WE ARE  
SAFER TOGETHER,  
AND WE ARE  
UNION STRONG!**

Workers today want to organize because they are fed up not only with the physical conditions at their workplaces, but the understaffing, unreasonable production demands and schedules, and constant monitoring. These factors are creating turnover rates of 100 percent or more in many warehouses and other facilities, as workers burn out physically and mentally. And they view management as those who see them as disposable goods. So this is our challenge because we know that without change nothing changes. We need to communicate that unions can make that change, that we have training programs, committees, contract language, grievance procedures and other resources to take on fighting what's wrong in those workplaces where folks are wanting to organize. The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) does not have standards covering a number of significant hazards

workers are experiencing currently in their work: like understaffing, excessive production speeds, repetitive work, lifting and other causes of ergonomically related injuries. There are also no standards on heat or cold, air quality, workplace harassment and violence. But it doesn't really matter whether OSHA doesn't have a specific standard or not. If exposure to the hazard is causing problems, it needs to be dealt with as soon as possible! We need to identify and document health and safety issues of concern as part of our internal and external organizing efforts.

We can start with ourselves. What workplace conditions are a problem for you? Why? If it is a problem for you it is most likely a problem for your coworkers as well. What has been the employer's response? These concerns should not remain as secrets. We need to share our thoughts and observations on a regular basis in whatever manner is most inclusive and effective. Our investigation needs to go beyond the "official" data. We all know that a lot more of our co-workers suffer injuries than get reported. Why is that the case? How does the employer treat injured workers? How does that square with their pronounced commitment to a safe and healthy workplace? How many of us keep working day after day even though we are often in great pain after our shift? Working together we have the knowledge, experience, common sense and strength to clean up our workplaces and protect our health and safety. And we have the ability to share our insights and encouragement with our unorganized brothers and sisters about the important changes a union can make. We are not third-party outsiders, we are a union family for the benefit of all workers. We are safer together, and we are UNION STRONG! ■



**RWDSU Local 108 is fighting for safer workplaces for health care facility workers. Health and safety is an important issue in union organizing campaigns and in everything the union does.**