

**Wisconsin State AFL-CIO
31st Biennial Convention Summary**

September 30th, 2020

Webcast Live from the Fiserv Forum

Home of the Milwaukee Bucks

Virtual2020wi.org

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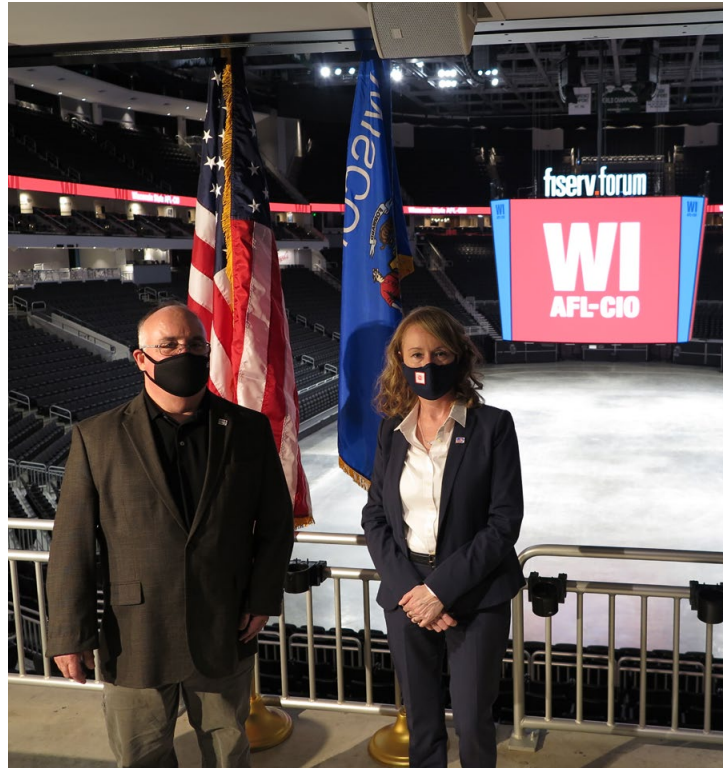
Virtual
2020

31st Biennial Convention

Zoomin' Live in Unprecedented Times

For the continued health and safety of our members and our communities during the COVID-19 coronavirus global health pandemic, the 31st Biennial Convention of the Wisconsin AFL-CIO was held virtually via Zoom webinar livestream. The convention was streamed live from the union-built Fiserv Forum on Wednesday, September 30, 2020, beginning at 1:00 p.m.

Credentialed delegates received an invitation email with unique login to attend the convention safely from home. Delegates heard from invited guests who joined the convention by recorded video, live video stream, and in-person attendance. Convention speakers included Governor Tony Evers, Lieutenant Governor Mandela Barnes, Senator Tammy Baldwin, Congressman Mark Pocan, Milwaukee Mayor Tom Barrett, Milwaukee County Executive David Crowley, AFL-CIO President Richard Trumka, Attorney General Josh Kaul, author and former New York Times labor reporter Steven Greenhouse, economist and author Professor Gordon Lafer, Wisconsin State Treasurer Sarah Godlewski, Representative Gordon Hintz, State Senator Janet Bewley, Associate Director of COWS Laura Dresser, Senior Vice President of the Milwaukee Bucks Alex Lasry, Interim President of the Wisconsin Regional Training Partnership Sheila Cochran, and Vice President Joe Biden! The convention concluded on September 30, 2020 with a virtual rendition of "Solidarity Forever."



Opening Ceremonies

Wisconsin AFL-CIO President Stephanie Bloomingdale called the Convention to Order. President of the Professional Fire Fighters of Wisconsin Mahlon Mitchell and the Professional Fire Fighters of Wisconsin Honor Guard presented the colors and led the Pledge of Allegiance. Reverend Teresa Thomas-Boyd provided an invocation for delegates. Pam Fendt, President of the Milwaukee Area Labor Council, welcomed delegates. Dan Bukiewicz, President of the Milwaukee Building and Construction Trades Council, provided an overview on labor and communities partnerships during the construction of the Fiserv Forum.

A Year of Challenges Reinforces Need for Unions

This year has seen great challenges for workers across our state and nation. Our Virtual 2020 Convention addressed the issues of the moment and featured important speakers, Labor 2020 campaign news, updates on critical issues facing Wisconsin's workers, and moving forward with solidarity.

From a global health pandemic that underscores the need for safe workplaces and healthcare access, to historic job losses impacting millions of working Americans, to long-standing structural racism and

injustice, there was much for workers to overcome this year. Working people united through our unions remain the greatest force to deliver safety and equity at work, healthier communities with healthcare for all and social, racial, and economic justice. The only way forward is to organize and build power for workers and our communities together as one united movement. The importance of having a voice on the job and strong unions is critical for the well-being of all of Wisconsin's working men and women, our families, and our communities.

Now is the time for us to come together safely in unity to organize and vote to strengthen our voices, build power, and advance the rights of all working people. We pledge to put in the work to elect candidates this November 3 who will prioritize workers and our unions. We must build back better with unions. As Wisconsin union members at this 31st Biennial Convention, we strengthen our resolve to stand together to fight for the health, safety, and freedom of every worker to collectively bargain so that we can have a strong, stable, and fair economic recovery with an expanded middle class now and for the next generation to come.



President Bloomingdale Keynote: Politicians and Corporate Bosses Should Have Listened to Labor

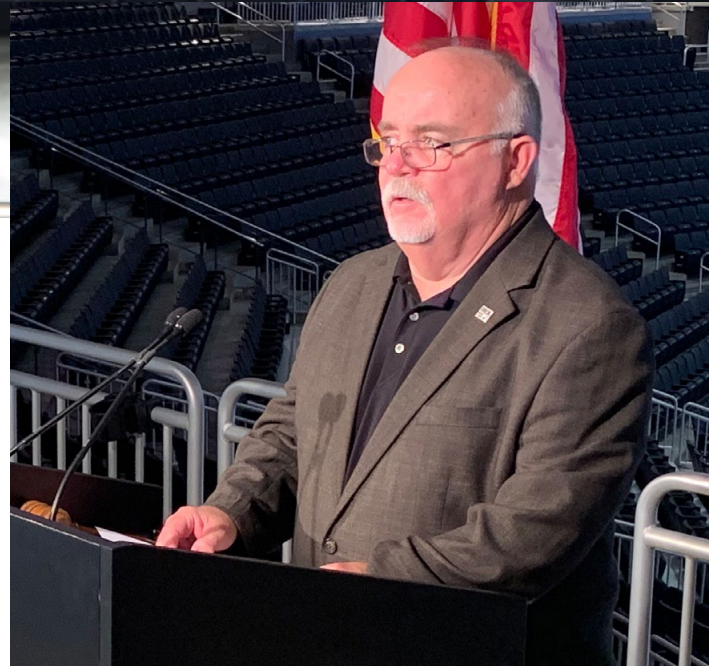
President Bloomingdale delivered a moving and memorable speech highlighting the heroic work of Wisconsin workers. Bloomingdale urged leaders to prioritize an American-made supply chain for PPE and covid testing supplies and follow the lead of working people serving our communities.

Excerpts from President Bloomingdale's 31st Convention address:

"The original outbreak of the coronavirus was an act of nature largely beyond our control. Much of the damage it caused, however, was the result of deliberate deception coupled with an economic system that for too long has placed profits ahead of people. The impacts of the pandemic on millions of Americans would have been far less severe if politicians & corporate bosses would have listened to what we in labor have been saying for years.

Take just one example: PPE. For essential workers expected to stay on the job when the pandemic hit, the shortage of personal protective equipment forced them to make the terrible choice between their safety and a paycheck.

Twenty years ago, the vast majority of the PPE used by American workers was made right here in the USA, and as a result, workers had



the equipment they needed. Now, in 2020, nearly all of that critical production has been off-shored to China.

The lesson is clear—if we want a resilient economy capable of responding when a crisis hits, we need to be able to buy American, and to do that, we need to support our workers who make American. Exporting jobs means importing trouble. Simple as that. We told you so.

Brothers and sisters, in these unprecedented times, we will not work out our salvation in a selfish way, but by being the heroes those who went before us call on us to be. We will do the work history has put before us, to build the power of our fellow workers, to ensure the voice of the people is not silenced, to see our communities through these hard times and build back better. Brothers and sisters, together we will do these things; together we will set Wisconsin and our nation back on course; together we will be heroes."

Why Fiserv Forum? Union Built and Run

The Fiserv Forum was built by union members and it is union members who make the Forum's live events happen!

Completed in 2018 after just over two years of construction, it was union men and women of the Wisconsin Building Trades whose skills and dedication took the site from rubble to wow. A Project Labor Agreement was used to ensure good wages for local workers, project safety, and to develop a career pipeline for skilled workers.

Union members of IATSE Local 18, SEIU Local 1, and the Milwaukee Area Service and Hospitality Organization make the venue a success and ensure every event runs smoothly.

We look forward to when we can safely enjoy in-person events again. Until then, we continue to support union members and working people in every way we can.

Secretary-Treasurer Delie: Time to Tell Donald Trump His Time Is Up

Secretary-Treasurer Dennis Delie addressed delegates live from the Fiserv Forum, highlighting the long-term impact of former Governor Scott Walker's mishandling of Wisconsin's unemployment system. The Walker Administration enacted staff and funding cuts and put off modernization and technological upgrades that left the system unprepared to handle the sudden influx of thousands of workers during the pandemic.

Delie highlighted Donald Trump's callousness towards working people and his failed response to the COVID-19 pandemic. "He started out by lying to the American public about the threat. Then, he refused to acknowledge the severity of the pandemic. His delayed response and lack of preparedness undoubtedly contributed to the spread of the virus and the astounding loss of life that has now exceeded over 200,000 lives and the loss of millions of jobs," said Delie.

Delie highlighted that Trump's tax bill did nothing to help workers, it just lined the pockets of shareholders and helped companies ship jobs overseas. He also called out President Trump for paying just \$750 in federal taxes as well as spreading lies about election fraud to divide our nation with propaganda. "We can't lose sight of Trump's ongoing assault on unions and the laws and agencies designed to enforce worker rights," explained Delie. Under Trump, OSHA has been underfunded and understaffed with fewer inspectors than ever before. Trump has weakened the Department of Labor and appointed an anti-labor attorney as its Secretary. He has left NLRB board seats vacant and implemented anti-union rule changes; rolled back worker safety standards and Obama-era overtime protections; and watered-down apprenticeship standards. It is time to vote Donald Trump out of office."

AFL-CIO's Trumka: America is Seeing Union Members in New Light

AFL-CIO President Richard Trumka joined the Convention via Zoom, praising the work of union members on the ground in Wisconsin. He highlighted the labor movement's ability to come together to support each other and help our communities in times of crisis.

"Even with all of the uncertainty and pain, something good is happening in America," said AFL-CIO President Trumka. "Working people are showing up and fighting as one united labor movement. You've created the Union Mask Brigade, sewing and distributing personal protective equipment to essential workers. You've shown up for families who are struggling right now with your Be a Hero food drives. And you've sent Senator Ron Johnson a loud and clear message: pass the HEROES Act now! Union members have answered the call of COVID-19. Every day and in every way. We've served. We've sacrificed. We've healed. We've done it all."

Citing Joe Biden's plans to boost union rights and our economy by passing the PRO Act and making key investments in manufacturing and infrastructure, President Trumka called on union members in Wisconsin to do all we can to elect Joe Biden.

"To defeat the coronavirus, economic inequality and systemic racism, we're going to have to remove this dangerous president from the White House. This November, we need to elect Joe Biden. We know Joe and Joe knows us. He has been to our union halls. He has marched on our picket lines. That's Joe. Joe Biden wants a future that is "Made in All of America" by all of America's working people. That will create more good, union jobs. And Joe Biden supports the PRO Act so we can form a union freely and fairly and ban right to work once and for all. Wisconsin, the labor movement is strong. We're united. And when we show up, we get the job done!"



Highlights *from the 31st Biennial Convention*



Lieutenant Governor of Wisconsin Mandela Barnes:

"This public health crisis has further exposed how far we have to go in order for all workers to be safe, to be protected and to also be supported. Especially our essential workers. We're going to fight with vigor to address all the inequities that continue to divide us and hold us back. We are going to go forward in faith and in justice for a brighter tomorrow."



Steven Greenhouse, author and former New York Times labor reporter:

"The 40-hour workweek and pensions and health coverage and middle class wages were not handed down by God, they were won by unions through decades of worker struggle. We as a nation badly need to strengthen worker power and labor unions to raise wages, build a fairer economy, and to make sure all workers are treated with dignity."



U.S. Senator Tammy Baldwin: "This is the moment to imagine and build a new American economy for our families and the next generation. An economy where all Americans enjoy a fair return for work and an equal chance to get ahead."

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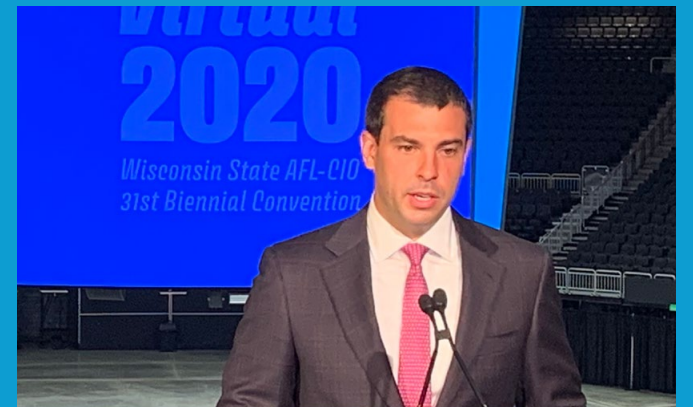
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Milwaukee County Executive David Crowley: "When unions organize and working people unite throughout Milwaukee County and our state, the lives are improved for everyone. We see higher wages, safer working conditions, and more equitable economic growth. As we continue to navigate the pandemic, it becomes increasingly clear the importance of unions for working people. When unions thrive, we all thrive. I will help amplify that message whenever I can and always."



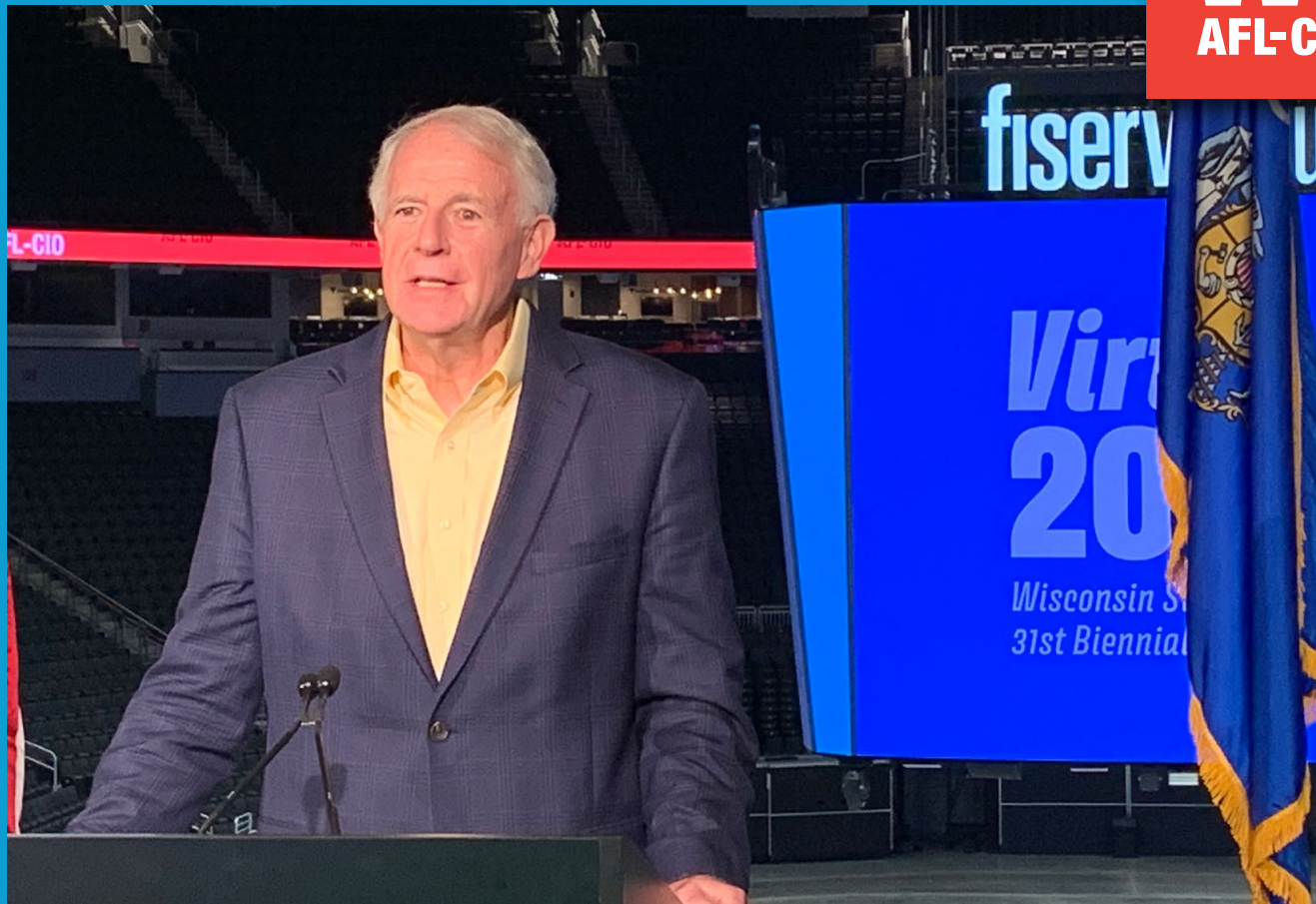
Wisconsin Governor Tony Evers: "We need to make sure that union rights are back on the table. And get rid of Right to Work. This only happens if we work together to put our workers and our communities first."



Alex Lasry, Senior Vice President of the Milwaukee Bucks: "We decided to go union because we wanted the best trained, the hardest working, and most skilled workers you could find. Those workers are from Wisconsin and they're union strong."

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Milwaukee Mayor Tom Barrett: “It’s the members of the AFL-CIO who are out there on the frontlines providing us with the leadership that we need so that they can take care of their families at a time when their families need them more than ever.”



Congressman Mark Pocan: “As a 30-year member of IUPAT, my labor colleagues and I, we really are trying to make sure that the voices of workers are fully integrated into all that we do at the Capitol. Thank you for the work that you’re doing, for everything you will do towards November, and everything we will do together in the next session for workers.”



Wisconsin State Treasurer Sarah Godlewski: “As the state’s chief financial officer, I can tell you how important unions are to the economy. Unions are critical, they don’t hinder. Take a look at the top 5 economies in US World and Report. All but one are pro-union states.”

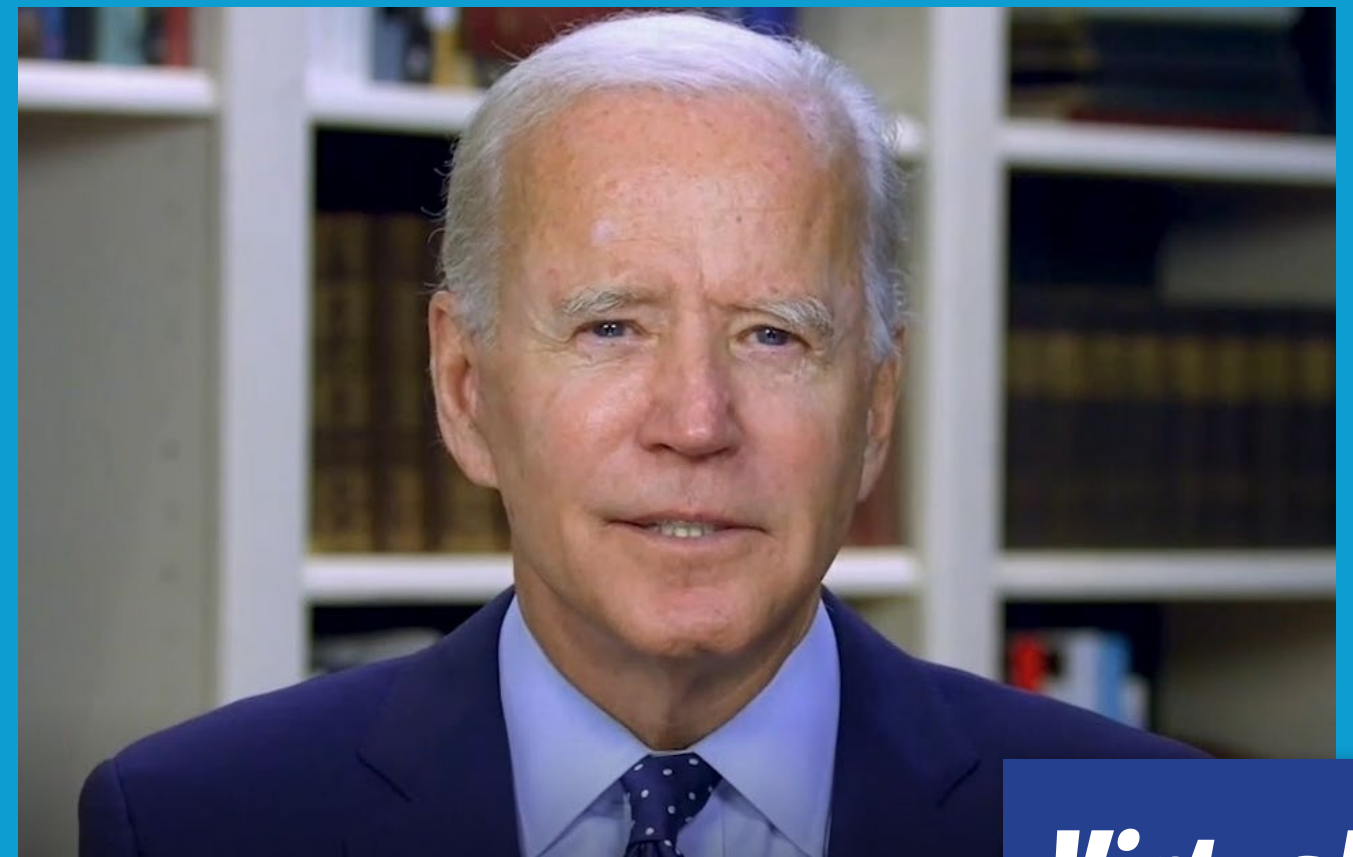
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Professor Gordon Lafer, Economist: “It’s vital to restore the right to organizing as a real right that exists in reality not just on paper. This process is surprisingly undemocratic. We need to make the right to organize real again.”



State Senator Janet Bewley: “It takes partnership, it takes coming together, it takes union to get things done. All across the state, we are working parallel standing beside you to make sure that all working families in our state know that they can have security, great wages and benefits. And also, that we are going to be working together to make sure work is safe.”



Presidential candidate Joe Biden: “So many of you have stepped up and led the way, saving lives, feeding our families, teaching our kids in the toughest of time, reminding us all just what an essential worker really is. You’re the steel threads that knit together our nation’s safety net. Unions have been fighting for workers and power for a long time. It’s long past time Washington fought for you as hard as you’ve fought for your communities. You deserve a government that doesn’t just praise you, that protects you and pays you.”

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Josh Kaul
Attorney General of the State of Wisconsin

Attorney General Josh Kaul: "I believe my job as Attorney General, when it comes to protecting elections, is to fight to make sure that every lawfully cast ballot is counted. I am going to fight to do that both before the election and after the election happens. It is vital that the winner of our election is chosen not by the courts and certainly not by any candidates but by the voters."

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Julie Greene Collier
Director for Mobilization of the AFL-CIO

Julie Greene Collier, Mobilization Director for the AFL-CIO: "We've had to adapt, adjust, and revamp what our programs look like in order to keep our brothers and sisters safe, but our goals remain the same. To win for workers up and down the ballot."

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Sheila Cochran, Interim President of WRTP-BIG STEP: "We have the heart and soul of the labor movement at our hands every day. We are reaching people in non-traditional roles who want to be in manufacturing, who want to be construction and we work very hard to make sure they have all the skills they need to be great workers on the worksite. We don't care where you come from, we care that we help you get a better job and better circumstances."



Representative Gordon Hintz: "This session we saw Republicans were more interested in making Governor Evers a failure, in suffocating the process, in meeting the fewest days ever, passing the fewest bills ever. It's a cynical style of governing that you can only get away with if you've drawn maps that ensure you're re-elected every cycle. Thankfully, Gov. Evers has made decision that while hard, looked out for the public interest."



Laura Dresser, Associate Director of COWS: "There's three emerging groups in the new covid economy. The unemployed; those who risk virus exposure at work; and those who can work from home and not be exposed to virus via workplace interactions. For workers who risk exposure through customer or client interactions, a voice on job, the ability to speak up for and get access to needed equipment and protective safety equipment as well as public policies that support those efforts will make an enormous difference going forward."

Federal Labor Law Fails Workers

Economist and University of Oregon Professor Gordon Lafer took a deep-dive into the anti-union industry where companies spend big bucks to skirt or break federal labor law during NLRB elections. Lafer finds that anti-union scare tactics are intense, overwhelming and omnipresent as workers organize and that companies frequently break the law to avoid a union contact “as a matter of course because penalties are so weak in federal labor law.”

The right to organize is about solving the crisis of inequality and letting people support their families. We must fix labor law to fix our broken economy. A union contract is the best path to a more just, equal, and fair society for all.

Governor Evers:

Legislators Need to Hold Up Their End of the Deal

Noting the inaction of the Wisconsin Legislature, which hasn't passed legislation since April 2020, Gov. Evers urged politicians to put people above politics.

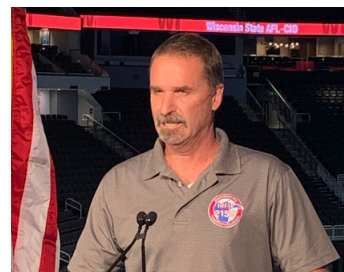
“We have much work to do to ensure not just our workplaces, but our communities are safe, equitable and support the workers who keep the state afloat,” Gov. Evers told delegates. “Wisconsin workers over the past seven months have risen to the challenges facing us, risking their own health and safety, and the health and safety of their families, to keep our communities and economy running. The pandemic further highlighted the importance of the work you do and the value of unions that represent working folks all across the state.”

Evers provided an overview of the many ways in which we can support working people through the pandemic citing strong unions, prevailing wage laws, and getting additional funding through the CARES Act into local communities across the state.



Reports and Resolutions!

The report of the Rules Committee was read by George Walls, President of Communications Workers of America Local 4603, and adopted by delegates. The report of the Credentials Committee was read by Mike Follett, Business Manager of IBEW Local 2150, and adopted by delegates. Scott Van Derven, National Association of Letter Carriers, read the report of the Resolutions Committee. All Resolutions were adopted by delegates.



2020 Resolutions

Adopted at the 31st Convention of the Wisconsin AFL-CIO

- No. 1 Protect Workers from Coronavirus
- No. 2 Reaffirmation of Our Commitment to Fight for Racial Justice
- No. 3 Support the United States Postal Service
- No. 4 In Support of State & Federal Prevailing Wage & Project Labor Agreements
- No. 5 In Support of Teachers and Educational Professionals
- No. 6 Support for Free and Fair Elections and Power the Polls
- No. 7 Labor Law Reform Now! Pass the PRO Act
- No. 8 Our Decree: The Union Mask Brigade: All Workers Should be Provided with PPE
- No. 9 Protecting Social Security and Supporting Retirement for All
- No. 10 In Support of Apprenticeships
- No. 11 Healthcare Access and Equity
- No. 12 Buy WI
- No. 13 Support Passage of Fair Work Week Laws
- No. 14 Support for Path to Power
- No. 15 Labor 2020
- No. 16 Reaffirms Past Convention Action on Legislative Issues