

## 2019 AFL CIO Conference Orlando, Florida



Opening ceremony led by President Mike Williams

The lineup of speakers was inspiring even if the times are not! Unionists from across the state and nation, politicians from the Florida Legislature and Cabinet were united in the message: NOW IS THE TIME!

D Taylor, an organizer from Nevada, brought people to their feet with his call to ORGANIZE. He drew the similarities between FL and NV: both are Right To Work (RTW) states, both were built on a dream (legalized gambling, Disney) and both are hot. He said unionists should be glad to be RTW because 'it keeps you at your scrappy best' and you always know clearly who your friends are (and who are enemies).



Installation of new officers.

The similarities end there, however. Nevada unionists have elected the only two female senators to represent the state in DC, a Democratic governor AND a Democratic Legislature. And it has made a BIG DIFFERENCE.

Taylor went on to call Florida a "1% state" because every election it is the percentage by which Republicans claim victory. "We cannot live with 1% margin of victory...we must be proactive!" He was optimistic in his forecast to change that margin and instead send PRO UNION candidates to state houses, governorships, senators and ultimately the White House. He said Florida, along with California and Texas are not only among the most populous states but also the destinations for people to grow and change. He fired up people to make unions BE THE CHANGE...Take risks...Learn from past losses

and capitalize on the growing approval rating of unions! He got a series of applause for his reminders that we stand on the shoulders of BIG risk takers; that if unions don't expand in the South, the South will bring RTW and other bad labor practices north as they did in WI and MI.

He went on to correct perceptions. Mainly Taylor asserted that "Labor unions do politics occasionally, we are not a political organization that does occasional labor work." He challenged workers to "GO BIG OR GO HOME". There is no time for timidity. Members must make the time to GOTV: Get Out The Vote. Register new voters. Be sure family and friends are registered and that they know labor issues and will support working families.

Florida AFL CIO President Mike Williams reminded the audience of how great the labor contribution is to our fellow citizens when there is crisis. He shared a brief film of union members in Florida rushing disaster relief after Hurricane Michael and detailed the substantial amounts of time, money and supplies that our members had made to each recovery. There was an ongoing collection for the latest victims in the Bahamas as continued proof of union members willingness to open hearts and pocketbooks for others.

Elected officials gave similar praise and detailed ongoing and upcoming issues before the Florida State Legislature and national Congress.



Steve Barrish & NYSUT RC 43  
VP Felicia Bruce - Retired  
Educators from Florida & New  
York: Advocates for public  
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