

At AFL-CIO meeting, Rolando appointed finance committee vice chairman, more



NALC President Fredric Rolando was appointed vice chairman of the AFL-CIO's finance committee during the federation's executive council winter meeting in San Diego during the last week of February.

Rolando is among the presidents of the AFL-CIO's member unions who serve on the council as vice presidents. The entire council meets in person at least twice a year to consider business regarding the union movement and various labor policies.

In other business, the council declined to hold a vote on whether to endorse a presidential candidate in the 2016 election campaign.

In an e-mail to executive council members, AFL-CIO President Richard Trumka said that, after much discussion and conversation, "I have concluded that there is broad consensus for the AFL-CIO to remain neutral in the presidential primaries for the time being and refrain from endorsing any candidate at this moment."

Trumka said that the federation's leadership encourages "affiliated unions to pursue their own deliberations with their members and come to their own endorsement decisions, if any, through open and rigorous debate."

The threat of 'on demand' work

At its meetings, the AFL-CIO executive council typically approves statements on issues that affect the interests of working families, ongoing struggles for justice for workers and more. So in San Diego in February, the

council approved a number of statements in an effort to set a blueprint for how organized labor should move forward when working with legislators on crafting public policy.

The statements particularly focused on several bills introduced and issues addressed at the state and federal levels—issues such as workers' rights, retirement security, investing in America's infrastructure and ensuring democracy.

Of particular interest to letter carriers was a statement concerning the rising class of "on demand" workers, something that has the potential to threaten postal employees' jobs.

"While the number of people who earn a majority of their income from work 'on demand' via digital platforms constitutes only a tiny slice of the workforce today," the statement said, "some predict this kind of work could become much more prevalent in the future.

"Under current law, only workers who are defined as 'employees' are protected by the National Labor Relations Act," it said. "Encouraging on-demand companies to rely on a workforce of independent contractors who lack the rights and protections of employees is bad public policy."

So far, four states have passed legislation defining the on-demand workforce as independent contractors; five other states have similar legislation pending. As more and more companies are created around new technologies and innovations, their workers need to have good jobs that are fully protected under the National Labor Relations Act—just as letter carriers' jobs are.

AFL-CIO is working on efforts to grant on-demand employees, such as Uber drivers, a status that will allow them to receive benefits such as overtime, workers' compensation and a minimum wage.

"We believe there is no basis for the pessimistic view that good jobs soon will be a thing of the past," the council's statement said. "Employee status by itself is no guarantee of decent work, but the rights and protections of employee status long have been the foundation on which we strengthen our bargaining power."

The AFL-CIO's statement on this issue called for strengthening the collective-bargaining power of working people as well as granting on-demand employees a status that will allow them to receive benefits such as overtime, workers' compensation and a minimum wage.

Foundations threatened

The council also approved a statement about the state of the country's infrastructure, pointing out how the ongoing water crisis in Flint, MI, is one clear example of what happens when governments don't invest in public services. (See also "Water safety a concern for carriers in Flint, MI," in the March *Postal Record*, available for review at nalc.org.)

The AFL-CIO called for rebuilding America's infrastructure to protect its citizens from disasters similar to the one that Flint is experiencing—or worse. It added that coupling such



investment with project-labor agreements (PLAs) can help ensure quality and efficiency on the job.

Further, the statement encouraged the use of American-made products as a way to boost the country's economy, noting that in states such as Illinois, Kentucky, Massachusetts, Maine, New York and Virginia, legislation has been introduced that would require American-made products to be used in certain circumstances, such as building projects.

A separate statement served as a reminder about how important it is for the entire labor movement—including letter carriers—to continue to be engaged in elections as voters, activists and volunteers.

For there to be electoral successes, the council said, it is imperative that everyone use one of this country's most fundamental rights: the right to vote. The council's statement reflected the body's agreement on several principles:

- expansion and protection of voting rights at the federal and state levels,
- preventing corporations and the wealthy few from buying

elections,

- changing structural rules to ensure that every vote and every voice counts equally, and
- reshaping the political debate to demand full democracy at every level of government.

The council noted that several state initiatives have been introduced and even passed to help make voting easier—for example, universal voter registration and no-excuses vote-by-mail. (See page 12 to learn about one such recent success in Florida.) But it warned that there remain other state-level bills that could make it harder to vote, such as voter I.D. laws and restrictions on early voting, absentee voting and voter registration.

During its sessions that week, the council also discussed a wide range of items related to the union movement, including plans for labor's get-out-the-vote efforts in 2016 and beyond and the number of anti-union battles taking place across the country at the state level.

You can access the full statements on these and other issues at aflcio.org/about/exec-council. **PR**

Deadlines set for NALC national convention

Delegate eligibility lists for the 70th biennial national convention in Los Angeles have been mailed to all branches. The lists must be completed and returned to Secretary-Treasurer Nicole Rhine's office at NALC Headquarters no later than June 15 in order for branch representatives to be registered as delegates to the convention. The convention is set for Aug. 15-19.

All proposed amendments to the

NALC Constitution to be submitted for consideration at the convention must be received by Rhine's office by June 15. That date is 60 days in advance of the convention, as prescribed by the *Constitution*. Proposed amendments will appear in this July's *Postal Record* for the membership to review.

Resolutions to be considered by delegates also must be received by the June 15 deadline in order to be printed in the *Resolutions and Amendments*

book provided to delegates. Resolutions received after June 15 still may be considered at the convention.

Branches wishing to sell items in the designated branch sales area during the convention must contact Rhine's office no later than April 18 to secure guidelines and forms. The completed forms must be returned to Headquarters by May 2.

Go to nalc.org for more convention news. **PR**