

REPORT ON THE 35TH UAW CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION

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The 35th UAW Constitutional Convention took place in the Motor City – Detroit, Michigan – from June 14th thru June 17th 2010. Your elected delegates were: Carlo Bishop, Allan “Coby” Millender, Scott Houldieson, Carlos Lara, & Ryan Rettig. We were five delegates of a little under 1,100 delegates who attended the convention.

The convention began with an address from Michigan Governor Jennifer Granholm. She made some interesting comments, but hearing speeches from dignitaries was not the purpose for which you sent us to the convention. That’s why I’ll skip over the comments by the many dignitaries.

There was a sense of excitement over the impending International Executive Board Election. For the first time in eighteen year there would be an announced challenger for UAW President.

The several committees that made the necessary preparations for the convention were introduced. The committees were the Rules Committee, Resolutions Committee, Constitution Committee, and Credentials Committee.

Next President Gettelfinger commented that over eight years of economic downturn and declining membership that Secretary/ Treasurer Elizabeth Bunn and the International Executive Board did not spend one penny of the principal from the operating funds. This was accomplished partly by some painful mid-contract modifications for International Staff and Clerical employees.

Unfortunately the resolutions passed at local union membership meetings across the country never were brought to the floor. Instead the only resolutions

that were considered were those that came out of the Resolutions Committee.

Early in the convention a couple of delegates motioned to have the committee’s resolutions passed as a whole without debate. This was to allow debate on the resolutions submitted by local unions. The motions both failed to pass, so debate continued throughout Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday. The convention concluded without ever hearing any of the resolutions submitted from Local Union memberships.

The resolutions that came out of the committee were all good. When delegates rose to speak against any of these resolutions, including myself, our opposition was on the basis that they did not go far enough. For example: I spoke against a resolution titled Fair Labor Standards.

The problem I had with this resolution was that it made no mention of the eight hour day. I told the delegates about the abuse of your extended work day. I told them that you would often be required to work 10.7 hours for three day; then have what should have been overtime cut out from under you by going short hours on the fourth day.

I said we need to get back to the motto from a nationwide strike in 1887 for a struggle to win the eight hour day, a struggle in which workers lost their lives, a struggle which gave rise to the International Labor Day. That motto is “Eight hours for work, eight hours for rest, and eight hours for our families.”

Wednesday was election day. The convention hall was decorated with thousands of balloons and posters. The only office that had a challenger was that of International President. As you

know Bob King was elected President by a wide margin. His challenger, Gary Walkowicz conceded that his candidacy was a symbolic stand against concessions.

Carlos Lara and I campaigned on our opposition to concessions and followed through on our promise to you. We voted for Gary Walkowicz as we said we would do.

We took that stand on behalf of the members that elected us. It is important, as with any election, to come together in solidarity to represent you, and to face the many challenges that the UAW must confront over the next four years.

Your newly elected International Executive Board is: President; Bob King was elected to fill the vacancy created by the retirement of President Gettelfinger.

Secretary/ Treasurer; Our very own Region 4 Director Dennis Williams was elected to fill the vacancy created by the retirement of Secretary/ Treasurer Elizabeth Bunn.

Vice Presidents; General Holiefield, and Jimmy Settles were reelected while Director for Organizing, Cindy Estrada and Region 9 Director Joe Ashton were elected to fill the vacancies created by the retirement of Vice President Cal Rapson and the election of Vice President Bob King as President.

Director Region 4; Region 4 Assistant Director Ron McInroy was elected to fill the vacancy created by the promotion of Director Dennis Williams.

Through the democratic process of the convention many of your concerns were brought to the attention of the UAW International Executive Board. Thank you for giving me the honor to represent you there.