

American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations



815 Sixteenth Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20006
(202) 637-5000
www.aflcio.org

JOHN J. SWEENEY
PRESIDENT

Gerald W. McEntee
Frank Hurt
Michael Goodwin
Robert A. Scardelletti
Boyd D. Young
Elizabeth Bunn
Terence O'Sullivan
Cheryl Johnson, R.N.
Edward C. Sullivan
Edward J. McElroy Jr.
Baxter M. Atkinson
Nat LaCour
Michael T. O'Brien

EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

RICHARD L. TRUMKA
SECRETARY-TREASURER

Morton Bahr
Gloria T. Johnson
William Lucy
Andrew L. Stern
Dennis Rivera
Michael J. Sullivan
Harold Schaitberger
Bruce Raynor
William Burrus
Ron Gettelfinger
John Gage
Jack Cipriani

Gene Upshaw
Clayola Brown
Leon Lynch
John M. Bowers
Stuart Appelbaum
James P. Hoffa
Edwin D. Hill
Clyde Rivers
Leo W. Gerard
James Williams
Joseph T. Hansen
Vincent Giblin

LINDA CHAVEZ-THOMPSON
EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT

Michael Sacco
Patricia Friend
Arturo S. Rodriguez
R. Thomas Buffenbarger
John W. Wilhelm
Capt. Duane Woerth
Joseph J. Hunt
Cecil Roberts
Melissa Gilbert
John J. Flynn
William H. Young
William Hite

For Immediate Release

Contact: Lane Windham (202) 637-5018
or Suzanne Ffolkes

AFL-CIO Exec. Council Strongly Supports Sweeney Redirection Plans to Increase Support for Organizing and Grassroots Mobilization, Expand Leadership Diversity 'Winning for Working Families' Plan Up for Vote at Convention

(Washington, June 27)—The AFL-CIO Executive Council—the federation's 54-member leadership body—overwhelmingly approved key planks of the *Winning for Working Families* reform plan put forward by AFL-CIO President John Sweeney, meeting here today. This is the first time the full Executive Council has voted on elements of his plan.

The Council voted to send two proposals for sweeping change to the 13-million member labor federation's July convention: One increases resources and capacity for organizing and member mobilization for politics and legislation and prioritizes grassroots at the state and local level. A second resolution supports increased leadership diversity in the movement. The Executive Council also approved a new two-year budget that funds the program.

"America's working people need strong and united unions now more than ever—that's why this plan encourages increased organizing and mobilization for politics among all unions," said AFL-CIO President John Sweeney.

The plan passed by the Executive Council that moves resources to organizing and grassroots mobilization was approved two weeks ago by the AFL-CIO Executive Committee, a 24-member advisory group to the AFL-CIO leadership.

"The proposals...are anchored by our belief that to restore the strength of our movement and win for working families, we must focus sharply on two interdependent goals: helping affiliated unions organize and engaging working people in deeper, broader, ongoing mobilization to win legislative and political gains that build a better future," reads the plan.

To fund the shift in resources to organizing and political mobilization, the federation has already begun a review of all programs and a reorganization of its staff, which will be reduced by 25 percent.

Highlights of the plan include:

- Increased capacity and resources for helping more workers form unions, or **organizing**, through:
 - (1) an accelerated initiative to help more unions increase their capacity to organize, especially outside the deeply-flawed National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) process. Specific changes include creating a \$22.5 million Strategic Organizing Fund, establishing industry coordinating committees for more strategic organizing, encouraging and actively promoting mergers of unions, and supporting a major global campaign against Wal-Mart.
 - (2) a ramped up effort to change public policies to help restore workers' freedom to form unions, including training 100,000 worksite stewards to defend workers' freedom to form unions,.

The group discussed proposed changes to procedures under Article XX and XXI of the AFL-CIO constitution which govern jurisdiction in organizing. These changes will come up for a vote at the July convention;

- A call for the AFL-CIO and unions to increase **mobilization for legislation and politics** by moving from a focus on biannual Get-Out-the-Vote work to building year-round capacity to engage members in political and legislative action. The federation will fund this work by increasing its Member Mobilization Fund for legislative and political action; none of the fund will go to contributions to political candidates. The plan emphasizes that unions support candidates based on where they stand on working family issues, not according to political party. The plan also calls for building on the initial success of Working America, the AFL-CIO's new community affiliate for non-union workers, by increasing members to two million by the end of 2006;
- A proposal to **strengthen state and local labor movements** for greater grassroots power;
- A proposal to **expand leadership diversity** in the union movement and **strengthen democracy**. The plan calls for increasing training and leadership development, increasing outreach to young people and requiring that women and people of color are represented among convention delegates at least in proportion to their representation in the membership. It requires AFL-CIO leadership bodies at the national and local levels to develop plans to achieve targeted levels of diversity, urges affiliated national unions to agree to diversity principles and provides for them to report annually on the representation of women and people of color in their membership, staff and elected leadership;

A full copy of the *Winning for Working Families* proposal is available at www.aflcio.org/proposal. A copy of the Executive Council resolutions approved today are available by calling 202-637-5018.