

# ALL IN *on* SOLIDARITY

DAY TWO | 2025 United Steelworkers Constitutional Convention Coverage



Chris Frydenger,  
Local 7-838

UNITED STEELWORKERS  
**USW**  
UNITY AND STRENGTH FOR WORKERS

DELEGATES:

## ORGANIZING ESSENTIAL TO JUST AND EQUITABLE SOCIETY

Dee Thomas,  
Local 697

Convention delegates on Tuesday celebrated the USW's groundbreaking organizing victories and adopted a blueprint for extending the benefits of union membership to more workers.

Delegates gave a rousing welcome to members who joined the USW since the 2022 convention. This included 1,500 workers at the Blue Bird bus company in Fort Valley, Ga., who defied the U.S. South's long hostility to unions and went on to bargain a life-changing first contract.

"Change starts from within," observed Dee Thomas, a worker at Blue Bird and delegate from Local 697 who rose in support of organizing efforts. "I believe that everybody deserves the same opportunity to organize on the job."

Delegates also watched a video recounting how District 6 members organized thousands of security guards in recent years, helping to transform a shadow work force into a respected group of workers with higher pay and better benefits.

"We are improving the lives of the people

who are coming up behind us," Local 9597 President Sherry Charette said on the video, noting the dental benefits in her USW contract enabled her to get a crown "for the first time ever."

Many workers overcame employer opposition and other challenges to organize. But the stakes couldn't be higher, delegates noted, with unions providing the only true firewall against corporate power, shareholder greed and widening inequality.

Delegates passed a resolution to guide the USW's future organizing efforts and build a "more just and equitable society."

The plan includes additional organizing in core sectors while growing the USW's representation of workers in new industries, with a special emphasis on larger workplaces and key geographic areas.

It also calls for the union to redouble internal organizing, ensuring members remain

engaged. In addition, given the power of workers communicating directly with other workers, the resolution directed the USW to continue late International President Tom Conway's initiative to train members as organizers and send them into the field to bring the union to others.

Chris Frydenger, president of Local 7-838 in Decatur, Ill., told fellow delegates about his work helping to organize thousands of new members at the University of Pittsburgh and declared: "I'll remember this for the rest of my life."

The resolution further calls for the USW to focus on groups eager for representation, "such as younger workers, women, people of color, and new immigrants to both Canada and the United States."

"Let's build a movement where no worker is invisible," urged Parvinder Kaur, a delegate and president of Local 5296 in Mississauga, Ontario "When we stand together, every sector gets stronger."

“  
CHANGE  
STARTS  
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WITHIN.”

Dee Thomas, Local 697



# ‘FAMILY’ OF INTERNATIONAL GUESTS PLEDGES UNITY

Yasmin Hilpert  
Counselor For Labor and Social Affairs  
at the German Embassy In Washington

Maicon Michel  
Vasconcelos da Silva,  
CNM/CUT Brazil

Convention delegates on Tuesday committed the USW to strengthening solidarity across borders, recognizing that an economy driven by multinational corporations requires a coordinated response.

“In a global economy, we ought to have a global workers’ voice,” International President David McCall said. “International solidarity is deeply rooted in our union’s identity.”

McCall welcomed international guests from 18 countries, including a half-dozen who spoke, in person and on video, about the need for cooperation.

“This really inspires us back home,” said

Kalpona Akter of the Bangladesh Center for Workers’ Solidarity. “Every time we need you, we are happy that you have our back.”

Akter, who went to work in a garment factory at the age of 12, spoke of the ongoing fight for democracy and workers’ rights, which she said Bangladeshi workers are winning thanks to support from groups like the USW.

“I never stopped believing in workers’ power,” she said.

Maicon Michel Vasconcelos da Silva, of the CNM/CUT metalworkers’ union of Brazil, detailed his nation’s struggle with totalitarian leadership. He noted that dictators always

promise workers will share in a bigger economic pie. “But we, the working class, never got our slice,” he said.

That began to change, he noted, when Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva (Lula) regained the presidency in 2023. Lula, a champion of labor, was wrongly imprisoned before his conviction was overturned in 2021.

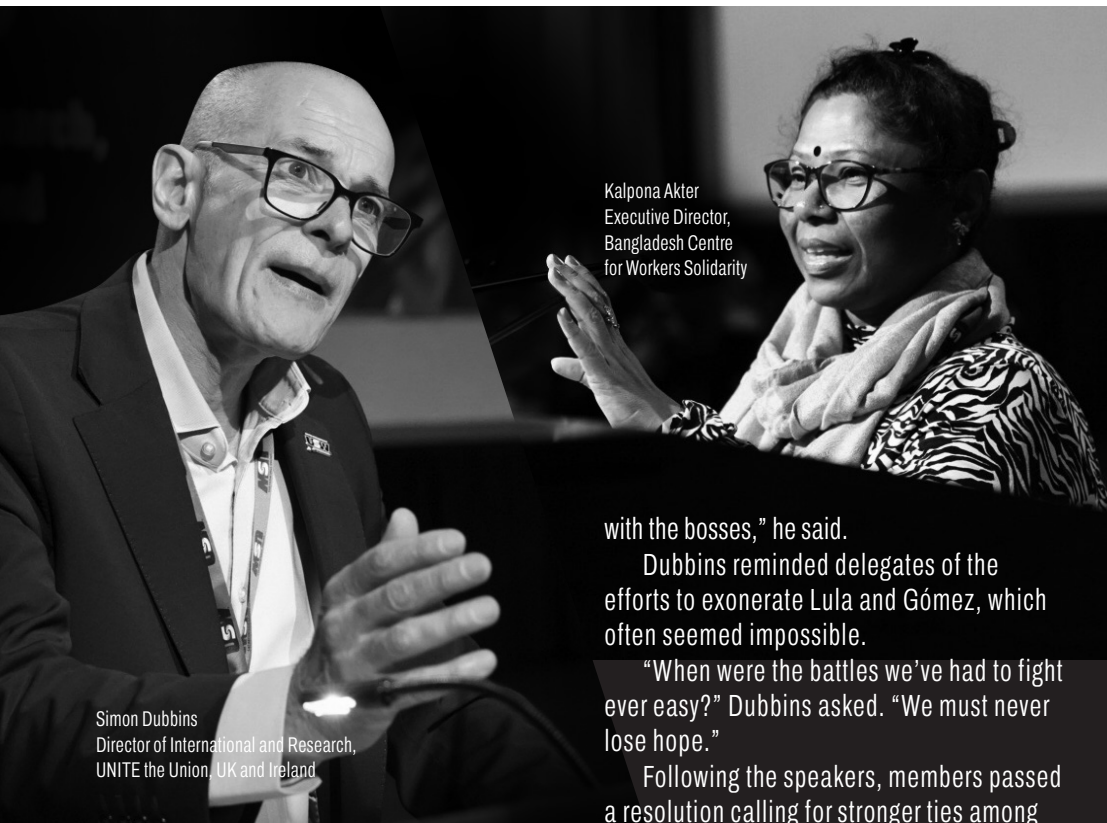
Similarly, Napoleón Gómez Urrutia, president of the Mexican mine and metalworkers’ union Los Mineros, was forced into exile while fighting bogus corruption charges.

Gómez delivered a written address, read by USW Director of International Affairs Ben Davis. Gómez was represented at the podium



## PREMIER WAB KINEW LAUDS CONVENTION DELEGATES’ WORK





Simon Dubbins  
Director of International and Research,  
UNITE the Union, UK and Ireland

Kalpona Akter  
Executive Director,  
Bangladesh Centre  
for Workers Solidarity

with the bosses,” he said.

Dubbins reminded delegates of the efforts to exonerate Lula and Gómez, which often seemed impossible.

“When were the battles we’ve had to fight ever easy?” Dubbins asked. “We must never lose hope.”

Following the speakers, members passed a resolution calling for stronger ties among labor groups across the globe.

Entitled “Global Unity and Activism,” it acknowledged the power workers gain when they support each other in labor disputes and fight together for worker-friendly trade policies.

Kent Holsing of Local 12075 in Midland, Mich., listed several recent disputes in which workers relied on cross-border solidarity to fight back against greedy employers.

“If these corporations can stick it to you,” Holsing said, “they are going to stick it to you.”

More than a dozen delegates also engaged in a spirited debate, focused largely on a section of the motion calling for a peaceful resolution to the conflict in Gaza, with several members expressing the desire to condemn the violence in even stronger terms.

by Los Mineros leaders José Angel Hernández Puente and Imelda Jimenez.

“We share more than causes,” Gomez declared. “We are a family.”

Yasmin Hilpert, counselor for labor and social affairs at the German embassy in Washington, D.C., said the current trade war hurts workers in the United States, Canada and abroad.

“The way forward must be cooperation, not confrontation,” Hilpert said.

Simon Dubbins, of UNITE the Union in Great Britain and Ireland, urged workers not to let wealthy elites divide them.

“Workers in different countries always have more in common with each other than they do

Wab Kinew, the premier of Manitoba, stood alongside four USW members at the Selkirk steel mill to deliver a video message praising convention delegates for “standing up for the rank and file.”

Kinew acknowledged the tireless contributions of workers across Manitoba and beyond. He also cited his own efforts to boost working people like those at the Gerdau-owned Selkirk complex.

“We’re taking steps to make life more afford-

able in a challenging economy. We’re supporting people’s jobs in the face of the Trump tariff tax,” he said, adding that the province also passed “anti-scab legislation to make sure that nobody can take your job when you’re standing up for your rights in the workplace.”

Kinew said he intends to partner with the USW on other initiatives, assuring delegates, “We look forward to doing many important, great things together.”

# DELEGATES VOTE TO REQUIRE NEXTGEN COMMITTEES

Convention delegates on Tuesday voted to amend the USW International Constitution to ensure each local maintains a Next Generation committee.

The amendment creates a new Section 16 in Article VII requiring each local union to establish a NextGen group, charged with educating and preparing the union’s future leaders and activists.

USW members voted at the union’s 2011 convention to formally establish the NextGen program, which continues to inspire hundreds of new leaders each year to drive education, networking, service and mobilization efforts in Steelworker communities across North America.



Tiffany McKee,  
District 1

USW MEMBERS

# ALL IN ON MANUFACTURING

Delegates to the convention voted Tuesday to reaffirm the union's commitment to strengthening manufacturing across the U.S. and Canada.

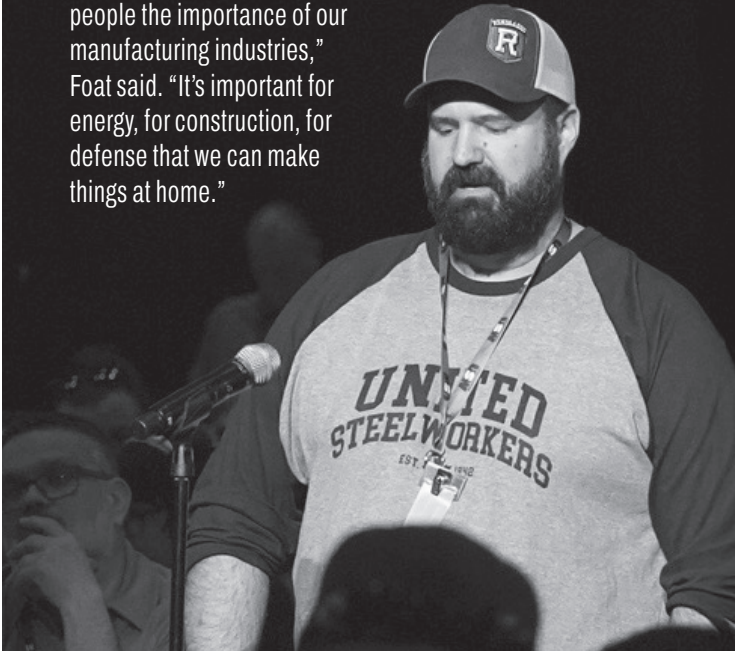
Representing a variety of industries, speakers in favor of the resolution recognized the critical role of collective bargaining in building strong communities and economies.

The resolution calls for organizing new workers, advocating for pro-worker trade and industrial policies, and demanding labor rights be tied to federal investments.

It condemns anti-competitive global trade practices, especially from China, and urges leaders to prioritize domestic manufacturing, defend workers' rights, and ensure fair trade to support a thriving, union-led industrial future.

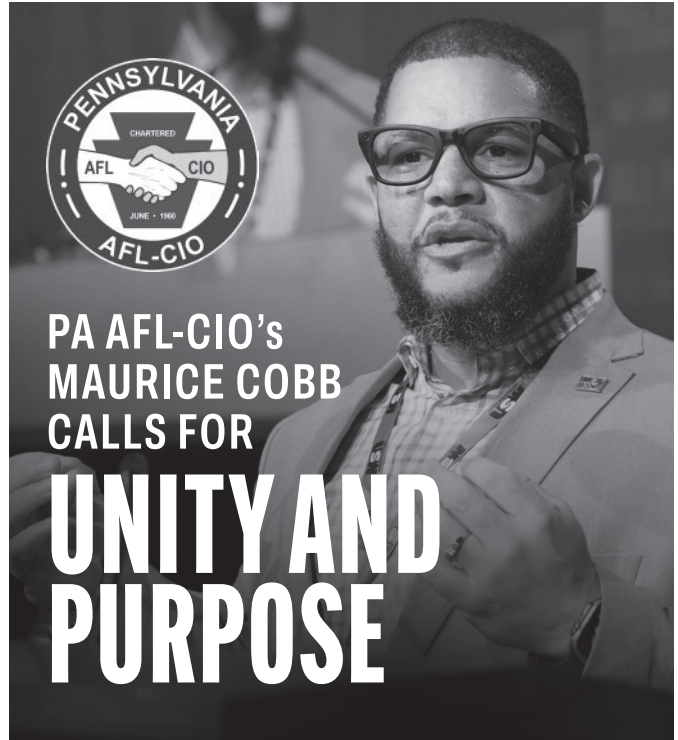
Mike Foat, the recording secretary from USW Local 6673 in Calgary, Alberta, explained the way in which union manufacturing jobs impact a variety of sectors.

"We're trying to instill in people the importance of our manufacturing industries," Foat said. "It's important for energy, for construction, for defense that we can make things at home."



PA AFL-CIO's MAURICE COBB CALLS FOR

# UNITY AND PURPOSE



Pennsylvania AFL-CIO Secretary-Treasurer Maurice Cobb delivered a personal, heartfelt address Tuesday that centered on the enduring strength of solidarity.

Cobb, a fourth-generation Steelworker and U.S. Army veteran, shared stories from his early days as a member of USW Local 1688, when he worked as an overhead crane operator at the former Bethlehem Steel plant in Steelton, Pa. His experiences, he said, differed greatly from those of many of his coworkers.

Despite these differences, Cobb said, it was through conversation, curiosity and mutual respect that he began to understand the depth of unity that makes the labor movement strong.

"We found common ground around that break room table, simply by listening to each other," he said.

Cobb reflected on a formative moment early in his union career, when a coworker defended him against discrimination. That moment, he said, became his first powerful example of solidarity in action.

He urged union members to stay united as they face unprecedented threats to organizing and collective bargaining.

"We didn't all vote for the same person last November," he said, "but we're still on the same team."

Quoting Scripture and invoking his hopes for his daughter's future, Cobb reminded workers that solidarity is rooted not in sameness, but in shared purpose and love for one another.



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