

retiree wrapup



CBTU 52nd Convention: **AN AGENDA THAT PROMOTES**

GROWTH

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The 52nd International Convention of the Coalition of Black Trade Unionists (CBTU) was an extraordinary event, attended by over 1,400 delegates and guests, including delegations from Africa and Canada. The event took place from May 24-30, in New Orleans, Louisiana. The theme of the convention was "Confronting Radical Dangers to Our Families and Our Future." The well-structured event identified issues of concern and offered comprehensive approaches to evaluate and collaboratively address them.

One of the first events was the Retirees Conference chaired by Donald Afflick, DC 37 Retirees Association's VP of Political Action & Legislation. The Retirees Association was well represented by members from New York and Florida. A representative from the Alliance for Retired Americans (ARA) highlighted the importance of Social Security and the significant threats it currently faces, namely privatizing Social Security and raising the retirement age. The ARA's position, on the other hand, is to strengthen and expand Social Security.

Seniors' wellness and mentoring were also important agenda items and were widely discussed and debated. The role of retirees as mentors to the youth was well illustrated by CBTU's president the Rev. Terrence Melvin in his greetings, which emphasized the significant contribution of retirees to labor and noted that "we are living on the shoulders of retirees."

A CALL TO ACTION!

According to Rev. Melvin, "We cannot forget the forces mobilizing against us. We can never forget the real and eminent threat of white nationalism. Our nation is at risk as our Black babies to this national cancer. It has infected our schools, our churches, and our way of life. No longer are we safe knocking on doors or making simple mistakes. The dehumanization of Black life has led to the dehumanization of all lives. Now our nation is riddled with death, violence, and poverty. It must be resisted! We are not going to back down."

To the surprise and delight of all attendees, President Emeritus Bill Lucy, who is recovering at home from a hip injury he sustained last year, was introduced to bring remarks virtually. He was thankful for the opportunity to address the convention, and further shared that he was elated that participants continue to see the value of attending the convention. Lucy, the last living founder of CBTU, added that "we'll be heard every time; we are no longer waiting to be told to wait in the back of the line. We are the line." He also referenced comments made in 1972 that CBTU would not last. It has, however, been 52 years. President Emeritus Lucy enthusiastically endorsed U.S. Pres. Joe Biden and VP Kamala Harris for reelection in 2024.

Other speakers, as well as the members of Congress who addressed the convention, expressed serious concerns regarding the current trend in our society, which is detrimental to our families and our future. A global assault on democracy that requires collective effort to reverse!

Members of the African delegation similarly shared issues in their countries regarding political instability, labor migration, voter suppression, violence, corruption, and poverty.

Several resolutions were submitted and approved to address issues around racism, mental health, education, health, housing, union jobs, climate change, poverty, gun violence in Haiti...As a Haitian American, I am particularly grateful for the submission and approval of this resolution due to the high level of instability, poverty, and violence in the country. It is reported that Haiti recorded 389 kidnappings in the first quarter of 2023, a 72% increase from the same period in 2022 and a 173% increase from 2021. Gang violence has also led to the deaths of at least 195 people in March 2023.

Kudos to Sallie Robertson, DC 37 Retirees Association's VP of Membership, for the significant support she provided as a Sergeant at Arms. She was once again mentioned as an indefatigable member of the CBTU Sergeant-at-Arms team.

A successful convention with an agenda supportive of our efforts to succeed! An agenda that promotes growth!

Up-to-date retiree info: www.dc37retireesassociation.org