



FederationNews

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The CFL Remembers Margaret Blackshere

Trailblazer and Giant of the Illinois Labor Movement

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Solidarity on Campus

CFL Secretary-Treasurer Don Villar speaks to striking graduate student employees at the University of Chicago.



PHOTO: CHICAGO FEDERATION OF LABOR

President's Report

The 2019 Spring Session of the Illinois General Assembly was one of the most productive in state history. In partnership with Gov. JB Pritzker, lawmakers passed legislation to balance the state budget, place the Fair Tax on the ballot, raise the minimum wage to \$15 an hour, legalize cannabis, protect the prevailing wage, and outlaw so-called “right-to-work” zones.

One of the most impactful pieces of legislation signed into law is the Rebuild Illinois capital plan. This 10-year plan will invest in our state's infrastructure, the

backbone of the Illinois economy, and make critical upgrades to state facilities. Plus, these projects will be protected by prevailing wage, ensuring plenty of high-road jobs for the entire Chicagoland and Illinois labor movement.

The bipartisan \$45 billion plan will address decades-long problems in our state while creating an estimated 540,000 jobs all over Illinois. More than \$33 billion will be invested into transportation projects, including \$14 billion for new roads and bridges and nearly \$5 billion for mass transit. These are critical improvements that smooth the flow of people and goods, helping promote a healthy economy and ensuring safe travels for everyone.

The capital bill does more than just invest in horizontal road projects. The plan includes \$3.5 billion for education, including nearly \$3 billion for higher education. I know how important it is for our state to invest in higher education, and I am proud to see these improvements coming to Illinois' great university and community college campuses. Plus, the plan includes more than \$500 million for early childhood education and pre-K through 12 school maintenance, meaning better schools for all the children of this state.

Nothing in this world is free, however, and the Rebuild Illinois capital plan includes several revenue mechanisms to pay for these investments. One of the biggest revenue raisers is the expansion of gaming, which includes legalizing sports betting, building six new casinos across the state, and expanding video gaming terminals. Because one of these new casino licenses is for the City of Chicago, the Chicago Federation of Labor will do everything it can to make sure these facilities are built union and staffed union.

It has been nearly a decade since Illinois passed a capital plan. In that time, we have seen the dangerous deterioration of our roads, bridges, and other critical pieces of state infrastructure. I am encouraged to see the passage of the Rebuild Illinois plan, and I congratulate all the advocates who made this bill a reality. Without everyone's tireless efforts, we may not have been able to bring this level of investment to our state. Now, the real work of rebuilding our state begins. Let's get to work!



BOB REITER
PRESIDENT

Hands Off Pants On Goes Global

One year ago, on July 1, 2018, the Chicago labor community held a press conference at the Plumbers Local 130's union hall to announce the implementation of Chicago's "Hands Off Pants On" panic button ordinance. Since then, the "Hands Off Pants On" campaign (HOPO) has continued to bring national and international recognition to UNITE HERE Local 1, the Chicago Federation of Labor, and the City of Chicago for the collective work to help protect hotel workers from sexual harassment and assault.

This spring, UNITE HERE Local 1 and the Chicago Federation of Labor successfully lobbied for statewide legislation that extends HOPO protections, including panic buttons, to hotel workers and casino workers throughout the state of Illinois. The law will go into effect in July of 2020.

This June, HOPO went global. UNITE HERE Local 1 members traveled to Geneva, Switzerland to serve on the U.S. Delegation to the International Labor Conference. More than 180 countries participated in the International Labor Conference, the world's highest decision-making body on international labor standards. The HOPO leaders advocated alongside the AFL-CIO and union leaders from around the world for a global convention to end harassment and violence in the workplace. Chicago's HOPO campaign was referenced in the global negotiations and served as a concrete example of how the labor movement is working to protect the most vulnerable workers from harassment and assault.

On June 21, 2019, the global convention was officially adopted

by the International Labor Organization. Significantly, the new convention recognizes the hospitality sector as one of the industries where workers are particularly vulnerable. The convention also explicitly addresses harassment and violence by third parties, such as hotel guests.

The Chicago labor community should be proud to know that it helped shape this new international labor standard, which will help protect millions of workers around the world for decades to come.

Letter Carriers' Food Drive Delivers For the Needy

Each year in spring, the National Association of Letter Carriers (NALC) Branch 11 leads the Stamp Out Hunger Food Drive to stock food pantries across Chicago by collecting donated food during their deliveries on the second Saturday in May.

This year's drive produced 549,557 pounds of food, nearly 230,000 more pounds than the 2018 drive. Chicago's labor movement generously supported the drive in several capacities and demonstrated labor's ability to step up to support our community members in need.

The food drive, started in Chicago by NALC Branch 11, has spread into a national event. The 2019 program marked the 27th annual food drive with letter carriers and food pantries from across the country participating and donating.

The 2019 food drive got off to a strong start thanks to a generous donation from the UFCW, which donated 500,000 food-collection bags to the Chicago area. IBEW Local 9 and UFCW Local 1546 both donated

to the local effort, subsidizing an additional 10,000 bags. The bags were distributed to local families throughout the region, to encourage them to give. More than 20 CFL affiliate unions and labor organizations pitched in by collecting food at their halls and promoted the drive to their members.

"Born right here in Chicago, Stamp Out Hunger is another great example of the labor movement doing its part to support our communities," said CFL President Bob Reiter. "Congratulations to NALC Branch 11 and all of the participating unions for a job well done."

Thank you to everyone who donated food or money to the 2019 Stamp Out Hunger Food Drive and demonstrated labor's solidarity with struggling families. Special thanks to NALC Branch 11 President Mack Julion for his leadership in making this year's drive a great success.

Mark your calendar for next year's food drive, scheduled to take place on Saturday, May 9.

United Way Luncheon Demonstrates Labor's Commitment to Community

On May 17, the United Way of Metro Chicago held a successful Stronger Neighborhoods Luncheon thanks in part to the Chicago Federation of Labor and its affiliate unions. The annual event was held at the Marriot Marquis Hotel and hosted a record number of attendees.

"The United Way has been a steadfast partner of Chicago's labor movement and I am proud

to see their great work celebrated at the Stronger Neighborhoods Luncheon," said CFL President Bob Reiter, who also served as a co-chair for the event.

Several individuals and organizations were honored for supporting the United Way at the event, including Lester McKeever with the Lifetime Leadership Award and Exelon Corporation with the Corporate Leadership Award. The event raised funds for United Way and their work supporting Chicagoland communities.

CFL Secretary-Treasurer Don Villar presented the Community Leadership Award to Michael Strautmanis of the Obama Foundation for their efforts to strengthen communities across the region through workforce development. The Obama Foundation is leading several initiatives, including partnering with labor through the building of the Obama Presidential Center, which will become a major economic engine and destination in Chicago. The Obama Foundation has also supported the We Can Build It! program as it partners with the United Way and CFL's Access United program to connect individuals to building trade apprenticeship programs. These investments are creating real employment opportunities for residents in Chicago and reflect the Obama Foundation's commitment to building pathways to union careers.

A special thank you was also extended to the CFL affiliated unions that supported the Stronger Neighborhoods Luncheon: AFG Local 704, IBEW Local 134, Painters District Council 14, SMART Local 73, and UNITE Here Local 1. Thank you to all unions for their continuous support of the CFL's partnership with the United Way.

CFL Convenes Airport Labor Committee

Nearly ten million airline travelers pass through Chicago's O'Hare and Midway Airports every month. As they travel through Chicago's airports, they will see and interact with dozens of airport workers — union members — along the way.

Union members from across the labor movement — the public sector, service sector, industrial, and building and construction trades — work at Chicago's two airports. Because of the importance of organized labor to the smooth and successful operations at O'Hare and Midway Airports, the Chicago Federation of Labor convened its inaugural Airport Labor Committee on June 20, 2019.

"I know the importance of union labor at Chicago's airports," said Secretary-Treasurer Don Villar. "My mother was a UNITE-HERE member at Sky Chef, a flight kitchen. My cousin is an ALPA member. And my neighbor is a Teamster at O'Hare. The union members at Chicago's airports are our relatives, friends and neighbors. The work they do each day is not just for the benefit of the traveling public; their labor supports their families and communities."

The primary purpose of the ALC is to build solidarity and strengthen the labor movement at the airports through internal and external organizing, bargaining

and improved communications. The ALC will be a forum to discuss the issues and challenges facing the various unions at O'Hare and Midway, and if possible, come up with solutions and responses. At the inaugural meeting, ALC affiliates gave updates on their collective bargaining, mobilization efforts and ongoing organizing campaigns. The ALC also discussed working conditions and workflow at the various capital projects around both airports, as well as projects being planned in the future.

The ALC plans to meet quarterly with their next meeting scheduled for Sept. 10, 2019.

TOP: (LEFT TO RIGHT) ROUSHAUNDA WILLIAMS, SARAH LYONS, AND CECILIA LEIVA OF UNITE HERE LOCAL 1 AT THE INTERNATIONAL LABOR CONFERENCE IN GENEVA, SWITZERLAND.

MIDDLE: UNITED WAY OF METRO CHICAGO CEO SEAN GARRETT (LEFT), OBAMA FOUNDATION CHIEF ENGAGEMENT OFFICER MICHAEL STRAUTMANIS, AND CFL SECRETARY-TREASURER DON VILLAR (RIGHT).

BOTTOM: (LEFT TO RIGHT) GUS FUGUITT (UNITED WAY), ANA MARIA. MONTES DE OCA-ROJAS (UNITED WAY), ELISE FOSTER (NALC BRANCH 11), DOMINIQUE WHITE-NICHOLS (NALC BRANCH 11) AND DENISE MICHAEL (NALC BRANCH 11).



PHOTO: UNITE HERE LOCAL 1



PHOTO: UNITED WAY OF CHICAGO



PHOTO: UNITED WAY OF CHICAGO

Submit your stories

Unions and their members are doing great work throughout our communities, and we want to hear about it.

Email your stories (200 words or less) and high-resolution photos (300 dpi or greater) to info@chicagolabor.org.

The CFL reserves the right to edit stories for content and space allowance.

Margaret Blackshere, 78, trailblazing 'giant of the Illinois labor movement'

Labor, political leaders remember an Illinois icon of the labor movement

By Rachel Hinton, Chicago Sun-Times

Margaret Blackshere went from teaching kindergarten in a downstate classroom to making history as the first woman to lead the Illinois AFL-CIO and helping lead Democrats to victory across the state.

"She was an amazing woman not just because she was the first woman to lead the AFL-CIO, but because she had such a commitment to working people in and out of unions," said Barbara Flynn Currie, former majority leader in the Illinois House. "She was able to bridge gaps and made sure that people in the union stuck together, stayed together and stayed strong."

Ms. Blackshere died Saturday [July 13, 2019]. She was 78.

A former kindergarten teacher in downstate Madison, she worked her way up the ranks of the labor movement. She served as a president of Madison Federation of Teachers Local 743 and eventually was a statewide vice president of the Illinois Federation of Teachers.

She was elected secretary-treasurer of the Illinois AFL-CIO in 1993, and served as president of the million-member labor organization from 2000 to 2007 after winning its first ever contested election for president. She threw her full support and political muscle behind countless Democrats, helping Dan Hynes win election as state comptroller and Barack Obama as president of the United States.

"She wouldn't just tell you who to call, but would often make calls for you and make introductions and draw you a roadmap to how to win statewide in Illinois," Hynes said.

Democrats courted Ms. Blackshere for her expertise, her support and her friendship. She was a delegate to the Democratic National Convention and a member of the Democratic National Committee.

"Margaret Blackshere had the caring heart of a downstate teacher and the fierce spirit of an advocate fighting for justice in classrooms and workplaces across Illinois," U.S. Sen. Dick Durbin said. "She made history as the first woman to serve as president of the Illinois AFL-CIO and her legion of friends, like Loretta and me, will miss her great humor and her willingness to always wish others well unless they were playing her beloved St. Louis

Cardinals."

Currie said her friend was someone who had "such a flair and commitment to the issues that mattered to working people" and that the former labor leader was "one of a kind."

Though the two were connected through politics, Currie says they got together with others every week to watch "The West Wing," often eating Thai food as they caught up with the political drama when it was still airing.

With Ms. Blackshere at the helm, the labor organization enjoyed legislative victories as well, such as winning increases in the state minimum wage. Dennis Gannon, a former president of the Chicago Federation of Labor, credited her with helping land pro-labor individuals on state boards and commissions when Ms. Blackshere announced she was stepping down at Illinois AFL-CIO president.

Cook County Board President Toni Preckwinkle said she identified with Ms. Blackshere because of their shared teaching backgrounds, but said she got to know her mainly through political campaigns.

"She was a tough and effective labor leader," Preckwinkle said. "She was also fun — she had a great sense of humor. ... She was a great lady, I liked her a lot."

In a tweet, Gov. J.B. Pritzker said Ms. Blackshere "dedicated her life to fighting for Illinois teachers and social justice for all."

"She was a trailblazer and an organizer, a loving mother and grandmother, and a role model for all of us," the governor said in the tweet. "The entire state mourns her passing and keeps her family in our thoughts."

Hynes, a former state comptroller who is now one of Pritzker's deputy governors, said Ms. Blackshere was "instrumental" in his first election as comptroller and treated him like a son when he was running for office. She introduced him to labor leaders around the state to help him garner the votes needed to win statewide.

"She was a great organizer, a committed teacher and someone who cared about the state of Illinois," Hynes said.

House Speaker Mike Madigan and his wife, Shirley, issued a statement paying tribute to "Margaret and her fierce spirit."

"Margaret Blackshere's impact on the hard-working men and women of Illinois will

be felt for generations to come," they said. "As the first woman to serve as president of the Illinois AFL-CIO, Margaret created a seat at the table for female workers and always fought for their best interests. She had a passion for building bridges and uniting people around common goals with a spark and an energy that was unmatched."

The Illinois AFL-CIO issued a statement saying it "mourns the passing" of Ms. Blackshere, "a fearless leader for economic and social justice from the halls of the State Capitol to the picket lines and shop floors up and down our state. She will be deeply missed by our organization, the labor movement and working families throughout Illinois."

Bob Reiter, president of the Chicago Federation of Labor, said in a statement that Ms. Blackshere was "a giant of the Illinois labor movement and a crucial partner of the Chicago Federation of Labor. Working men and women across Illinois will feel the impact of her work for generations to come. We mourn her passing and our thoughts are with her family at this time."

The Chicago Federation of Labor is one of the organized labor groups that has an ownership stake in the Chicago Sun-Times.

Illinois Federation of Teachers President Dan Montgomery said: "From her start organizing teachers in Madison, Ill., to her leadership at the state and national levels, Margaret's efforts to make our state and country better and fairer for everyone were inspirational and quite necessary. She was a tireless advocate for working people and a shining example of what a union leader can be."

Beyond leading the AFL-CIO, Currie said Ms. Blackshere enjoyed baseball and other hobbies.

"She was down to earth, she was a real person and her passing is the end of a very important era in Illinois labor history," Currie said. "She was a great woman — we're sorry to lose her."

Survivors include two sons, Michael and Thomas; a sister, Patricia Smith, and four grandchildren.

This story originally appeared in July 9, 2019, edition of the Chicago Sun-Times and is reprinted with permission.



PHOTO: CHICAGO SUN-TIMES/JEAN LACHAT



PHOTO: CHICAGO FEDERATION OF LABOR



PHOTO: CHICAGO FEDERATION OF LABOR

ABOVE LEFT: MARGARET BLACKSHERE AS THE HEAD OF THE ILLINOIS AFL-CIO IN 2001.

ABOVE RIGHT: MARGARET BLACKSHERE

LEFT: THEN-CFL PRESIDENT DON TURNER (CENTER LEFT) AND MARGARET BLACKSHERE (CENTER RIGHT) IN A 1995 PROTEST.

BELOW LEFT: (FROM LEFT TO RIGHT) THEN-CFL SECRETARY-TREASURER RICH GANNON, THEN-MAYOR RICHARD M. DALEY, THEN-VICE PRESIDENT AL GORE, THEN-CFL PRESIDENT DON TURNER, AND MARGARET BLACKSHERE.

BELOW RIGHT: THEN-CFL SECRETARY-TREASURER DENNIS GANNON (LEFT) AND MARGARET BLACKSHERE AT CFL HEADQUARTERS.



PHOTO: CHICAGO FEDERATION OF LABOR



PHOTO: CHICAGO FEDERATION OF LABOR

Feature Stories

Chicagoland Speedway's 5th Annual Tribute to Labor Brings Family, Fun, and Union Pride to the Racetrack

On Sunday, June 30, the Chicagoland Speedway hosted their fifth annual Tribute to Labor during the Camping World 400, a day of fun for the entire Chicagoland labor movement. Thousands of union members attended the day to celebrate the summer with their union brothers and sisters.

“The Tribute to Labor is an outstanding opportunity for union members and their families to celebrate the labor movement while enjoying a fantastic summer day,” said CFL President Bob Reiter. “The Chicagoland Speedway has been a terrific partner in hosting and promoting this event, and we are proud to continue that partnership for the benefit of all of Chicagoland’s union members.”

Union members were offered a special promotional package that included a premium race ticket for the Camping World 400, a Sunday infield fan zone pit pass with access to the pre-race concert, and free parking for the day’s events. The Chicago Federation of Labor joined with Central Labor Councils and Building & Construction Trades Councils across Illinois, Indiana, Wisconsin and Iowa to support the annual event for union member and their families.

“Chicagoland Speedway, a ‘Proud Union Home,’ was honored to host the 5th annual Tribute to Labor during our NASCAR event weekend,” said Scott Paddock, President of the Chicago Speedway. “This event continues to serve as a tremendous organizing opportunity for labor and we are incredibly proud to honor the hard working men and women of labor at the state’s largest annual sporting event.”

Though the Camping World 400 was delayed due to severe weather, Alex Bowman eventually took the checkered flag. The 2020 Tribute to Labor is scheduled for Father’s Day, Sunday, June 21.



PHOTO: CHICAGO FEDERATION OF LABOR

CFL PRESIDENT BOB REITER (RIGHT) CELEBRATES THE TRIBUTE TO LABOR WITH CHICAGOLAND SPEEDWAY PRESIDENT SCOTT PADDOCK (LEFT).



ABOVE: (LEFT TO RIGHT) PIRIN FILIPOV (LABORERS LOCAL 1), CHARISE WILLIAMS (CFL), NORA CAY RYAN (CFL), ELAINE FLECK (CFL), ANDREA KLUGER (CFL), DON VILLAR (CFL); MIKE HARTGE (UNITED WAY), AND MIA BERRY (UNITED WAY).

BELOW RIGHT: CFL STAFF MEMBERS AND SEIU LOCAL 1 SUPPORTERS PREPARE TO MARCH IN THE PRIDE PARADE.

BELOW LEFT: CFL SOLIDARITY HAND SIGNS USED IN THE PRIDE PARADE.



PHOTO: CHICAGO FEDERATION OF LABOR



CFL Shows Off Its Pride

On Saturday, June 30, the Chicago Federation of Labor participated in the 50th Annual Chicago Pride Parade, marking the first time that the CFL has participated as an organization.

“The Chicago Pride Parade shows the rest of the world that the city of Chicago and the Chicago labor movement supports its LGBTQ community,” said Bob Reiter, President of the Chicago Federation of Labor. “No matter your race, gender, neighborhood, income, or any other factor, we can all come together in solidarity to celebrate the power of love.”

The parade theme “Stonewall 50: Millions of Moments of Pride” recognized the historical impact of the 1969 Stonewall Riots in New York City, widely considered to be the event that sparked the gay liberation movement. Chicago hosted the first gay pride march on June 27, 1970, which consisted of just a few hundred people. That march has grown each year into a nationally recognized event that brings together more than a million people annually.

The CFL sent a contingent of nearly a dozen staff members and supporters to march in the parade for the first time in the organization’s history. The CFL marched along with SEIU Local 1, showing labor solidarity with the LGBTQ+ community.

This year was especially momentous as Chicago celebrated the Pride Parade with its first openly gay mayor, Lori Lightfoot. Mayor Lightfoot served as one of the parade’s seven grand marshals. Lightfoot told the Chicago Tribune that Chicago’s massive parade serves as “a beacon of hope” for people worldwide. “This is a place where people can truly live their authentic lives,” Lightfoot said.

The parade kicked off at noon but was unfortunately halted due to severe weather conditions. However, the day’s wet weather did not dampen spirits, and the CFL plans to participate in future parades.

PHOTO: CHICAGO FEDERATION OF LABOR



PHOTO: CHICAGO FEDERATION OF LABOR

CFL Secretary-Treasurer Villar Recognized by State Treasurer

On May 15, CFL Secretary-Treasurer Don Villar was recognized for Outstanding Achievement in Workforce and Labor during Asian Pacific American Heritage Month in a celebration hosted by Illinois State Treasurer Michael Frerich at the James R. Thompson Center in Chicago.

“I am truly honored and humbled to accept this award,” said CFL Secretary-Treasurer Don Villar. “On behalf of the many Asian Pacific Americans working hard every day to make the Land of Lincoln the greatest state in the nation, I want to thank Treasurer Frerichs for this award.”

Asian Pacific American Heritage Month began as a weeklong celebration in 1979, eventually being expanded to a month-long event in 1990. According to the Library of Congress, the month of May was chosen to “commemorate the immigration of the first Japanese to the United States on May

7, 1843, and to mark the anniversary of the completion of the transcontinental railroad on May 10, 1869.”

The award ceremony, hosted by Vi Nguyen (SAG-AFTRA) of CBS2, also honored:

- Beverly Kim Clark, Chef and Co-Owner Parachute, Outstanding Service in Business
- Irene Jisun Sohn, Executive Director, Hanul Family Alliance, Outstanding Service in Leadership
- Anna Guevarra, Associate Professor, University of Illinois at Chicago and Founding Director, UIC Global Asian Studies Program, Outstanding Commitment in Education, Professor
- Representative Theresa Mah, Illinois State Representative, 2nd District, Outstanding Commitment as an Elected Official
- Tommy Shimoda, Special Olympics Athlete, Outstanding Achievement in Sportsmanship



ILLINOIS STATE TREASURER MICHAEL FRERICHS (LEFT) AND CFL SECRETARY-TREASURER DON VILLAR AT THE ASIAN PACIFIC HERITAGE MONTH CELEBRATION.

Chicago, Labor Unions Pass Unprecedented Fair Workweek Ordinance

On July 24, the Chicago City Council passed the Fair Workweek Ordinance, giving hundreds of thousands of working families across Chicago stability in their work schedules. Through the Fair Workweek Coalition, the CFL helped lead this fight for fair scheduling that so many workers,

particularly those without a union, deserve.

“Today is great day for working people in Chicago,” said CFL President Bob Reiter. “The Fair Workweek Ordinance will provide the stability necessary for working people to care for their loved ones, advance their education, and save for the future. This is

a common sense measure that will improve the lives of hundreds of thousands of working families.”

Nearly half of Chicago’s workforce experiences unpredictable working hours and a volatile income. In a study conducted by University of Illinois’ School of Labor & Employment Relations, 48 percent of Chicago workers report having little to no input into their daily work schedules, and 40 percent

report not being able to rely on minimum hours or steady income. These conditions strain working families, with many reporting conflicts with caregiving responsibilities and missing class due to erratic scheduling practices by their employer. Women and people of color are disproportionately impacted.

When the Fair Workweek Ordinance takes effect on Jul 1, Chicago will join New York City, Seattle, San Francisco, Emeryville, Calif., Philadelphia and Oregon in providing reliable jobs that deliver stability for working families. Some provisions of the ordinance include: providing workers with schedules two weeks in advance; compensating employees for schedule changes or cancelled shifts; and providing opportunities for part-time workers to work extra hours.

The CFL is particularly proud that the Chicago ordinance has become the most expansive legislation of its kind, including industries such as healthcare and manufacturing that have not been included in other cities but are rampant with worker scheduling abuses. This ordinance will make a real impact on the lives of workers in Chicago and the CFL would like to thank the CFL affiliates for their help and support.

SNAPSHOTS



CFL DIRECTOR OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS CHARISE WILLIAMS (CENTER) WITH THE COMMISSIONERS OF THE METROPOLITAN WATER RECLAMATION DISTRICT IN CELEBRATION OF NATIONAL SKILLED TRADES DAY ON MAY 16.

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CFL Delegates' Meetings

Tuesday, October 1, 2019

Tuesday, November 5, 2019

Tuesday, December 3, 2019*

* Delegate Holiday Party

START TIME: 6 p.m.

WHERE: Chicago Plumbers Local 130 Hall
1340 W. Washington, Chicago



Delegates must present their current Chicago Federation of Labor membership card or this notice for admission. We look forward to full representation from your local union to assist the Federation in the development of its policies.



DON V. VILLAR
SECRETARY-TREASURER

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Editor in Chief: Robert G. Reiter Jr., President

Editor: Don V. Villar, Secretary-Treasurer

Managing Editor: Jake Lewis

Contributors: Elaine Fleck, Gus Fuguitt, Andrea Kluger,
Sarah Lyons, Nora Cay Ryan
and Charise Williams