



Report of the President

Larry Brown



Earlier this year, I announced that I will not be seeking a second term as President of the Washington State Labor Council, AFL-CIO. So in this, my final report to WSLC Convention delegates, I wanted to explain what WSLC Secretary Treasurer April Sims and I have done to achieve the goals I set when I first campaigned for this position in 2018. I vowed then to build on the council's successes while ensuring that it was increasingly responsive to its affiliated unions and their priorities.

One of the WSLC's great successes has been its groundbreaking Race and Labor program. A series of resolutions approved by the WSLC conventions starting in 2015 set a path for our council to become a national leader in confronting institutional racism; in our communities, in our workplaces, and within our unions. Our mandate has been to integrate racial justice into all the work that we do at the Council and to help our members understand that racism is a system of oppression designed to divide the working class so the wealthy elite can consolidate their wealth and power at the very top. To meet those objectives, we have built our capacity to reach more members with our Race & Labor workshops by training cohorts of new trainers to get Race & Labor Certification; created a Racial Justice standing committee to guide us in this work; promoted membership growth in WSLC Constituency Groups of Color; and this year we launched the WSLC Racial Equity & Policy Toolkit (available at www.wslc.org) to explain how our affiliates and community partners can incorporate racial equity into their legislative advocacy. And we are so fortunate to have Kasi Perreira, our amazing Director of Racial and Gender Justice, help lead us in this critical work.

In addition to racial justice, our convention delegates have been very clear that they want the WSLC to actively fight for immigrant rights. Dulce Gutiérrez, the WSLC's Union, Community and Naturalization Organizer, has given the council a strong presence in the Yakima Valley advocating for farmworkers and immigrant rights. She and WSLC Organizer Ingrid Chapman have worked with the WSLC's new Labor and Immigration Committee to ensure that Washington's labor movement has a comprehensive program for its immigrant members, including a plan for rapid response to raids and detentions, know-your-rights trainings, assistance with naturalization, visa processing, adjustment of immigration status, and best practices for bargaining to protect immigrant workers. Make sure you check out the WSLC's excellent new resource, the Immigrant and Worker Justice Toolkit, that was launched last fall (also available at www.wslc.org).

The other area of focus that WSLC delegates have mandated is to combat climate change and make sure that

new clean-energy jobs are good Union jobs. In 2019, the WSLC supported passage of Washington's historic 100% Clean Energy Bill that prioritizes both the planet's future and that of workers. Since then, we've built on that model by making sure that state tax incentives in this space have important labor standards like prevailing wage, apprenticeship utilization, preferred hire for women- and minority-owned businesses. See the legislative staff report for more details, but I want to describe one specific project that I've been very proud to focus on personally: restarting the Intalco aluminum smelter in Ferndale that was closed two years ago.

An alliance of Intalco's former managers and workers, backed by the investment firm Blue Wolf Capital Partners, has the opportunity to buy Intalco from Alcoa and restart it. Working alongside the International Association of Machinists, the WSLC helped secure a state investment that will modernize and decarbonize the plant's manufacturing process and use multiple state-of-the-art environmental controls. The last hurdle to restarting the West Coast's only aluminum smelter and restoring 700 Union jobs is securing a power agreement with the Bonneville Power Administration, and I'm working closely with our congressional delegation and others to make that happen. This effort is a great example of the WSLC working to address climate change while also promoting good jobs.

Those three bodies of work have commonality. They all combat efforts to divide working people in ways that benefit the wealthy few and big corporations. We cannot allow those who stoke divisions by race and immigration status—or who pit jobs versus the environment—to undermine the solidarity of workers.

We also cannot, and have not, allowed this important work to supplant the WSLC's fundamental work of rallying Union solidarity and community pressure in support of good union contracts, better wages, benefits and working conditions for Union members -- and public policies that promote better conditions for all workers. Our exceptional legislative team of Joe Kendo and Sybill Hyppolite continue to work closely with WSLC affiliates to advance a pro-worker agenda in Olympia. To help make those efforts successful, WSLC Political and Strategic Campaigns Director Cherika Carter continues to recruit, train and support the election of pro-worker candidates. Stay informed and engaged on these WSLC efforts and the work of our affiliated unions by subscribing to our award-winning news service, The Stand (www.thestand.org) produced by WSLC Communications Director David Groves.

Also, join the WSLC’s growing number of followers on social media (@WAaflcio on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram), made possible by WSLC Digital Organizer Sarah Tucker.

The WSLC has continued to build the WSLC’s Workforce Development Department to provide direct worker support for Unemployment Insurance issues, rapid response for layoffs/closures, help workers get Trade Adjustment Assistance, and promote and expand certified apprenticeship programs. Many thanks are due to our team of Emmanuel Flores, Chelsea Mason-Placek, Rachel McAloon, and new administrative assistant Laurel Poplack, all led by Kairie Pierce. Similarly, our Project Help team that assists injured workers in navigating the workers’ compensation system continues to assist more and more people under the leadership of Director Jessica Gallardo, and claims specialists Kathy Petruzzelli and Emmanuel Carrillo.

These past two years, we have also initiated a renewed focus on helping strengthen our state’s Central Labor Councils by better coordinating their efforts and helping them share best practices to promote Union solidarity at the local level. Thanks are due to all of the participating CLC leaders and to WSLC Organizer Ingrid Chapman for helping oversee this effort.

All this WSLC work is made possible by the incredible work of our accounting team of Paul Giering and Robert New, and of our support staff, which recently welcomed former Union Summer participant and leader Rashea Dickey. But more than anyone else, I need to thank my Administrative Assistant Willa Kamakahi for ably meeting the challenge of keeping me organized and on task. The work these folks do is too often unheralded, so I want to make sure everyone understands how much we appreciate what they do for all of us.

If it seems like this report has called out each member of the WSLC staff, it absolutely has. That’s because this dedicated, talented group of people have been the best I’ve ever worked with. And I have been truly blessed to do this

work alongside our inspiring and dynamic Secretary Treasurer April Sims. Her energy and passion for organized labor and worker justice is unmatched, and I am truly proud to be able to work with her every day.

And lastly, I must recognize the Executive Board of the WSLC. Between conventions it is their countless hours of dedicated service to our labor movement that provides the direction and advice to April Sims and me as we do the work of our council. I will always remain grateful to them for their contributions.

It has been the honor of a lifetime to serve as your President these four years, and I want to thank all of the leaders, staff and members of WSLC’s affiliated unions for your support and guidance during my tenure. Our solidarity and shared strength of purpose is what makes organizations like the WSLC -- and each of our unions -- more effective. Together we are stronger.

But our work together is not done.

We have a critical election ahead of us in 2022, and the importance of educating union members about what’s at stake has never been more clear. As we’ve seen from attempts to undermine legitimate elections and the Jan. 6 committee’s investigation of Trump’s insurrection, democracy is at stake. From the government response to the COVID-19 pandemic to the abhorrent Supreme Court decision overturning *Roe v. Wade*, our lives are literally at stake. We cannot allow right-wing (replace conservative with anti-democracy) forces to continue to undo the progress we have made investing in our nation’s infrastructure, making health care more accessible, and protecting our planet. Instead, we need to continue to make advancements in those areas, and critically, we must rewrite labor laws to truly restore the freedom to join together in Unions. I urge each of you to make sure your Unions are involved in this effort by being active participants in the WSLC’s Labor Neighbor political program.

Now let’s get back to work.



Report of the Secretary Treasurer

April Sims



In the two years since our last constitutional convention much has changed. We’ve weathered pandemic years. We’ve seen a massive uptick in enthusiasm for our movement. We’ve organized, flexed our power in the streets, and won gains for workers at the ballot box, at the bargaining table, and in the legislature.

We have supported and advocated for working people throughout these past two years of a global pandemic, meeting the needs of workers in the moment and building power for all

working people moving forward.

In the immediate term, the Foundation for Working Families — through diligent work by its board and WSLC accounting staff — stepped up its service of families in need, providing cash assistance to our labor siblings. Our legislative team worked to expand access to unemployment insurance, workers compensation, and to secure funds to support undocumented workers, who pay taxes but cannot access traditional

unemployment or workers comp funds.

We focused on economic recovery and resilience in our legislative agenda, winning wage increases for public sector workers and improving retirement benefits for the firefighters and other first responders who keep us safe. We passed a transportation package investing resources in building and maintaining infrastructure state-wide with no gas tax increase. Likewise, we won improved labor standards in data center incentives, ensuring that those who build this digital infrastructure are paid area-standard wages.

Our Workforce Development department continues to deploy their vast expertise on behalf of working people. Throughout the past two years, this hardworking team helped guide workers through accessing government benefits, elevating our affiliates' concerns with state agencies during the height of the pandemic when workers faced barriers. As we continue to navigate the economic challenges caused by inflation and corporate greed, our Workforce Development department is keeping an eye to the future, increasing access to apprenticeship opportunities, lifting up childcare as a labor issue, and identifying economic opportunities in manufacturing and construction in rural communities hit the hardest during the pandemic.

Our political and organizing team, lead by Cherika Carter, has secured ballot box wins and supported pro-worker projects state-wide. We helped elect President Joe Biden, and Vice President Kamala Harris, the first Black and Asian woman to serve in this role. And we elected worker champions to increasingly diverse Democratic majorities in the State Legislature. Our organizers provide naturalization services to members, develop needed resources for advocating for immigrant workers on the job, and support our 15 central labor councils through the CLC network developed under the leadership of President Larry Brown.

In the past two years, we've seen a disturbing uptick in racist and xenophobic violence and rhetoric that targets and threatens our Black, brown, Asian and Indigenous labor siblings, loved ones, and community members. In Washington, we recognize the power and potential of our movement in the fight for equity and an anti-racist future and at the direction of our affiliates we have committed resources to that fight.

Since 2020, we have expanded staffing support for our Race and Labor program, successfully moving from a training to a campaign and shifting the culture around race and racism within Washington's labor movement. Our Director of Racial and Gender Justice, Kasi Perreira, has led out a state-wide train the trainer program, assembling a multi-racial staff team of experienced trainers, leading trainer cohorts at affiliated unions, and bringing the Race & Labor training to all Central Labor Councils by year end. In 2021, we created a Digital Organizer position to support communications on our anti-racism work, and the broader communications needs of the WSLC.

This past year we also launched the WSLC Racial Equity & Policy toolkit, expanding the council's ground-breaking work on Race and Labor into public policy approaches. This customized tool will guide the WSLC's ongoing policy work and provide a resource to help the United Labor Lobby, a statewide coalition of union and advocacy groups, promote racial equity in the policy work they do on behalf of union members and working people.

It's been a formative two years. Looking to the future, there are major opportunities to grow and strengthen our movement on the horizon, opportunities that our movement is ready to seize.

We're ready to build our future as a labor movement, prioritizing climate jobs and climate justice. We have once in a lifetime opportunity to address income inequality and center the needs of workers and frontline communities in the emerging green energy economy. We can ensure good union jobs in this next generation of manufacturing, construction, operations and maintenance work.

We must double down on our racial equity work. We can ensure that every worker sees their fate in the fight for anti-racism and equality, working directly with members across political lines to draw the connection between race and class that impacts us all.

Building our future means a recommitment to organizing, building strategies to seize this moment of worker enthusiasm and defiance; identify new organizing targets, share strategies, and grow our strength through both new members and internal organizing. This is an exciting moment for our movement, with real potential to build power for working people.

This progress is made possible by the hard work of the WSLC executive board and staff, who have tirelessly shown up for working people every day. In particular I want to recognize the contributions of WSLC support staff, who run the show behind the scenes and without whom our organization could not succeed. Many thanks to Emmanuel Carillo, Rashea Dickey, Robert New, and Laurel Poplack for their commitment and dedication. And a special shout out to Willa Kamakahi, who leads on operations and logistics for WSLC events like the 2022 Constitutional Convention. Please make sure to stop by the convention office and say hi to our staff team!

Finally, it has been my privilege to serve Washington's labor movement alongside my co-conspirator and friend, President Larry Brown. His years of service in support of working families have profoundly benefited our movement, and it is an honor to have worked beside a selfless, compassionate, and fearless leader like President Brown. Thank you Larry Brown. Here's to Building our Future!