



HPAE
AFT / AFL-CIO

2026 AFT CONVENTION REPORT

HPAE DELEGATES HELP SET AFT'S NATIONAL AGENDA



HPAE members brought the voice of nurses and health professionals to the 2026 AFT Convention in Washington, D.C.

Forty-three HPAE delegates representing locals across New Jersey and Philadelphia joined nearly 2,500 delegates from throughout the country at the AFT's 89th Convention, held July 16–19. Delegates debated and adopted national union policy, celebrated organizing and bargaining victories, elected AFT officers and committed to the fights ahead. HPAE delegates played an active role throughout the convention, participating in committee meetings and floor debate, joining healthcare workers from across the country and building solidarity with our fellow New Jersey affiliates.

Delegates Advance Healthcare and Worker Priorities

Convention delegates adopted resolutions establishing AFT policy on safe staffing, corporate control of healthcare, immigrant rights the 2026 elections, and more:

Expanding Code Red and the fight for safe staffing

Delegates committed AFT to an expanded national Code Red campaign, including a goal of winning enforceable, ratio-based safe-staffing laws in at least 10 additional states by 2028. The resolution also calls for federal staffing legislation and greater strategic and financial assistance for bargaining and legislative campaigns. The convention specifically recognized staffing-ratio language won in numerous New Jersey contracts, reflecting the organizing and mobilization of HPAE members.

Building Power for the 2026 Elections

Delegates committed to a major member-to-member political mobilization ahead of the November elections. The AFT's national goal is to recruit 28,000 election volunteers, approximately 1.5 percent of every local union's membership, to help mobilize 200,000 AFT voters. For HPAE, that translates into a clear organizing challenge: recruit 225 election volunteers, an average of 12 members per local, and build a member-led program capable of reaching coworkers directly.



Debbie White re-elected to AFT Executive Council

HPAE President Debbie White, RN, was re-elected as an AFT vice president and member of the union's national Executive Council. Debbie will continue bringing the experience and priorities of HPAE nurses and health professionals into the AFT's national leadership. Delegates elected 43 vice presidents to serve alongside AFT President Randi Weingarten, Secretary-Treasurer Fedrick Ingram and Executive Vice President, Evelyn DeJesus.

For more information about the resolutions adopted at the convention and other convention highlights, visit aft.org/convention.



Standing with immigrant families: Delegates adopted a resolution condemning current ICE operations and calling for stronger protections for immigrant workers, patients, students and families. It supports keeping immigration enforcement out of hospitals, schools, houses of worship and other sensitive locations; requiring judicial warrants; protecting due-process rights; and expanding training and resources for locals responding to immigration enforcement actions.

Patients over profits: Delegates affirmed healthcare as a human right and committed the AFT to opposing the financialization of healthcare, including private-equity and for-profit control of hospitals and essential health services. The resolution supports protecting community hospitals from profit-driven closures, challenging excessive consolidation and continuing the fight for universal healthcare.

AFT Posts Highest-Ever Membership as Union Popularity Surges

AFT has reached a record 1.8 million members, with nearly 60,000 workers in 179 new units joining over the last two years. Healthcare has been a major driver of that growth, with AFT Nurses and Health Professionals now representing over 250,000 healthcare workers, ranking as the fastest-growing healthcare union in the country and second largest nurses union in the AFL-CIO. Our newest affiliate is the 1,500-member Hawaii Nurses and Healthcare Professionals.



New Jersey Solidarity

HPAE delegates joined AFTNJ members for a joint delegate luncheon during the convention, bringing together healthcare workers and educators from across the state.

Pride of the Union Award

HPAE 5058 at Jersey Shore received an AFT Pride of the Union Award for outstanding membership growth. The award was presented during a special convention reception.



Barbara Rosen receives AFT Living the Legacy Award

HPAA First Vice President, Barbara Rosen, received an AFT Living the Legacy Award, recognizing over 50 years of service. Established by the AFT Women's Rights Committee, the award honors women whose leadership, activism and mentorship have strengthened their unions and communities.

HPAE Delegates:

Local 5004

Alice Windley Barden
Cathi Goldfischer
Sarah Szulecki
Elaine Van Buren-Rizzo

Local 5030

Tara Lyndia Ontal
Azza Elsaid
Elizabeth Simon

Local 5058

Daniel Hayes
Stephanie Boursiquot
Kathleen Kochel
Fiona Morgan-Newbury

Local 5091

Faith Mazuru
Cristina Blasoni-Topsidis
Jeffrey Peck
Barbara Rosen

Local 5105

Debbie White

Local 5089

Banita Herndon
Ivan Bangug
Wendy Bobcombe
Sabrina Brown-Oliver
Dominick Desteno
Stella Odefemi

Local 5094

Mayra Barreto
Herberth Chacon
Anna Falisiewicz
Saleena Ghanny
Noor Hamdan
Jessica Liptak
Jason Minott
Christina Rozario
Ashley Uribe
Carmen Vincenty

Local 5106

Tamika Gillard
Christopher Lewis

Local 5138

Anna Pona

Local 5107

Tamara Williams-Joseph
Eugenie Adolphe

Local 5147

Curtis Jeter
Juan Seguinot

Local 5186

Rebecca Lowe

Local 5621

Jennifer Thurston

HPAA State Fed, 8071

Alexis Rean-Walker

HPAA Retirees, 8071R

Bernie Gerard

Guests:

Kendra McCann (5058)
Pam Reinhardt (5058)
Cynthia Baez-Lugo (5089)
Mendes Toussant (5094)
Chris Whalen (HPAA E.D.)