

# AFL-CIO Joins Call for **JOBS Now!**

In a sea of orange posters, thousands of voices filled the air of the David L. Lawrence Convention Center in Pittsburgh, PA. "What does labor want?" IAM International President Tom Buffenbarger yelled from the 2009 AFL-CIO Convention podium.

"JOBS Now!" the delegates and guests repeatedly shouted in response.

Buffenbarger led the call to support a resolution to commit the 11.5 million-member labor federation to push for a second stimulus package aimed at creating jobs, rebuilding the nation's manufacturing, construction and transportation sectors, and providing more education



*Delegates at the 2009 AFL-CIO Convention, including at left, IAM General Secretary-Treasurer Warren Mart, IAM General Vice Presidents Robert Roach, Jr. and Robert Martinez, Jr., joined the call for a JOBS Now! plan to create jobs faster for America's unemployed.*

and training opportunities for U.S. workers.

"America now has 29.7 million unemployed workers, involuntary part-time workers, or workers who want a job but cannot find one," said Buffenbarger. "Just in the last four months, another 900,000 Americans simply gave up looking for a job. Never before have 31 million Americans been idled to this degree... JOBS Now! must

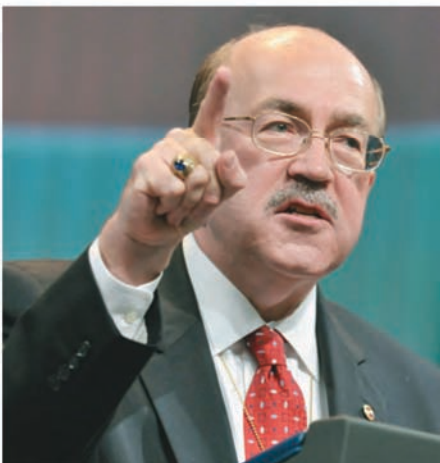
*IAM President Tom Buffenbarger introduced the resolution that called for a national JOBS Now! initiative to put Americans back to work.*

become our initiative, our issue, our action agenda and our clarion call."

The resolution passed with unanimous support.

## **Better Future**

Hours later, President Barack Obama acknowledged the needs of the working class in his address to delegates. "For over half a century, the success of America has been built on the success of our middle class," said President Obama. "It was a strong middle class that powered American industries, propelled America's economy,



Bill Burke, Page One Photography

Steve Dietz/Sharp Image



and made the 20th Century the first American Century.

"The fundamental test of our time is whether we will heed this lesson; whether we will let America become a nation of the very rich and the very poor, of the haves and the have-nots; or whether we will remain true to the promise of this country and build a future where the success of all of us is built on the success of each of us."

President Obama pledged his continued support for working families, a stronger economy, the Employee Free Choice Act and affordable, quality health care. "That's the future I want to build. That's the future the AFL-CIO wants to build. That's the future the American people want to build."

The president's \$787 billion American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, passed last February, has so far saved and created 1.2 million jobs. "A great start," says Buffenbarger, "but the first stimulus package

has been slow in implementation, inadequate in size and insufficiently focused on the one area sure to get us out of this mess — jobs. More stimulus is needed to get Americans back on the payroll and our country on the road to recovery."

## New Leadership

This year's Convention also marked a change in AFL-CIO leadership. Delegates bid farewell to 14-year President John Sweeney and welcomed the leadership of Rich Trumka.

Trumka brings 40 years of experience to the top spot of the Federation since his start as a member of the United Mine Workers of America in a small coal-mining community in southwest Pennsylvania. Former International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Executive Assistant Liz Shuler replaced Trumka as AFL-CIO Secretary-Treasurer, and former American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees Area Director Arlene Holt Baker



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President Barack Obama

resumed her post as AFL-CIO Executive Vice President.

Trumka and his team promise a new future for the middle class and organized labor. "Middle-class people who once hoped of living the American Dream are today living in chaos," said Trumka. "We're losing health care. We're losing our pensions. We're losing our jobs. And we are losing our patience!... Our message to America is that just as unions built the middle class once before, if you give us the chance, we can build it again!"

To join the JOBS Now! campaign, log on to [www.GoIAM.org](http://www.GoIAM.org) and tell Congress you want JOBS Now!



*AFL-CIO delegates elected new leaders, from left, Arlene Holt Baker as Executive Vice President, Rich Trumka as President and Liz Shuler as Secretary-Treasurer. The new leaders pledge swift action to rebuild America's middle class.*