

July 2022 38th Constitution Convention Report

By Greg Suggs, Constitution Committee and Convention Delegate

I would like to first thank the membership for electing me to be a delegate and then approving me to sit on the Constitution Committee. My 3 weeks in Detroit was an educational experience I will not forget.

The nine members of my committee discussed, debated, and voted on over 400 amendments to the constitution sent in by locals across the country. This group of people is the most diversified group I have ever had the pleasure to work with. We had knowledge and experience unparalleled in the cross section of this UAW. The points of view and experiences of these individuals made the big picture we were charged with looking at much easier to see and base our decisions on. Our job was to vote as a committee to send the proposed amendment to the convention floor to be voted on by the delegates or keep it in committee. During the convention my committee spent most of our time either on stage or backstage waiting to go on stage to give our speeches and present the proposed amendments to the delegates.

With the Consent Decree agreed to by the UAW and Federal Government stemming from the corruption of past leadership, there were a lot of changes wanted by members of the UAW to try and stop future corruption. A lot of the amendments put before us would have hand cuffed the current and future leadership from allowing them to lead and be reactive to the needs of the locals. Corrupt individuals will find a way, but they will be caught and prosecuted. The just over one million dollars taken by the 17 individuals prosecuted has to date of the convention cost the UAW over 12 million dollars in legal fees and expenditures including the Federal court appointed attorney overseeing the elections of the International Executive Board (IEB). The Constitution Committee brought 12 documents before the delegates to be voted on. The first set of changes to the constitution voted on we referred to as the monitors package, this was changes to the constitution required by the monitor changing the way we hold our IEB elections.

Convention Day 1:

- Passage of the monitors package to align the constitution language with the recent referendum on direct elections of the UAW International officers and Regional Directors.
- A resolution calling for ranked choice voting was defeated, and delegates instead adopted runoff elections in the event there is no clear majority winner in the UAW International officers or Regional Directors election.

Convention Day 2:

- Delegates voted down a proposal for retiree eligibility for UAW International office.
- Delegates soundly approved stronger language to include higher education in the unions constitution regarding areas of jurisdiction.
- Delegates also voted to create Region 6, comprised of Washington, Oregon, California, Nevada, Idaho, Utah, Arizona, Hawaii and Alaska.
- Delegates approved a resolution for no cap on the maximum contribution amount to candidates during any election cycle for International or local union offices.
- Starting in 2026, only eligible active and retired members can contribute to a candidate during any election cycle for International or local union offices with a cap of \$2,000.
- Delegates approved salaries for International staff and officers. The wage increases track the most recently ratified GM contract. In addition, the new language specifies the base salaries of staff and officers instead of using a formula.

Convention Day 3:

- Delegates approved strike pay beginning on day one instead of day eight.
- Delegates approved increases in strike pay from \$400 to \$500 a week. On Day 4 this resolution was revisited and voted on by the delegates to reverse the weekly strike pay to \$400 a week.
- Delegates voted to present President Emeritus status to retired UAW Presidents Ron Gettelfinger and Rory Gamble.
- Nominations were held for International President, Secretary-Treasurer and Vice Presidents. To be determined by mail in ballots this fall.
- Trustee nominations and elections found Emilio Ramirez elected from a field of 4 candidates. His term ends in 2030.

Convention Day 4:

- Trustee nomination and elections found Dana Davidson elected to a term ending in 2034.
- Break out to Regions for the nomination of Regional Directors. Region 8 Director Mitchell Smith is retiring after this term. Assistant Region 8 Director Tim Smith was nominated and won by acclamation the position of Region 8 Director. Tim will be sworn in after the mail in election this fall.
- Delegates approved extending the Union's Ethics Committee until the next convention in 2026.
- Delegates concluded convention business by approving the use of gender-neutral language and strengthening language on the duties of local union members.
- Another resolution added an organizing committee to the union's standing committees.
- Also delegates unanimously approved a resolution to authorize the IEB to use legal resources to recoup from the UAW officials convicted of felonies the estimated \$12.9 million in costs related to the court appointed monitor. This is in addition to the \$1.1 million currently still owed in restitution for monies fraudulently taken from the UAW.