



The Sidney Hillman Foundation

THE AMERICAN PROSPECT

THE AMERICAN LABOR MOVEMENT AT A CROSSROADS: New Thinking, New Organizing, New Strategies

Thursday, January 15, 2015

Washington Court Hotel, 525 New Jersey Ave. N.W., Atrium Ballroom, Washington, D.C.

The American labor movement is at a critical juncture. After three decades of declining union density in the private sector and years of all-out political assaults on public sector unions, America's unions now face what can only be described as existential threats. Strategies and tactics that may have worked in a different era are no longer adequate to confront today's challenges. The need for different approaches to the fundamentals of union work in areas such as organizing, collective bargaining and political action is clear. This conference will examine new thinking and new initiatives, viewing them critically in the light of ongoing union imperatives to cultivate member activism and involvement, foster democratic self-governance and build the collective power of working people.

AGENDA

8:30 a.m. – 9:00 a.m. Check-in and Continental Breakfast

9:00 a.m. – 9:30 a.m.

WELCOME AND OPENING REMARKS

Leo Casey, *executive director, Albert Shanker Institute*

Alexandra Lescaze, *executive director, Sidney Hillman Foundation*

The Honorable Thomas E. Perez, *U.S. Secretary of Labor*

Keynote: AMERICAN LABOR MOVEMENT AT A CROSSROADS

Randi Weingarten, *president, American Federation of Teachers and Albert Shanker Institute*

9:30 a.m. – 10:45 a.m.

NEW FORMS OF LABOR ORGANIZING/ORGANIZATION I

Tefere Gebre, *executive vice president, AFL-CIO*

Harold Meyerson, *editor-at-large, American Prospect; columnist, Washington Post; board member, Albert Shanker Institute; judge, Sidney Hillman Foundation*

Karen Nussbaum, *executive director, Working America*

David Rolf, *president, Workers Lab, Service Employees International Union, Local 775*

Moderator: **Alexandra Lescaze**, *executive director, Sidney Hillman Foundation*

10:45 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.

Break

11:00 a.m. – 12:15 p.m.

NEW FORMS OF LABOR ORGANIZING/ORGANIZATION II

Paul Booth, *executive assistant to the president, American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees*

Elizabeth Bunn, *Organizing Director, AFL-CIO*

Sara Horowitz, *founder and executive director, Freelancers Union*

Jessica Smith, *chief of staff, American Federation of Teachers*

Cristina Tzintzún, *executive director, Texas Workers Defense Project*

Moderator: **Phil Kugler**, *special assistant to the president for organization and field services, American Federation of Teachers*

- 12:15 p.m. – 12:30 p.m. **REFLECTIONS ON THE STATE OF AMERICAN LABOR**
Steven Greenhouse, *labor journalist*
Moderator: **Mark Levinson**, *chief economist, Service Employees International Union; board member, Sidney Hillman Foundation*
- 12:30 p. m. – 1:00 p.m. Lunch
- 1:00 p.m. – 2:15 p.m. **BUILDING COMMUNITY-LABOR ALLIANCES**
Marcelle Grair, *National Organizer, United Students Against Sweatshops*
Sarita Gupta, *executive director, Jobs with Justice*
Gerry Hudson, *executive vice president, Service Employees International Union; board member, Sidney Hillman Foundation*
Joseph McCartin, *director, Kalmanovitz Initiative for Labor and the Working Poor, Georgetown University*
Sejal Parikh, *fast food workers campaign director, Working Washington*
Moderator: **Leo Casey**, *executive director, Albert Shanker Institute*
- 2:15 p.m. – 2:30 p.m. Break
- 2:30 p.m. – 3:45 p.m. **RETHINKING COLLECTIVE BARGAINING AND UNION REPRESENTATION**
Catherine Fisk, *chancellor's professor of law; co-director, Center in Law, Society and Culture, University of California at Irvine Law School*
Prasi Gupta, *deputy executive director, National Guestworker Alliance*
Mary Cathryn Ricker, *executive vice president, American Federation of Teachers; board member, Albert Shanker Institute*
Dan Schlademan, *director, OUR Walmart, United Food and Commercial Workers International Union*
Moderator: **Cheryl Teare**, *director, Union Leadership Institute, American Federation of Teachers*
- 3:45 p.m. – 4:00 p.m. Break
- 4:00 p.m. – 5:15 p.m. **WORKERS' RIGHTS AND COLLECTIVE POWER**
Mark Brenner, *director, Labor Notes*
Richard Kahlenberg, *senior fellow, Century Foundation; board member, Albert Shanker Institute*
Rich Yeselson, *labor strategist*
Moderator: **Rachel Cohen**, *The American Prospect*
- 5:15 p.m. – 5:40 p.m. **NEXT STEPS**
Leo Casey, *executive director, Albert Shanker Institute*
- 5:40 p.m. – 6:30 p.m. **RECEPTION (555 New Jersey Ave, NW, 9th Floor)**

For more information contact Vicki Thomas, vthomas@ashankerinst.org.