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AFL-CIO Convention Recognizes the Growth of Professionals in Unions, Acknowledges Potential for Future Gain

ST. LOUIS, Oct. 25, 2017—Today, AFL-CIO convention delegates voted to recognize the dramatic growth of professional union members who now make up over 40 percent of the labor movement, as well as acknowledged the potential for future growth.

The delegates of the AFL-CIO convention adopted Resolution 36, Celebrating DPE: 40 Years of Growing Professional Union Membership. The resolution commemorates the Department for Professional Employees, AFL-CIO's ([DPE's](#)) 40 years of work to increase the number of professionals in the labor movement from less than 18 percent to 42 percent of all union members. The resolution also endorsed professionals as critical to the future of the labor movement due to their majority support for joining unions and the growth of professional jobs in the workforce.

“When DPE was being created many were skeptical about whether professionals would be drawn to unions, but the skeptics were wrong,” said DPE President Paul E. Almeida. “As DPE’s affiliate unions’ success shows, professionals want to join unions.”

The resolution highlights that while over six million professionals have already chosen to join together to negotiate for better raises, benefits, and working conditions, there is the potential to bring even more into the labor movement. DPE’s [survey of non-union professionals](#) conducted last fall revealed that a majority (56%) of non-union professionals would support joining a union at their current job. Recent organizing success among [digital journalists](#), [graduate employees](#), [doctors](#), and [non-profit employees](#), reinforces the survey’s results.

While employment in other sectors has declined or stagnated, employment in professional and technical occupations continues to grow. Over 80 percent of the new jobs created in the last 15 years were in professional and technical occupations. In 1972, professionals were a quarter of the workforce, now they are 38 percent.

“The future of the labor movement is clearly professional,” said Almeida. “DPE will continue to help affiliate unions organize professionals and grow by providing a way for unions to collaborate, share their experiences, and access research-based organizing resources.”

About DPE

The Department for Professional Employees, AFL-CIO (DPE) is a coalition of 23 unions representing over four million professional and technical union members. DPE affiliate unions represent professionals in over 300 occupations in education and healthcare; science, engineering, and technology; legal, business, and management; media, entertainment, and the arts; and public administration.