AFL-CIO MEMBERSHIP AT 8.4 MILLION OVER TWO YEARS

The unions affiliated with the AFL-CIO have a combined average membership of 8.4 million members over a two-year period ending June 30, according to membership figures computed by the federation in conjunction with its September 2009 quadrennial convention. The membership levels computed for the 2005 convention, before six large AFL-CIO affiliates left the federation to form the Change to Win (CTW) federation, show that affiliates were paying per capita dues on nearly 13 million members. The six unions leaving the federation were paying per capita dues on approximately 4.3 million members. Taking the membership figures for those six unions out of the mix, AFL-CIO unions gained approximately 300,000 members since the last convention.

These figures are used to determine each union’s voting strength at the convention. Unions provide membership figures to the federation based on U.S. membership levels and do not count their Canadian members in the per capita totals. The membership figure does not include associate members, for which the affiliates pay a reduced monthly per capita tax. The figures also do not include the 3 million members of the Working America, the federation’s community affiliate for workers who do not have a union in their workplace, or 3.9 million retired union members represented by the Alliance for Retired Americans. The federation usually says it represents 11.5 million members, including those in Working America.

The new membership figures include several affiliations that took place since the 2005 convention including the American Federation of Television & Radio Artists, which received a charter in February 2008; the California Nurses Association/National Nurses Organizing Committee, which affiliated in May 2007; the Farm Labor Organizing Committee and the United Transportation Union, both of which affiliated in February 2006; and the National Postal Mail Handlers, an affiliate of the Laborers’ International Union, which reaffiliated in December 2006 under a new AFL-CIO program that allowed former affiliates that had merged with or into the CTW unions prior to their disaffiliation to seek national charters and rejoin the AFL-CIO.

The federation currently has 57 affiliates including the 265,000-member UNITE HERE, which reaffiliated on the last day of the convention. The members of UNITE HERE are not included in the membership figures compiled for the convention.

Of the 56 unions reflected in the membership figures, 22 gained new members, with five making gains of more than 10,000 members. The American Federation of Teachers increased its average membership by 94,384 to 1,110,698. The American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees increased by 73,327 to 1,378,008. The American Federation of Government Employees increased by 19,493 to 226,756, and the International Association of Fire Fighters grew by 14,375 to 243,125. The Operative Plasterers and Cement Masons increased its membership by 10,063 members to 39,563.

Seventeen AFL-CIO affiliates lost members since the last convention. The biggest losses were felt by the United Auto Workers losing 168,458 members; the Communications Workers of America down by 81,912; the United Steel Workers fewer by 68,810; the International Association of Machinists less by 25,527; and the American Postal Workers Union with 24,452 less members.
