



A Union of Professionals

AFT News Release

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Statement by Randi Weingarten, President, American Federation of Teachers, On White House Event Honoring Women of Labor

Attending the National Women's History Month event hosted by U.S. Secretary of Labor Hilda Solis were AFT-West Virginia President Judy Hale and Kathleen Hofmann, a music teacher from Cincinnati who works every day to ensure she and her fellow teachers have a voice in their students' education.

WASHINGTON—From garment workers at the turn of the last century to today's teachers and nurses, women—especially those in female-dominated professions—have led the fights for safe and fair working conditions, upward mobility and a voice in the workplace. We thank U.S. Secretary of Labor Hilda Solis and White House Senior Advisor Valerie Jarrett for recognizing the women of labor who blazed a trail, as well as the courageous women of today who continue their commitment to dignity and fairness in our nation's workplaces.

The American Federation of Teachers is proud of the work our members and leaders do every day—including women like:

- Susan Crutchfield, the chair of the English department at the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse, who led the fight for collective bargaining rights for higher education faculty and staff in Wisconsin. Through the leadership of Crutchfield and her colleagues, faculty at UW-La Crosse recently voted overwhelmingly for union representation, undeterred by the anti-union action of Wisconsin Gov. Scott Walker and Republican state lawmakers. Three UW campuses have voted for AFT representation since Walker introduced legislation to eliminate collective bargaining rights for public employees.
- Tammie Miller, who in 2007 joined with other family child care providers in New York City to win the right to bargain collectively as a way to improve the circumstances of the children they serve, and to win a measure of economic justice for the largely female workforce that comprises this profession.
- Vi Parramore of Jefferson County, Ala., who, despite living in a state where public employees do not have the right to collective bargaining, has demonstrated that through collective action and purposeful leadership, teachers and school support personnel could mobilize to force the district

American Federation of Teachers, AFL-CIO

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to close down or fix school buildings that were in unsafe or unhealthy condition, require the state to provide school nurses in every school district, advocate for appropriate services to children with special needs, and—working cooperatively with school district officials—develop high-quality teacher evaluation standards.

- AFT Executive Vice President Lorretta Johnson, who started her career in education as a teacher's aide at a Baltimore elementary school, where she was paid \$2.25 an hour with no benefits. To improve the working conditions of paraprofessionals like her, she led the successful effort to organize them into the Baltimore Teachers Union, where she negotiated the first contract for paraprofessionals in 1970. Johnson's organizing work has brought dignity and professional advancement to thousands of paraprofessionals and teachers in Baltimore and across the country, to the benefit of their communities and the children they serve.

They are four among hundreds of thousands who, every day, work to make a difference in their communities and in the lives of the people they serve. More profiles of AFT members who make a difference every day can be found at <http://www.aft.org/heroes/index.cfm>. Classroom materials on National Women's History Month can be found on the AFT website at <http://www.aft.org/yourwork/tools4teachers/women/index.cfm>.

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The AFT represents 1.5 million pre-K through 12th-grade teachers; paraprofessionals and other school-related personnel; higher education faculty and professional staff; federal, state and local government employees; nurses and healthcare workers; and early childhood educators.