

In August 2017, I had the opportunity of attending the Inaugural National Convention of the Union of Health and Environment Workers as an observer. This was my first time attending a convention and the perfect chance to witness the democratic principles in which the union is based. Thankfully, I was seated next to a fellow observer who was familiar with the processes and procedures of the convention and was able to provide me with some clarification and insight. I was quickly impressed with the organization, layout of the room, and planning that went into the conference to overcome the logistical challenges that come with hosting an event of that size.

My experience was mostly positive however there are some additional issues that I feel should be addressed. Although there is no official dress code for the convention it is my opinion that some members were not dressed appropriately during the proceedings (shorts, sandals, jeans, t-shirt etc.). I believe the governing body should adopt a business casual dress code for these conventions.

Additionally, a great amount of time and effort goes into the convention and the overall cost cannot be ignored. That being said, I was disappointed with the “games” that were being played on the floor which resulted in a great deal of wasted time and lost opportunities to handle important union business.

Overall, it was a great learning opportunity and I’m thankful I was given the chance to attend the convention. I think we have a great leadership team and are headed in the right direction.