**POLITICAL CAMPAIGN SPEECH**

**FOR**

**SHAWN WILLIAMS**

Hello everyone, and thank you for joining me. Whether or not we are here in each other’s presence in person or connecting via technology, one thing is certain.... it becomes clearer every day that we are in this together.... as members of this important union, as concerned citizens, and as people, integrally involved, to create and maintain a viable “road map” so urgently needed in these times. As we continue to navigate through the constant change felt throughout our union, our professions, and our country, it’s urgent that we have leaders with experience, compassion, and tenacity.

As members of the American Federation of Government Employees, we find ourselves placed in the center of the conversation regarding action and education in order to maintain equitable and productive environments in which to make our marks professionally. Make no mistake.... what happens in our workplaces directly influences our ability to function in our committees... to spread the word and support a movement that advocates for civil, human, and workers rights, **NO MATTER WHAT**. Every day, it becomes more and more clear.... as if we didn’t already know.... that it is beyond critical that we have pro-active, creative, experienced voices at the table, and that is why I am seeking re-election for a second term as Representative of District 6 of the National Fair Practices Affirmative Action Coordinator as well as my commitment as Title 5 Vice-President of Local 1133. (**Please adjust title wording as needed)**. While District 6 serves Ohio, Indiana, and Kentucky, I believe that with powerful participants and leaders comes strength in representation for **ALL**. It is my intention to work to coalesce the voices, ideas, and the determination of my fellow regional coordinators to continue to build a powerful bloc aimed at finally achieving long sought goals and initiatives critical in providing and maintaining equity, justice, and respect through the body of the AFGE.

I think it’s not possible to overstate the mission and the message of what we do and why we do it, so here it is again. The purpose of the National Human Rights Committee is to study and recommend legal, legislative, and administrative proposals relating to improving working conditions, with a focus on eliminating employment discrimination in the Government. Of course, as is becoming more abundantly obvious every single day, the urgent objects of these proposals include but are not limited to, eliminating discrimination based on race, color, age, sex, religion, national origin, disability/handicap, gender, political affiliation, personal appearance, family responsibility, and sexual preference or sexual orientation as they relate to the quality of life for AFGE members, their families, and their committees. Rights for one, quite simply, means rights for **ALL**. It has never been, nor will it **EVER BE**, acceptable to cherry pick by privilege or superficial criteria of acceptability.

The late John Lewis stated simply yet powerfully, “When you see something that is not right, not fair, not just, you have to say something; you have to **DO** something.” It is incumbent upon all of us to do what we can, especially at this time, when so much is at stake, to coordinate, advocate and legislate for the basic rights for which we’ve all given so much. As government workers... **ANY** workers... we place ourselves on the field of duty to serve our country. This union advocates for **ALL** of us and as such, we must encourage our fellow constituents to stand together. It is urgent that we endorse leadership fueled by ingenuity, enthusiasm, experience, understanding. Our leaders must be in possession of positive, effective strategy and follow through.

Clearly, there’s **A LOT** of work to do. We are in the midst of a revolution. We are part of the evolution of change. Change is kinetic. By their very nature, neither time nor change stand still. Our “Pandora’s Box” of issues and prevalent conditions has burst wide open.... of course we have always been aware of the challenges we face, but we must believe that **NOW** it’s different. **NOW** we must mobilize and act to advocate for, and enforce the changes so critically needed. There are at least **THREE** executive orders whose purpose is to destroy Federal Unions... **THREE**. **SO FAR**.... What makes us think there aren’t more right around the corner?? Right now, they may seem abstract to some... just numbers... 13836... 13837... 13839.... but make no mistake... their purpose is to limit and eliminate our rights and dim our voices while we work to keep our country going. Let’s also be very clear ...the Voting Rights Act, championed by Congressman John Lewis has been sitting, idle, untouched, on Majority Leader Mitch McConnell’s desk, for **OVER two hundred days**.

This union and our committees have **A LOT** of work to do. National Fair Practices Affirmative Action Coordinators may advise, assist and/or represent members on EEO issues, monitor trends in EEO laws and regulations and may recommend human rights, civil rights, and worker’s rights national action plans for AFGE. And that’s just the beginning. I am committed to continuing to work on educating, training, and mobilizing our constituency in order to have our voices heard, our numbers count, and positive change take hold. I have received the education of a lifetime by being involved in the causes that mean so much to each and every one of us. It is a privilege to be a part of an unstoppable movement, one that is forced to grow and become more essential every.... single... day. (**If you want to make a little joke, you can say**) Not that I feel it necessary to quote old song lyrics, but truthfully, “We’ve only just begun...” (**and wait for the laugh**).

John Lewis also reminded us, “What I try to tell young people is that if you come together with a mission, and it’s grounded with love and a sense of community, you can make the impossible **possible**.” I come to all of you, my community... **OUR** union... with passion, purpose, and a **PLAN**.... I look forward to continuing my mission as National Fair Practices Coordinator, and for that, I seek your support. I will build on the work we’ve done and continue our mission to coalesce our message, stand for our membership, and effect the change so desperately needed throughout our work, our lives, and our country. Thank you!!