

**AFL-CIO President Shuler's Remarks Drafted for Delivery  
Harvard Kennedy School Conference on AI and Democracy, 12/1/2023**

I'm here today because the single best movement prepared to answer fears around AI is the labor movement. It is our unions.

We'll talk more about this in the panel ... but if you know your labor history, that is what unions have ALWAYS done when it comes to tech.

My home union is the IBEW, the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers.

One of the things I saw again and again coming up was this idea of collaboration on new technology. Workers and companies coming together, because it's common sense.

Why *wouldn't* you want the people who actually do the job to be involved in that process?

When it was my turn to speak in that forum with Senator Schumer and many tech executives ... I made it really clear:

THERE'S A BETTER WAY FORWARD.

Bring workers in early in the process — when your companies are still researching and developing the technology.

Use our expertise to brainstorm, develop, and implement new ideas. Make sure workers who need to be retrained for other roles are.

Give us the tools to become even better. Make your companies more profitable. Make ALL of us better off.

There are a few companies that are listening — but those are few and far between. Unions are how we guarantee our voice is heard.

That is what you're seeing across this country right now. Look at how workers are rising up, especially around AI.

Look at UAW auto workers. Look at the WGA writers in Hollywood. Look at UNITE HERE, the hotel workers in Vegas — who are all saying the exact same thing: "I'm not gonna *let* you automate my job! I'm not gonna *let* you threaten my future without a fight!"

And guess what? We're *winning*.

And those strikes are really just one way to make ourselves heard — a last resort sometimes. Unions give our workers a voice in a lot of different ways:

Collective bargaining. Labor-management partnerships. Training programs to make sure workers are gaining new skills if their job is changing. Constant education and re-education on what new technology like AI can do.

And making sure we're heard in Washington, D.C., too, as these policies are shaped.

Because I think a lot about that line: *If you're not at the table, you're on the menu*. We've been on the menu for *too long*.

And I'll tell you: Our mission when it comes to AI is a lot bigger than the workplace — because AI is a lot bigger than that, too.

This touches not just the jobs of workers. It touches our relationships. Our civil rights. Our ability to finance a home — especially for people of color. Every single aspect of our lives.

And this labor movement ... It's a movement for justice and dignity in ALL areas of our lives.

71% of Americans support unions right now. Think about the last time you got 71% of Americans to agree on anything. 9 out of 10 young people support unions, too.

We have incredible momentum right now...