



# INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF PROFESSIONAL & TECHNICAL ENGINEERS AFL-CIO & CLC

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## New Era for IFPTE – Union for Highly-Skilled Professionals in the Federal, Public, and Private Sector Elects New Top Leaders with a Record of Success in Halls of Government and the Utility Sector

*The fast-growing International Federation of Professional and Technical Engineers, which counts engineers at Boeing and rocket scientists at NASA among its members, also announced this week that it will ramp up efforts to organize workers employed by nonprofits, the energy sector and in Canada.*

WASHINGTON -- The International Federation of Professional and Technical Engineers (IFPTE) elected Matthew Biggs as its new president and Gay Henson as secretary-treasurer at its convention held online this week.

[Biggs](#), the union's legislative director for the past 20 years also has served as secretary-treasurer since 2018. [Henson](#) is a health physicist and served as president of the local that represents engineers and other professionals at the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA).

"I can think of no one more capable of leading this union than Matt Biggs," said Paul Shearon who is retiring as IFPTE president. "He knows the members, knows the issues, and knows how to get things done."

Shearon also cheered the choice of Henson as the new secretary-treasurer.

“Having an up-from-the-ranks leader like Gay Henson, who has organized and rallied workers in the deep South and proven that she can take on the big bosses and win, adds great strength to the leadership team.”

IFPTE is sometimes referred to as the home for “the geeks of the labor movement.” The union represents engineers at Boeing, NASA rocket scientists, researchers at the Congressional Research Service, auditors at the Government Accountability Office and federal judges who hear cases related to immigration and Social Security matters, to name only a few of the highly-skilled occupations under the IFPTE umbrella.

In recent years, hundreds of workers employed at think-tanks and non-profits such as the Economic Policy Institute, The Center for American Progress, the American Civil Liberties Union and the Animal Legal Defense Fund, have joined the union. IFPTE also has seen its ranks growing in Canada, where the union represents thousands employed by utilities such as Bruce Power and Hydro One as well as public employees employed by provincial and municipal governments, along with legal service lawyers throughout Ontario.

The engineers’ union has been very aggressive at organizing professionals employed at utilities and fighting against the outsourcing of work. Last year, Henson’s local union, with strong support from the international union, was able to reverse an effort by TVA to outsource hundreds of IT jobs at the public utility to subcontractors in India, Ireland and France.

“A common perception is that highly educated workers at non-profits, government agencies and tech companies have it easier than workers in industries and services where unions have a long history,” said Biggs.

“The fact is, workers with advanced degrees and those in offices, hearing rooms and labs have issues and need representation. IFPTE is here for them. We will fight for their rights and advocate for their well-being.”

Over the past year, IFPTE had to fend off outside union busters at the Animal Legal Defense Fund, whose managers think animals have a right to representation—but not their staff. The union in the past year also successfully fought back an attempt by the Trump administration to strip rights away from federal immigration judges represented by IFPTE. In past years, battles with the Boeing Company have been legendary, including a 40-day strike featuring picket signs that read: “No Nerds No Birds.”

During the IFPTE convention, delegates voted to raise union dues to hire additional staff to organize professionals in the energy sector and those employed at non-profit organizations, and to provide assistance to its Canadian local unions.

**Across the United States and Canada, IFPTE represents 90,000 highly-skilled workers in the federal, public, and private sectors. The union is an affiliate of the AFL-CIO and the CLC. More information can be found at [www.IFPTE.org](http://www.IFPTE.org).**

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