



FMCS
FEDERAL MEDIATION &
CONCILIATION SERVICE

NEWS RELEASE

Thursday, July 14, 2022
For Immediate Release
Website: www.fmcs.gov

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Labor and Management Industry, Sports, and Government Leaders Make National Conference a Virtual All-Star Event

WASHINGTON, D.C. (July 14, 2022) – The Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service (FMCS) National Labor-Management Conference (NLMC), held virtually on July 12-13, once again demonstrated why it is considered the nation’s premier labor-management event.

The NLMC is the largest labor-management conference in the country; this year, the more than 1,200 registered participants included leaders in business, labor, government, academia, mediation, arbitration, and, with this year’s event, professional sports as well.

The conference opened with a welcome from FMCS Acting Director Gregory Goldstein and Deputy Director of Field Operations (and President Joseph Biden’s nominee to lead the agency) Javier Ramirez, followed by a special [pre-recorded message](#) from President Biden.

National Labor-Relations Board (NLRB) General Counsel Jennifer Abruzzo presented during the NLMC’s opening plenary session on July 12, highlighting the importance of building positive relationships between employers and workers in the workplace. She also updated conference attendees on NLRB initiatives and took a variety of questions submitted by members of the audience using the conference’s Q&A function.

“Encouraging very productive labor-management relations...whether a union represents workers or not, is a crucial step towards promoting workplace and industrial stability,” said Abruzzo. “When workers’ voices are heard issues are addressed and workplace conflict diminishes. Then everybody wins – businesses, communities, workers - they will all flourish.”

The workplace issues faced by professional athletes drew a large crowd for the closing plenary on Day 1: “How Collective Bargaining Can Help Achieve Gender Equity in Professional Sports & Beyond,” which featured a panel discussion with National Women’s Soccer League Players Association (NWSLPA) President Tori Huster, AFL-CIO Vice President and Executive Director of NWSLPA Meghann Burke, and attorney Deborah R. Willig, and was led by newly elected AFL-CIO President Liz Shuler.

FMCS also welcomed back Dr. Peter Coleman, Executive Director of Columbia University’s Advanced Consortium on Cooperation, Conflict and Complexity in the Earth. Professor Coleman’s well-attended

plenary session, “The Way Out: How to Overcome Toxic Polarization” took a deep dive into what many consider one of the most significant crises facing modern America – both in the workplace and beyond.

The theme for this year’s conference was “Future@Work: Reimagining the Workplace” with a focus on the twin impacts of pandemic and a challenging economy on industrial relations. The NLMC also focused on Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility (DEIA) issues in the workplace, and featured a side-track on federal sector unionization during the Biden administration. Other notable sessions addressed challenges facing private, public, and federal sectors workplaces, such as hiring, the “Great Resignation,” managing workplace conflict, utilization of dispute resolution processes, the effects of inflation on the U.S. workforce, and contemporary collective bargaining approaches.

In addition to the robust schedule of individual workshops and panel discussions, this year’s NLMC offered six complimentary preconference sessions as a benefit to early registrants. These popular sessions covered a wide range of topics including cognitive bias in conflict dynamics, managing the integration of new bargaining units, and combating worker burnout in overstressed workplaces.

“FMCS strives to ensure that the NLMC provides engaging, informative, content that is useful to conference participants from all sectors of labor relations nationwide,” said Ramirez.

“The NLMC also goes far beyond discussing best practices,” Ramirez continued. “Our goal is to investigate emerging trends in American industrial relations, learn and share stories of success, and receive hard-nosed strategic insights from our country’s leading experts.”

At the close of the two-day event, U.S. Secretary of Labor Martin J. Walsh offered his remarks to the plenary, “I want to thank everyone from labor, management, government, academics, and the mediation/arbitration community, who are part of this important conference. Thank you for coming together to expand your knowledge and strengthen your relationships.”

“Most of all, I want to say thank you [to FMCS]. The work you do is incredibly important to America’s workers, America’s businesses, and to our entire economy,” Secretary Walsh said.

The FMCS National Labor-Management Conference was founded in 1982 and is generally held biennially as a showcase of FMCS services and programs for existing and prospective management and labor clients; the event attracted hundreds of attendees from the labor relations community in its early years and eventually expanding into a multi-day conference (and series of pre-conference events) that draws upwards of 1,000 - 1,500 attendees.

Though the 2022 conference has just concluded, planning is already underway for FMCS to combine the NLMC with the Labor and Employment Relations Association’s (LERA) Annual Conference in New York in 2024. This co-sponsorship will not only bring efficiencies, but also allow for more collaboration between the various stakeholders in the labor-management community. To learn more about NLMC, or to receive updates for future conferences, visit <https://www.fmcs.gov/nlmc-info/>

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The U.S. Federal Mediation & Conciliation Service (FMCS) is the nation's premier public agency for dispute resolution and conflict management. FMCS was created by Congress as a neutral and independent government agency upon enactment of the Labor-Management Relations Act of 1947 (Taft-Hartley Act) and mandated to resolve industrial conflict and promote labor-management peace and cooperation, minimizing the impact of these disputes on the free flow of commerce. With headquarters in Washington, D.C. and offices across the country, the agency has a proud track record of decades of effective dispute resolution and conflict management services for employers and unions across industries and work activities in the private, public, and federal sectors. FMCS is also recognized for its success facilitating negotiated rulemaking processes and for its robust employment mediation program in the federal sector as well as its global program, partnering with more than 60 countries to provide international consulting and training. For more on FMCS or to request services, visit www.fmcs.gov