



IFPTE LOCAL 21

Representing public sector professional and technical workers in the Bay Area

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Derecka Mehrens Speaks at the Delegate Assembly

Delegates to the October assembly held at the Oakland Marriott Hotel last week had a chance to hear Derecka Mehrens give a presentation on "Is the Tech-Driven Economy Squeezing the Middle Class?"



During her presentation, Mehrens addressed the disparity between the industry's record-breaking profits and market dividends versus the increasing income disparity between high-paying and low-paying jobs in the increasingly expensive Bay Area. She presented a "A Tale of Two Valleys" by illustrating how the bulk of tech jobs either lie on the low end of the wage scale, (\$8-\$18 per hour) or on the high end (\$30 an hour and up) but nothing in between.

While this reality may seem daunting, Mehrens stressed the need to "Build an Inclusive Economy" to help remedy the new economy's socio-economic disparity. Mehrens spoke about "raising the floor" as a way to preserve and uplifting the middle class the Bay Area.

As Executive Director of Working Partnerships USA, a community-labor organization dedicated to addressing the root causes of inequality for workers and communities of color in today's economy, Mehrens was instrumental in helping San Jose families in 2012 when voters raised the City's minimum wage -- well before the Fight for Fifteen campaign for a \$15 minimum wage gained national steam.



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