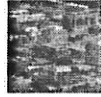


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# Educators, politicians make pitches at Scott's annual Labor Day cookout

By Jane Hammond  
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NEWPORT NEWS — Of the several dozen politicians — current, former and those vying to fill slots come November — U.S. Rep. Robert C. "Bobby" Scott, D-Newport News, introduced Monday afternoon, Flora D. Crittenden received the loudest round of applause.

Scott, working mostly off memory and a few prods from the crowd gathered, listed each politician by name and office, as has become tradition at his annual Labor Day cookout.

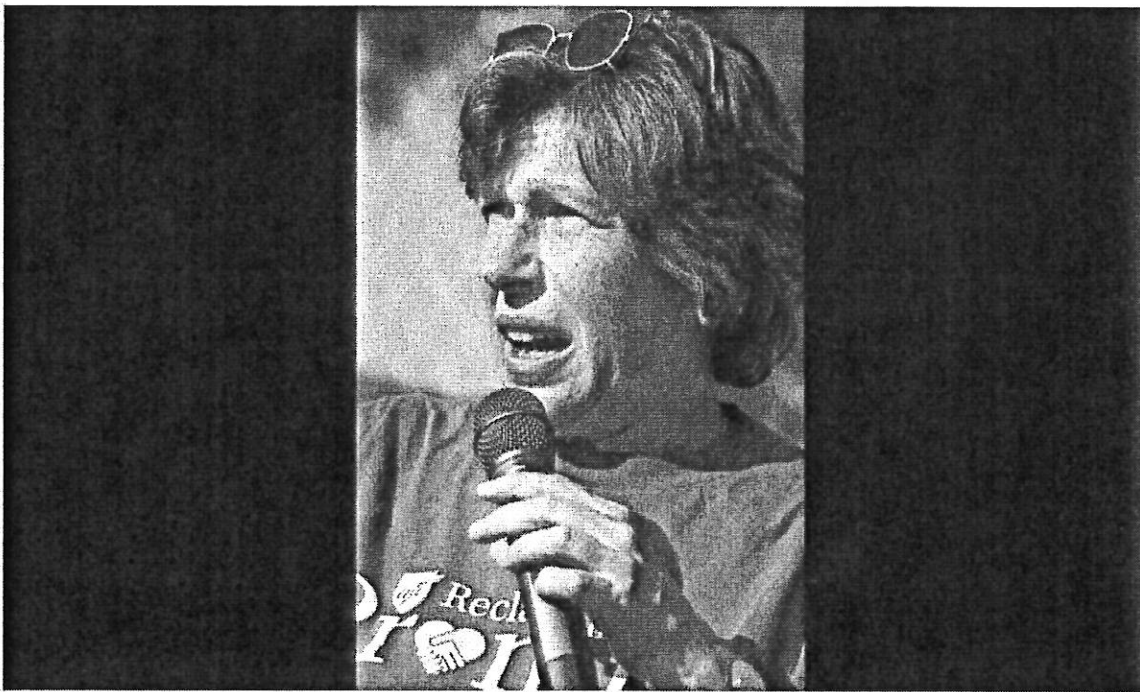


Crittenden, 93, stood front and center of the group, clad in an all-green ensemble. She served in the House of Delegates for 11 years until 2003, after spending several decades as a teacher and counselor in Newport News Public Schools.

The afternoon was the 41st annual cookout at the Scott family home at the southern tip of Newport News. What started as an event to thank Scott's volunteers has grown into a political must-stop for Democrats vying to hold office come November.

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10 of 16 < >



American Federation of Teachers President Randi Weingarten talks with the crowd during Congressman Bobby Scott's annual Labor Day Cookout in Newport News on Monday, Sept. 4, 2017. (Aileen Devlin/Daily Press /)

"I was in politics for quite a long time, so when I come, I see people that I haven't seen in a long time and I enjoy fraternizing," Crittenden said.

An organizer estimated more than 1,000 were in attendance Monday. The program began with an impassioned speech by Randi Weingarten, president of the American Federation of Teachers. AFT is a union for teachers and other educational professionals and topped 1.7 million members this summer.

Weingarten thanked Scott for his role in helping shape the Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015, the federal education law that replaced No Child Left Behind.

"We focus on good jobs and pathways to good jobs, we focus on affordable healthcare, we focus on quality education so that we're all 'public school proud,' " she said. "We focus on affordable higher (education). We focus on making sure there is a democracy and a fight against hate and bigotry. That's what our union focuses on on this Labor Day."



Leading the afternoon's programming were the Democratic statewide ticket — Lt. Gov. Ralph Northam, who is running for governor; Justin Fairfax, a former federal prosecutor hoping for Northam's current position; and Attorney General Mark Herring, who is seeking re-election.

U.S. Sen. Tim Kaine capped off the event with remarks. He's attended every cookout for a couple of decades, although last year his wife, former Virginia Secretary of Education Anne Holton, came in his place as he campaigned for vice president.

Each worked to drum up supporters in the crowd with applause and pitches to come out and vote in November. The afternoon was the last of 15 campaign events over the holiday weekend.

"It's the place to be to get the energy," Kaine said. "You know, Labor Day to Election Day is the sprint. Campaigns are marathons, but you start sprinting Labor Day. And this is an event that sort of gives you the energy you need to hit and really sprint through the end."

**Hammond can be reached by phone at 757-247-4951 or on Twitter [@byjanehammond](#).**

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