

OLBC's president Rep. Sandra Williams gave a welcome and State Rep. Carlton Weddington (House District 27) talked about the history and mission of the OLBC. Cleveland's Bishop F. E. Perry gave the invocation.

By JAMES W. WADE III Staff Reporter

Rev. Al Sharpton had no problem expressing his feelings to the Ohio Black Democrats at the dinner where he let them know they got comfortable and too "low down" to stand up for yourselves. "You forgot how you got here, and that's how they will take you out of here," Sharpton told about 600 people at the dinner.

If the audience of elected officials, civic leaders, attorneys, and business people and clergy members expected a pep talk and nice words, it did not happen. Rev. Sharpton explained that

while everyone was still dancing at the Inauguration Ball for President Barack Obama, the Republicans were working hard. "We acted like the fight was over when the fight had just begun," Sharpton said.

Rev. Sharpton focused on state Issue 2, a referendum on the GOP-passed law to rein in collective-bargaining rights for public employees. Sharpton explained he knew about being Black. Rev. Al said "I been Black three times, I was born a Black baby, became a Black boy and now I am a Black Man."

OLBC president Williams introduced the Rev. Al Sharpton who has had recent success with his new MSNBC TV Show "PoliticsNation," and he is the president of the National Action Network. Rev.Al

is one of America's most-renowned civil rights leaders.

Sharpton

's strong commitment to equality and progressive politics has had an irrefutable impact on national politics.

The Ohio Legislative Black Caucus (OLBC) had a conference in Columbus Ohio at the Hyatt Regency Hotel downtown that consisted of workshops and a dinner Saturday night that featured the Rev. Al Sharpton as the keynote speaker. This was the first Black caucus statewide convention held in 27 years under CJ McLin Jr.

Arnold Pinkney served as the Master of Ceremony for the first statewide dinner that opened with greetings from Columbus Mayor Michael Coleman and Cleveland's Reginald Thigpen singing the National Anthem followed by the Black National Anthem.

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United States Senator Sherrod Brown and Supreme Court Justice Yvette McGee Brown gave remarks. Sen. Nina Turner spoke about Issue 2 (SB 5) bill, Rep. Alicia Reese talked about the Voter Suppression Bill 194, and Rep. Tracy Heard spoke about the Sentencing Reform Bill (HB 86).

The Distinguished Service Awards were given to Congresswoman Marcia L. Fudge, Columbus Mayor Michael B. Coleman, Cleveland Mayor Frank Jackson and Cincinnati Mayor Mark Mallory.

The conference workshops were a big part of the conference that included a "Faith-Based Leadership in the African American community in times of Challenge and Change," where the Rev. Dr. Otis Moss Jr. served as the moderator. Other workshops covered were "Taking control of educating our children, Healthcare Disparities and Health problems of African Americans," with Dr. Daisy Alford as the moderator.

Akron Public School Supertindent Dr. David James moderated a workshop titled "Taking control of educating our children" and Dominic Ozanne was the moderator for "Developing Black Entrepenuers in the African American community." State Sen. Charleta Taveres was the moderator for "Strategic practices to fund political organizations."

Arnold Pinkney moderated the Government and voter outreach workshop and asked the question; "What does it take to get African Americans to vote?" Elected Officials from around the state enjoyed the conference.

"This weekend proved that African Americans can get together to tackle important issues impacting our community," said OLBC president Williams. Rev. Al shared this when he talked about being crabs in a barrel all fighting to be on top.

"People in the OLBC will not sit by and pass our responsibility to lead in difficult time onto someone else. Rev. Sharpton was on point saying 'It's time out for political putting on, nice suits and giving glorious speeches," said Williams.

A reception was held in conjunction with the conference with Central State University where the president Dr. John Garland attended and many alumni.