



CONVENTION RESOLUTION | CIVIL RIGHTS

Resolution 1: Workers' Bill of Rights

October 25, 2017



Working people in America will no longer accept economic rules written of, by and for the wealthiest few. We refuse to accept the reality of struggling to make ends meet in the richest country in the world at its richest point in history. We can do better. We must do better. And so we demand rights that ensure we are able, through our work, to lead better lives.

Working people demand the right to come home safely at the end of the day. We demand the right to be paid enough to support ourselves and our families. We demand the right to quality health care, paid time off to spend with family, a schedule that is flexible and fair, and protection from discrimination. Finally, after decades of hard work, we demand the right to retire with dignity and security.

We demand a comprehensive Workers' Bill of Rights. **Standing together in unions and working with all who share our values**, we will make this bill of rights a reality for all working people.

All working people have the right to:



- **Quality Health Care:** Regardless of income, job or a pre-existing condition.
- **A Safe Job:** Free from harassment and violence.
- **Paid Time Off and Flexible, Predictable Scheduling:**
To spend time with family or care for ourselves or a loved one.
- **Freedom from Discrimination:** In hiring, firing and promotions.
- **Retire with Dignity:** And financial security.
- **Education:** Public K-12, higher education and career training that advances our knowledge and skills without leaving us in debt.
- **Freedom to Join Together:** With our co-workers for better wages and working conditions, whether we are in a union or not.
- **A Voice in Democracy:** To freely exercise our democratic voice through voting and civic participation so that we can make sure our government stands up for this Workers' Bill of Rights.

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CONVENTION RESOLUTION

Resolution 2: An Independent Political Voice

October 24, 2017



For decades, the political system has failed working people. Acting on behalf of corporations and the rich and powerful, the political system has been taking away, one after another, the pillars that support working people's right to good jobs and secure benefits. Our opponents know that unions are the last bulwark for working people, and so set as their top priority taking away the freedom of working people to negotiate for a better life. Moreover, politicians restrict voting rights, legalize unlimited contributions and gerrymander in order to entrench themselves and preserve the corporate status quo.

Against this, we have one choice. We must give working people greater political power by speaking with an unquestionably independent political voice, backed by a unified labor movement. The time has passed when we can passively settle for the lesser of two evils. We must aggressively foster a new generation of elected representatives who share our aspirations for growing the labor movement and meeting the challenges of globalization and the emerging 21st century workplace.



Union members can redress the imbalance in power by organizing in their workplaces and their neighborhoods to drive our members, their families and their neighbors to participate in critical elections and to hold officials accountable to a pro-worker agenda.



Today, we resolve to take all necessary steps to realize working people's aspirations by joining together across the movement and committing to our members and working people everywhere that we will adhere to the following principles:

- Define a pro-worker agenda across the sectors of our movement to hold as a joint standard for all candidates and officials, regardless of party;
- Establish a communications framework to communicate our agenda across the federation and with our allies;
- Prioritize year-round member-to-member communication as part of a commitment to heightened internal organizing and workplace education;
- Mobilize working people who are not yet in unions;
- Promote effective models for recruiting, training, mentoring and supporting union brothers and sisters running for elected office; and
- Promote greater participation in the democratic process by opposing voter suppression and boosting participation by young people, seniors and people of color.

In short, we commit ourselves to working together—across unions, across sectors, across states—to tackle the challenges that lie ahead and to find common ground on which to strengthen and grow our movement.



CONVENTION RESOLUTION

Resolution 10: Encouraging Union Members to Run for Public Office

October 22, 2017



Every day, millions of working people come together through their unions to strengthen their collective voice and bargain for better lives. Acting together, working people can win higher wages, better health care and retirement security, improved worker and public safety, paid time off to spend with family, and greater fairness on the job.

Unfortunately, these freedoms are denied to too many workers because our laws are weak and employers exploit them to deny working people the freedom to join together and negotiate. As a result, our economy is weaker, income inequality is at historic levels and working people are not getting the pay raises they need to support their families.

All working people must have the freedom to bargain collectively with their employers, instead of that freedom being hostage to history, the cleverness of management lawyers, and the poisonous legal legacy of racism and sexism. We must rewrite the rules of our economy to



guarantee all who work in America the freedom to bargain collectively with their employer, free from fear and intimidation.



We resolve that the AFL-CIO will undertake a process in 2018 with the objective of fundamentally reforming America's labor laws. In an era of technological change and globalization, our laws must be rewritten to meaningfully guarantee all America's workers the freedom to bargain collectively with their employers.

In the interim, Congress can and must take some simple, yet significant, steps toward making the freedom to collectively bargain real for all of America's workers. We call upon elected officials, and candidates seeking elective office, to support and fight for changes to the National Labor Relations Act and other state and local laws that would:

- Protect more workers' right to organize;
- Meaningfully penalize employers who violate the law;
- Provide a process for ensuring an agreement with employers when workers first organize; and
- Protect immigrant workers from exploitation and retaliation when they exercise their rights.

No candidate or elected official seeking working people's support deserves that support if they do not endorse and fight for these fundamental reforms.

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CONVENTION RESOLUTION | MANUFACTURING

Resolution 24: Fighting Together for Workers in Manufacturing

October 22, 2017



The manufacturing sector is central to the economic success of our nation, and to our ability to raise wages and rebuild the middle class. Importantly, with the beginning of the Congress of Industrial Organizations in the 1930s, manufacturing became a source of family-supporting jobs for working-class people, immigrants and communities of color. These middle-class, family-supporting manufacturing jobs still exist in sectors with high union density, but increasingly are threatened.

That image has become a potent political symbol, but it does not match the reality of today. There has been shocking decline in the security of manufacturing jobs, and union density has fallen to just 8.8%.

Today, real wages in manufacturing are back to where they were in 1972, but take-home pay is lower because employees pay substantially more in premiums and out-of-pocket costs for health care than they did then. More than 40% of production workers make less than \$15 per hour, and another 11% of them work for employment agencies,



and thus are paid less but often are working alongside permanent employees for years. Despite recent gains, African Americans have been underrepresented in manufacturing since the 1990s. Women have never made up more than a third of the manufacturing workforce, and have inadequate opportunities in many occupations.

The sector also faces important policy and technology challenges, including export barriers and unfairly traded imports, exchange rates, tax reform and monetary policy, federal investment in new technologies, and continuing automation.

To win these fights, raise wages and improve diversity in manufacturing, we must activate workers to fight for political demands and to organize. We must insist on inclusion and solidarity, and reject exclusion and racism. The alternative is continued decline and the growth of a political narrative on manufacturing that is contrary to our values and our interests.

Actions We Will Take

The fight to reform NAFTA, and to set a new template for trade agreements, is immediate and critical.

The labor movement will expose poverty wages and demand that all manufacturing jobs become living wage jobs. We will fight against precarious work in manufacturing, and help nonunion workers understand and exercise their rights.

We will take action to improve access to manufacturing jobs for women and minorities, and to help them succeed in a workplace free from harassment and discrimination.



We will develop policies and bargaining strategies to ensure automation enhances human work and demand that the economic gains from automation are shared broadly.

We will insist on a domestic supply chain for national defense production and public procurement, expand Buy America coverage, eliminate waivers and exemptions, and ensure critical technologies are produced in the United States.

We will fight for a national manufacturing policy based on public investment in new technologies, maximizing the advantage of our energy abundance, the domestic production of clean energy goods and an expectation of rising pay. We reject manufacturing policies centered on subsidies that lower the tax base, degrade public services and hurt communities.

To accomplish these goals, we will create and support state industrial union councils. These councils will cooperate on in-state policies and political accountability, work with allies, and activate workers.

We will use the national Industrial Union Council to establish goals and projects that affiliates and the federation will accomplish jointly. We will support this work with political and data analysis, coordinated messaging and digital efforts, and targeted field activities.

Tags: NAFTA, 2017 Convention



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CONVENTION RESOLUTION | CRIMINAL JUSTICE REFORM

Resolution 25: Criminal Justice Reform: A System of Corrections and Rehabilitation That Prioritizes Corrections and Rehabilitation

October 23, 2017



The AFL-CIO supports reform of the criminal justice system. At the same time, the AFL-CIO has always embodied, embraced and advocated tolerance, diversity and inclusion for all working men and women, including the hardworking men and women who are police officers, correctional officers and corrections personnel. These union members serve our communities and provide for their families. These union members deserve safe and fair working conditions and the protections that come along with their ability to form and join in unions. These union members are part of the fabric of our society and the broader labor movement. They deserve to work in a fair system of corrections and rehabilitation that prioritizes corrections and rehabilitation.



Many of those incarcerated are in the system because of lack of access to quality schools due to underfunding of public schools, lack of access to health care—specifically for mental health and substance abuse treatment—and all of the negative impacts based upon lack of access to good-paying jobs. We know that education, health care and fair pay are the three fundamentals that reduce or prevent individuals from becoming a part of the criminal justice system.

“Prisons and jails have become America’s ‘new asylums.’” Many of these inmates would have been in hospitals prior to the deinstitutionalization movement of the 1960s, but now there are not enough hospital beds, and many mental health hospitals have been closed down. According to one report, the number of state psychiatric beds in the nation declined from a high of approximately 550,000 in 1960 to 40,000 in 2016. So extremely sick people are locked up, often for trivial offenses, frequently without treatment, as their illnesses worsen. Upon release, they are more likely than other prisoners to recidivate and be incarcerated again.

Drug offenders struggling with substance abuse or dependence need help, not jail. Offering treatment instead of incarceration enhances public safety by reducing drug-related crime and preserving jail and prison space for violent offenders. Rather than sending individuals to prison to learn more crimes that are dangerous, and not receive the appropriate treatment, we must address the root of the problem—substance abuse. Not only does treatment instead of incarceration make our communities safer, but the cost of probation and treatment is much less than the cost of incarceration.



THEREFORE, BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the AFL-CIO shall actively support criminal justice reforms based upon previously passed policy positions: community policing, sentencing reform, removal of employment obstacles for the formerly incarcerated, restrictions on for-profit prisons and voting rights restoration.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that:

- The AFL-CIO will continue to represent, defend the rights of and embrace all union members regardless of internal differences in political leanings, professions and uniforms.
- State federations and central labor councils urge policy makers to require police officers be properly trained in community policing and de-escalation tactics. Most research shows that our police force is no more racist than our population as a whole, while the consequences of their bias are more deadly. Local jurisdictions should participate in the Quality Policing Initiative, which promotes reciprocal, professional, accountable and cooperative policing, and addresses recruitment, training, community deployment, and accountability and advancement issues.
- The AFL-CIO and its affiliates will advocate for greatly expanded funding for behavioral and mental health as a more effective and humane alternative to incarceration.
- The AFL-CIO, state federations and central labor councils support efforts to reduce mandatory minimum sentencing laws, to support “ban the box” legislation and to restore the rights of the formerly incarcerated.



- Labor unions support efforts to alleviate prison overcrowding by advocating for adequate staffing for correctional institutions. Correctional officers have been working for many years under very difficult circumstances, including severe overcrowding of facilities, inadequate staff-inmate ratios, inadequate training and pay, and insufficient resources for rehabilitation. This makes their work dangerous. Reducing the inflow of prisoners would protect the safety of correctional officers and potential inmates.

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CONVENTION RESOLUTION | HEALTH CARE

Resolution 40: Rejecting the Privatization of Veterans' Health Care

October 24, 2017



WHEREAS, the Department of Veterans Affairs' mission is to care for those who "have borne the battle"; and

WHEREAS, the Veterans Health Administration is the largest integrated health care system in the United States, providing care at 1,245 health care facilities, including 170 VA Medical Centers and 1,065 outpatient clinics, serving more than 9 million veterans each year; and

WHEREAS, independent studies from RAND and other research organizations have shown that VA hospitals have consistently produced superior health outcomes for patients as compared to private-sector health care institutions; and

WHEREAS, one in three VA employees are veterans who are honored to serve their country for the second time by taking care of their fellow veterans; and

WHEREAS, veterans overwhelmingly prefer to receive care at VA hospitals; and



WHEREAS, veterans see VA hospitals as their own communities where they connect with other veterans; and

WHEREAS, veterans overwhelmingly reject the privatization of the VA and reject the Trump administration's proposal to make the choice privatization program permanent; and

WHEREAS, members of Congress have introduced several pieces of legislation to privatize the VA in whole or in part and divert resources from the VA to enrich private hospital CEOs and special interests, including the Koch brothers;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the AFL-CIO opposes the privatization of the VA and joins AFGE in its effort to fight the privatization of the VA.

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CONVENTION RESOLUTION

Resolution 48: Exploring New Directions for Labor in Electoral Politics

October 24, 2017



WHEREAS, for decades, labor unions have followed a strategy of supporting candidates for electoral office it best determines will serve its interests when elected; and

WHEREAS, labor manifests that support with contributions of multiple millions of dollars in both cash and boots on the ground for the candidates of its choice; and

WHEREAS, whether labor supports a candidate who promises to be pro-labor or supports a candidate labor determines to be the "lesser of evils" or whether labor's candidate wins or loses the election, the results for labor and the 99% remain fundamentally unchanged; and

WHEREAS, in the results of national elections, whether the candidates elected are from the Republican or Democratic Party, the interests of Wall Street have been protected and advanced, while the interests of labor and working people have generally been set back; and



WHEREAS, continuing to follow the same model, expecting different results, is not an effective strategy for labor; and

WHEREAS, the interests of labor can generally be defined as wanting good jobs, health care, safe working conditions, secure and dignified retirements, protecting and enhancing collective bargaining and the rights of workers to organize, protecting the right to vote, access to affordable education and housing, good public education and public services, an end to trade deals that cost millions of jobs, and investments in infrastructure and the environment leading to the creation of millions of jobs; and

WHEREAS, there have been numerous examples of issued-based electoral successes at the state and local levels, such as raising the minimum wage, creating paid sick leave, ensuring voting rights and getting corporate money out of politics;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, in addition to the traditional supporting for electoral candidates who are friends and allies of workers, the AFL-CIO also pursues a strategy of advancing our core issues through referenda and ballot initiatives and propositions at the statewide and local level; studies the viability of independent and third-party politics; and explores other reasonable means of advancing the interests of labor in electoral politics.

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CONVENTION RESOLUTION

Resolution 56: The Humanitarian Crisis in Puerto Rico and the Need for Immediate Federal Action

October 22, 2017



WHEREAS, two massive superstorms, Hurricanes Maria and Irma, have caused unprecedented devastation in Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands, amounting to more than \$100 billion in damages, according to Moody's Analytics; and

WHEREAS, an AFL-CIO multiunion delegation of 300 union volunteers recently deployed for two weeks in Puerto Rico to provide critical assistance for residents faced with damaged homes, lack of clean water, closed health care facilities, lack of power, inadequate food and shelter, and other basic needs; and

WHEREAS, the AFL-CIO volunteers deployed to Puerto Rico in response to an emergency request and in cooperation with our sisters and brothers of the Puerto Rican Labor Federation and the mayor of San Juan's office; and



WHEREAS, the response of the Trump administration has been wholly inadequate to meet the critical needs faced by the 3.6 million U.S. citizens of Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands; and

WHEREAS, the Trump administration's relief efforts have paled in comparison to its efforts following similar destruction by Hurricanes Harvey and Irma in Texas and Florida; and

WHEREAS, union volunteers associated with the AFL-CIO deployment met hundreds of Puerto Rican U.S. citizens who have not received any assistance or who were required to fill out forms online, with a deadline rapidly approaching, at a time when most island residents continued to have no access to power, including internet access; and

WHEREAS, more than one month after the landfall of Hurricane Maria, according to the World Health Organization, the amount of water that the Trump administration says it has distributed to residents, including water for hospitals and dialysis centers, equates to only 9% of what each person needs every day; and

WHEREAS, one month after the landfall of Hurricane Maria, less than 20% of Puerto Rico's power grid has been restored and around 3 million people are still without power; and

WHEREAS, press assessments place the death count in Puerto Rico as a result of the hurricanes as at least 450 people, conservatively, with many more people still unaccounted for and health conditions continuing to be at crisis levels; and



WHEREAS, many people have been forced to drink untreated water from polluted water sources, and many health care centers continue to operate with a lack of needed supplies that compromises people's health and recovery; and

WHEREAS, a breakout of leptospirosis, a dangerous bacterial disease, already has claimed lives, and the lack of safe drinking water and unsafe conditions threaten the outbreak of cholera and other potential epidemics; and

WHEREAS, the response to the crisis in Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands from the Trump administration has been unacceptable for the wealthiest country in the world; and

WHEREAS, at the same time as the Trump administration has failed to do its job to provide relief to the people of Puerto Rico, some politicians and interests continue to attack the very working people who are contributing to relief and recovery efforts. These attacks include spreading misinformation about the Jones Act, which ensures maritime workers in the United States are paid a minimum wage, blaming FEMA workers for policy failures of the Trump administration, and seeking to destroy the freedom of workers in Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands to bargain with their employers.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the AFL-CIO Convention commends the heroic and courageous efforts of the AFL-CIO union members and volunteers who participated in the multiunion emergency relief mission; and



BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the AFL-CIO will support and lift up the workers and their unions who are providing relief, care and supplies in Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands and the mainland United States; rebuilding the islands; working to reopen schools and nurture children and senior citizens; and returning a sense of normal life to the people of Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the AFL-CIO will support and promote Operation Agua, launched by the American Federation of Teachers, the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees, Operation Blessing and the Hispanic Federation, and other efforts to provide a reliable source of clean, safe drinking water to families across Puerto Rico; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the AFL-CIO calls upon Congress to provide assistance to Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands on the scale of the damage done by the storms, to ensure full funding for FEMA in order to substantially escalate its relief efforts on the ground, to end the cap on federal funding for Medicaid in Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands, and to set federal matching rates for Medicaid in the same fashion as they are set in the mainland United States; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the AFL-CIO calls upon the Trump administration to deploy the Department of Defense and other federal agencies to provide the resources necessary to restore drinking water, electric power and telecommunications to the people of Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that the AFL-CIO calls upon Congress to enact a long-term moratorium on payments of all Puerto Rican public debt, followed by debt forgiveness,



to prioritize the lives of Puerto Ricans over debt payments to Wall Street and free up millions of dollars for both short- and long-term recovery efforts.



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