



2017 USW Constitutional Convention RESOLUTION

Resolution No. 13

Political Activism

WHEREAS, the purpose of our union is to protect and advance the rights of our members and families through collective and organized efforts; and

WHEREAS, the decisions made by elected officials in state and federal governments in the U.S., and provincial and federal governments in Canada, have a significant impact upon the health and safety of workers as well as our ability to provide for ourselves and our families; and

WHEREAS, it is commonplace for employers to attempt to influence the political process to advance their own economic interests at the expense of workers; and

WHEREAS, corporate interests exercise this influence by giving financial backing to candidates who support deceptively-named laws like “Right to Work” and “Paycheck Deception” which seek to undermine the labor movement by exploiting a worker’s self-interest at the cost of our collective solidarity; and

WHEREAS, so-called “Right to Work” laws in states are designed to weaken unions by making it possible for workers to take advantage of union negotiated benefits without having to pay any union dues, including forcing local union representatives to advocate on their behalf if the collective bargaining agreement has been violated by the employer; and

WHEREAS, there is a major push on at this time to make so-called “Right to Work” a national federal law; and

WHEREAS, in Canada, unions and workers are under threat from the election of candidates and parties with anti-worker agendas at both the provincial and federal levels, which has resulted in attacks on workers’ pensions, wages and benefits, and health and safety standards; and

WHEREAS, there has been a massive and coordinated assault from the far right on public sector collective bargaining using legislative vehicles like “paycheck

deception" to limit union political activity and also passing laws that say public sector workers cannot have a union; and

WHEREAS, in Canada, unions are barred from making political donations federally and in some provinces, and as a result our union must redouble our efforts to encourage members to become politically engaged at the individual level; and

WHEREAS, the efforts of employers to gain political advantage must be confronted through the thoughtful and deliberate organizing of workers and the labor movement; and

WHEREAS, our union reaffirms its commitment to mobilizing our members in the political process in an effort to advance human dignity by upholding the rights of workers and ensuring access to family-sustaining jobs; and

WHEREAS, assuring the wellbeing of working families requires legislators to be equally committed to upholding the rights of workers and protecting American jobs from being offshored; and

WHEREAS, in Canada, the growing use of the Temporary Foreign Worker Program by corporations permits exploitation of vulnerable workers, denies rights and a path to citizenship and creates divisions between workers while lowering wage and work standards for all; and

WHEREAS, in Canada the federal government continues to sign and promote pro-corporate "job killing" free trade agreements such as the Trans Pacific Partnership (TPP), the Canada-EU trade agreement (CETA) and even a free trade agreement with China; and

WHEREAS, the long-term defeat of job-killing "free trade" agreements and the promotion of policies that ensure the rights of workers will require the persistence and thoughtful action of Steelworkers for years to come.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that:

- (1) The USW will prioritize political activism as one of the most immediate ways for Steelworkers to fight against the efforts of employers to erode the hard-fought rights of workers.
- (2) The USW will leverage the solidarity of our membership to advance a political agenda that seeks to improve safety and health conditions, ensure respectable wages and benefits, and protect the dignity of retirees.
- (3) The USW will work tirelessly to ensure that workers' rights are central to the campaigns of candidates seeking office in state and federal governments in the U.S., and provincial and federal governments in Canada.

- (4)** The USW will conduct a rigorous political program that employs the latest campaign strategies, tools and tactics to communicate with our members as well as sympathetic voters in our communities.
- (5)** The USW will encourage and empower our members to run as candidates for elected offices in both Canada and the U.S.