



2017 USW Constitutional Convention RESOLUTION

Resolution No. 4

Honoring Our Past and Present While Building the Next Generation

WHEREAS, since our founding days, we have been a Union that welcomed all, regardless of age, and worked to mentor, educate and empower the next generation of activists and leaders to ensure a sustainable future; and

WHEREAS, people age 35 and under represent 75 million people in the United States and 15 million in Canada, and are the largest, most diverse and technologically savvy workforce in both nations' history; and

WHEREAS, young workers earn wages on average 20 percent less than Baby Boomers did when they were young, have half the net wealth as the generation of young workers before them, and suffer about twice the national averages of unemployment in the United States and Canada; and

WHEREAS, young workers have a significantly more positive view of unions than their older peers and yet union membership rates among young people is far lower than of older workers, exposing an opportunity to connect more young workers with the USW, especially since union members earn a median of \$200 more per week than non-union workers – a difference of over \$315,000 in higher earnings over an average lifetime career; and

WHEREAS, we are fighting to overcome continued global austerity that is destroying our middle class, particularly harming young workers and families around the world, including efforts to cut health care, education and other safety net programs in the United States and Canada; record levels of childhood poverty in the United Kingdom; unemployment and under-employment internationally, and continued attacks against low-wage workers' human and labor rights worldwide; and

WHEREAS, crushing student debt in our nations is enriching banks and others by financially oppressing young people and their parents, many of them USW members, with the average college debt exceeding \$27,000 per student in Canada and \$37,172 in the United States; and

WHEREAS, corporations concerned about profits above people continue to try and break unions, drive down wages, erode benefits and push inequity with multi-tier and other divide-and-conquer strategies at the bargaining table; and

WHEREAS, we continue to lead the charge for strong domestic manufacturing policies and economic security by supporting fair trade deals that promote workers' rights and create good jobs in all sectors, as well as to fight against sweatshop labor and environmental destruction in the name of higher profits in bad trade deals; and

WHEREAS, we understand that a strong, sustainable, global labor movement is the key to a better life for young workers and their families because unions improve wages, worker health and safety, block anti-worker legislation and demand equality by leading the fight for social, economic and racial justice; and

WHEREAS, the USW has shown leadership and courage by investing in its future by creating a permanent structure for the Next Generation program, including the commitment of staff and resources at the International, District and Local levels, including the appointment of Next Generation coordinators in every district in the United States and Canada, and providing various education and training opportunities; and

WHEREAS, Next Generation members have participated in bargaining, organizing new members into our union, building stronger local unions, working collaboratively with other activist parts of our Union, and becoming allies in our communities, including by leading the Union's community service project called USW Cares Jefferson Awards; and

WHEREAS, the USW Next Generation has led our Union's efforts to address work-life balance challenges, including finding ways to make Union activities more family friendly; and

WHEREAS, the USW Next Generation has worked closely with the Steelworkers Organization of Active Retirees (SOAR) and others to protect the promises made to our retirees.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that:

- (1)** The USW supports increased legislative, political, community and union activism at the local, district and International levels for USW members of all ages; and endorses the continued focus on developing our newest Steelworker activists to take on increasingly greater roles in our Union, their governments and their communities.

- (2)** We will continue to support the AFL-CIO's "Next Up" Young Workers Movement, including the appointment of an emerging USW leader to the AFL-CIO Young Workers Advisory Council to represent our Union in the federation's big picture efforts to grow the labor movement. In Canada we will continue to support young workers' councils at the Canadian Labour Congress and provincial labor federations
- (3)** Our Union pledges to support and create a respectful atmosphere for USW members of all ages at every level to be active in the labor movement throughout their lifetimes with the understanding that we need to work together in order to have the best union possible for current and future generations.
- (4)** We continue to support the integration and involvement of younger members into current programs in the United States and Canada, including Organizing, Education and Membership Development, Rapid Response, Political Action, Legislative Action, Health, Safety and Environment, Civil and Human Rights, Women of Steel, United Steelworkers Press Association, and all other integral parts of our Union.
- (5)** We rededicate ourselves to the commitment that we will include Next Generation members in conversations about the important work of our Union, including bargaining, so that we unite to fight against injustice, including the multi-tier trap and attacks on retiree benefits that corporations push to try to divide and conquer our movement. We encourage these conversations to include discussions about new and different ways of doing our work, including the use of modern technology.
- (6)** We support including Next Generation in our global efforts, including continued involvement in Workers Uniting, the global union, and other international endeavors aimed at lifting up all workers, such as the Global Youth Exchange with young trade unionists from the United States, Canada, Mexico, the United Kingdom and Cuba.
- (7)** The USW will continue to develop USW Next Generation district coordinators in the United States and Canada, as well as complete a formal mentoring program, and together these leaders will endeavor to help every local union create a Next Generation committee within the next three years.
- (8)** Next Generation will lead our Union's involvement in the fight against oppressive student debt that is burdening so many, including our members and their children, through legislative, community and other action.
- (9)** We commit to training and empowering Next Generation members so that they may contribute in meaningful ways to growing and strengthening our Union through organizing, both internally and externally, and we support

including Next Generation in union-wide efforts to welcome, educate and engage new workers from all ages, professions and backgrounds into our Union with open arms, including through new employee orientation programs.

- (10)** Next Generation will continue to be leaders in important economic, social, gender and racial justice movements consistent with our Union's values to fight for equality and better lives for all working people.