



2017 USW Constitutional Convention RESOLUTION

Resolution No. 5

Global Unity and Activism

WHEREAS, increasing inequality and concentration of wealth threaten the stability of democratic institutions and the human rights of working people around the world; and

WHEREAS, the mobility of capital, without effective regulation or control, enables multinational corporations and wealthy investors to pit workers in different countries against each other; and

WHEREAS, corporate-driven globalization can only be countered by a worldwide democratic movement for economic and social justice that fights for good jobs, improved wages, working conditions, health care, retirement security, human rights, social inclusion and environmental standards; and

WHEREAS, the failure of political parties in many industrialized nations to address the impact on the working class of "free trade" agreements, dumping of manufactured goods, currency manipulation and deindustrialization has fueled the rise of right-wing political movements that promote racial and religious hatred and discrimination; and

WHEREAS, multinational corporations in pursuit of more profits continue to drive down real earnings of workers, weaken their health care coverage and threaten them with outsourcing despite the union's good-faith bargaining and the willingness to accommodate, where warranted, demands for flexibility and cost savings; and

WHEREAS, even those global corporations that generally respect workers' rights in their home countries increasingly violate those rights when they operate in other countries; and

WHEREAS, our union continues to promote the labor movement by engaging in political and organizing activities with working families, students, environmentalists, civic and religious leaders, immigrant communities, First Nations, women's groups and civil and human rights activists as well as trade unionists; and

WHEREAS, our union continues to organize unorganized workers employed by multinational companies in North America and is committed to strengthening the capacity to coordinate bargaining within companies and industries; and

WHEREAS, global solidarity campaigns over the past three years have provided concrete assistance to USW members during our oil industry strike in 2015 and at companies including Asarco, ATI, Crown, EuropTec, Glencore, Honeywell, Huhtamaki, LafargeHolcim, National Grid, Novelis, Owens-Illinois, Rio Tinto, Sapa, Siemens, Solvay, and Telus; and

WHEREAS, Workers Uniting – the global union uniting two million members of USW and UNITE the Union in Canada, Ireland, the U.K, and the U.S. around a common program of industrial solidarity, political action to combat global austerity policies, member-to-member coordination around equalities, youth, women, and health and safety, and global cooperation – celebrated its second Congress in November 2016, reaffirming its commitment to build a global campaign in defence of trade union and human rights in the U.K. and the U.S. against the attacks of right-wing governments, based on the demand of respect for international labour standards and including the responsibility of global corporations to adhere to these standards; and

WHEREAS, as part of Workers Uniting, the Institute for Global Labour and Human Rights has supported the organizing efforts of garment and shipbreaking workers in Bangladesh and exposed sweatshop conditions in countries around the world; and

WHEREAS, our union supports the work of global unions including IndustriALL Global Union, the Building and Wood Workers' International (BWI), and UNI Global Union, to build effective networks of unions in multinational companies that enable them to share information about working conditions and prepare for coordinated bargaining; and

WHEREAS, IndustriALL played a key part in creating the Accord on Fire and Building Safety in Bangladesh, a legally enforceable five-year agreement signed in 2013 by over 170 global apparel companies and currently being re-negotiated; and

WHEREAS, our union maintains strategic alliances with labor unions around the globe, including The Australian Workers' Union (AWU) and the Construction, Forestry, Mining & Energy Union (CFMEU) in Australia; the Unified Workers' Central (CUT) and the National Confederation of Metalworkers (CNM/CUT) in Brazil; the Industrial Union of Metalworkers (IG Metall) in Germany; the Authentic Workers Front (FAT) and the National Union of Mine, Metal, Steel and Allied Workers of the Mexican Republic (Los Mineros) in Mexico; and

WHEREAS, the USW has continued to strengthen its alliance with the National Union of Mine, Metal, Steel and Allied Workers of the Mexican Republic (Los Mineros) to create a North American union of industrial workers. Since 2005, Los Mineros have organized more than 10,000 new members and have bargained the highest wages and benefits

in Mexico for their members, lifting them into the middle class and narrowing the wage gap that drives the outsourcing of American and Canadian jobs, while combating Chinese steel dumping and unfair trade agreements that hurt Mexican workers; and

WHEREAS, because Los Mineros' democratic organizing threatens the entrenched Mexican system of company-controlled "protection unions," the Mexican Government has continued its assault on Los Mineros and their leader, Napoleón Gómez Urrutia, re-filing baseless criminal charges against him that were thrown out by Mexican appellate courts and even rejected by Interpol as politically motivated. Steelworkers at American Steel Foundries, ArcelorMittal, Asarco and Dana have forged strong bonds of solidarity with Mineros members who also work for these companies, and the USW and Mineros are working together to strengthen our education, health and safety, women's leadership and Next Generation programs; and

WHEREAS, the USW condemns the unelected and illegitimate government of Michel Temer in Brazil which has launched a systematic and violent attack on trade unions, worker and human rights, including political persecution of former President Lula, in an attempt to reverse the gains of Brazilian unions since 2003 in raising real wages, expanding health care and pensions, and achieving equality and economic opportunity for women and Afro-Brazilians; we are proud to stand with Lula in defense of Brazilian democracy; and

WHEREAS, the USW has provided training and support in the areas of health and safety, collective bargaining, membership mobilization, organizing and women's empowerment through the Women of Steel to support the growth of the Liberian trade union movement in the rubber, mining and forestry sectors where we have industries and employers in common, leading to collective bargaining agreements that have strengthened health and safety protections and helped to prevent child labor; and

WHEREAS, we recall the pioneering leadership of our former President Lynn R. Williams in establishing a linkage between labor rights and trade agreements, insisting that governmental suppression of labor rights "constitutes not only a social deprivation for the workers concerned, but an economic disadvantage for American workers"; and

WHEREAS, the Prime Minister of Sweden and former leader of the Metalworkers' Union IF Metall, Stefan Löfven, has proposed a "Global Deal" for decent work and inclusive growth with the goal of establishing genuine social dialogue to enhance economic stability and shared prosperity, which could lay the groundwork for negotiating global agreements that respect fundamental rights and reduce inequality; and

WHEREAS, the USW, together with democratic unions in Mexico, opposed NAFTA from the inception because it promoted a corporate-driven strategy of economic integration with disastrous impact on jobs and wages, labor rights, and the environment; and

WHEREAS, we demand that any renegotiation of NAFTA establish fully enforceable labor and environmental rights, eliminate the undemocratic Investor-State Dispute Settlement provision, strengthen rules of origin especially in the automotive supply chain, create enforceable rules against currency manipulation, safeguard "Buy American" and "Buy Canadian" procurement policies, and implement more effective enforcement mechanisms; and

WHEREAS, the labor rights provisions of United States and Canadian free trade agreements with Central America, Colombia, South Korea and Europe fail to address fundamental worker rights violations. In Colombia, trade unionists continue to be murdered with impunity and government policies systematically undermine collective bargaining; while in South Korea, the government continues to violently repress workers' efforts to exercise their rights to strike, bargain and organize; and

WHEREAS, the USW led the fight against the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) which would have extended trade benefits to systematic labor rights violators such as Brunei, Malaysia, Mexico and Vietnam without establishing effective mechanisms to protect workers in these countries or to shield Canadian and American workers from unfair competition; and

WHEREAS, Workers Uniting has demanded that the proposed Trans-Atlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) "strengthen social, labour and environmental rights by raising legal and regulatory standards across all member countries" to prevent the weakening of Europe's generally higher social protection standards and to improve protections for U.S. workers; specifically by requiring that multinational companies with established European Works Councils be required to expand these bodies to include their U.S. and Canadian operations; and

WHEREAS, Workers Uniting opposes the Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA) between the European Union and Canada on the basis that it will increase corporate power by providing corporations with investor state rights, it fails to protect labor rights, it threatens Canada's environmental and financial regulations, it will increase the price of generic drugs and it will encourage further privatization so as to threaten Canada's social programs; and

WHEREAS, the 2016 Workers Uniting Congress resolved to continue the fight in the North America and the European Union against Market Economy Status for China and for stronger anti-dumping/trade defense measures, and to oppose unfair trade agreements including TPP, TTIP, CETA and the EU-Mexico FTA; and

WHEREAS, Napoleón Gómez and Los Mineros have joined with the United Steelworkers to condemn Chinese steel dumping, to oppose the Trans-Pacific Partnership, and to call for a renegotiation of NAFTA that provides effective enforcement of labor rights violations and guarantees real freedom of association and collective bargaining for workers in Mexico, the United States and Canada; and

WHEREAS, the Congress of IndustriALL Global Union in October 2016 resolved that "no moves be made to grant China Market Economy Status without a public debate on all social, economic and legal implications, a strengthening of existing trade defence instruments and improvement of social, labour and environmental conditions in China"; and

WHEREAS, the USW continues to support the efforts of the Publish What You Pay Coalition to require that multinational mining and petroleum companies disclose all of their payments to foreign governments; and to support the implementation of the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative in the U.S.; and

WHEREAS, the Canadian Steelworkers have played a key role in the Canadian Network on Corporate Accountability, which advocates for legislation that will hold Canadian extractive companies accountable for rights violations in their operations overseas, specifically the establishment of a Human Rights Ombudsperson; and

WHEREAS, Canadian Steelworkers, through the Steelworkers Humanity Fund, have played a key role in building international alliances that have strengthened the efforts of labor and social movements in developing countries to defend human rights; and

WHEREAS, the AFL-CIO Solidarity Center has provided critical support for the efforts of the USW and the global unions to develop partnerships with unions in many developing countries to defend fundamental labor and human rights.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that:

- (1)** Our union will continue its successful efforts to build international solidarity among workers and their unions to challenge right wing governments and corporations and achieve social and economic justice and a sustainable environment for all.
- (2)** As we construct a global union to challenge multinational corporations, our efforts to establish mutually beneficial global alliances in all sectors with key trade union partners that share the willingness to build workers' power through global organizing, bargaining and political action campaigns will not cease.
- (3)** At home and abroad, our union will continue to build coalitions with activists - including environmentalists, students, religious, civil and human rights, immigrant, First Nations, women's and senior citizens' groups to demand respect for fundamental human rights and democracy.
- (4)** We will build alliances to ensure that all trade agreements and the structure of the global economy will include enforceable core labor standards. Such

standards should include the right to organize or join a union without reprisal, the right to bargain collectively and to strike without the threat of being replaced, a prohibition on forced and child labor, minimum wages, hours of work and occupational health and safety. Through our global alliances, we will work to ensure that the institutions of the global trade union movement actively engage in the fight against unfair and anti-democratic trade and investment agreements.

- (5)** We will continue to develop practical strategies to engage our members in transnational organizing, bargaining and solidarity, and work to educate them on the ways labor rights violations and declining living standards in other countries adversely affect our workplaces and communities.