



2017 USW Constitutional Convention RESOLUTION

Resolution No. 7

Civil and Human Rights

WHEREAS, the United Steelworkers is and has always been a union for all. We do not discriminate nor will we condone discrimination on the basis of race, gender, religion, ancestry, national origin, citizenship, age, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, or any other legally protected grounds; and

WHEREAS, our union is committed to the principle that “Workers’ Rights are Human Rights” and strongly supports the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Labor Organization Conventions on Labor Rights; and

WHEREAS, it is our union’s duty to eliminate discrimination in the workplace, and deal effectively with civil and human rights complaints through internal procedures and contract enforcement; and

WHEREAS, all workers should experience employment security, fair promotions and benefits regardless of race, religion, age, gender, gender identity or gender expression; and

WHEREAS, discrimination and harassment continues to exist in our two countries for minorities, immigrants, women and other groups seeking equality and equity. Violent hate crimes continue to occur; and

WHEREAS, the globalized economy and concentration of wealth among the richest of the rich has eroded human rights and workers’ rights in North America and internationally; and

WHEREAS, our union is committed to building and training local union member activism to advance civil, human and workers’ rights and civil liberties; and

WHEREAS, in the United States, our union continues to stand with labor, faith, community and business allies in recognizing the need for a new immigration policy that includes a path towards citizenship that protects the rights of both native and foreign-born workers and the more than 11 million people who aspire to be U.S. citizens who contribute to our economy, our communities and our country; and

WHEREAS, in the United States, sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression must cease to be a lawful basis of discrimination in employment or in any other area of public life; and

WHEREAS, our union supports marriage equality as a civil and human right and condemns its use as a distraction to pit workers against workers when all workers must stand in solidarity in the fight for economic justice; and

WHEREAS, our union has improved the lives of minorities, women and others seeking equality by negotiating voluntary affirmative action programs and employment equity programs; and

WHEREAS, the union is committed to continuing the work of civil rights leaders like A. Philip Randolph, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Congressman John Lewis and others to ensure that every American has access to the voting booth; and

WHEREAS, Black and brown lives are systematically and intentionally targeted for voter suppression as seen in North Carolina where the legislature and the governor passed an illegal voter suppression law that a Court said unlawfully targeted Black voters for disenfranchisement; and

WHEREAS, in our two countries, Black and brown lives are systematically and intentionally targeted for mass incarceration in public and for-profit prisons, which thrive on their bodies in exchange for dollars; and

WHEREAS, Black people alone comprise 12-13% of the U.S. population, but according to the Federal Bureau of Prisons in 2016, they comprise 37.8% of inmates in federal institutions. Black males represent 38% of state inmates and are 5.1 more times likely to be incarcerated than whites, and Blacks represent more than half of the prison population in 11 states; and

WHEREAS, notwithstanding the fact that all lives matter, it must be spoken that Black lives matter because Black lives are more at risk, based on policies that target Black lives for incarceration, voter suppression, and death through extrajudicial killings of a disproportionate number of unarmed Black people; and

WHEREAS, in Canada, our union has negotiated employment equity and other collective agreement provisions for Aboriginal employees, has established a National Aboriginal Committee, demanded an effective national inquiry into missing and murdered Aboriginal women and girls, endorsed the recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and is committed to exploring possible partnerships and alliances with Aboriginal organizations; and

WHEREAS, in Canada, the number of Temporary Foreign Workers rose dramatically from under 90,000 in 2000 to over 360,000 in 2014, leading to the terrible exploitation of these workers and downward pressure on Canadian wages; and

WHEREAS, people who live with disabilities are not fully protected by state, provincial and federal legislation in the United States and Canada; and

WHEREAS, national security policies and discriminatory interpretations of anti-terrorism laws infringe on fundamental civil rights and liberties, including the right to political dissent; and

WHEREAS, our members are known internationally for outstanding social justice achievements at all levels in the AFL-CIO, the CLC and other affiliated social justice and faith-based organizations in which we share common goals and values, including: the Coalition of Labor Union Women (CLUW), the A. Philip Randolph Institute (APRI), the Coalition of Black Trade Unionists (CBTU), the Labor Council for Latin American Advancement (LCLAA), the Asian Pacific American Labor Alliance (APALA), the Asian Canadian Labour Alliance (ACLA) and Pride at Work (PAW).

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that:

- (1)** Each local union must establish a civil rights or human rights committee to implement our union's commitment to the protection and expansion of civil and human rights and civil liberties; where amalgamated locals exist, a civil rights or human rights representative or committee shall be established for each unit.
- (2)** To reflect the growing diversity of the workforce in both our nations, we pledge to build a strong civil and human rights activist corps to promote diversity in our Union, the labor movement and our communities. Training will be encouraged through our civil rights, human rights and anti-harassment education programs.
- (3)** We will actively discourage members from engaging in discrimination and harassment of equality-seeking individuals or groups in the workplace and in union activities, and will not use disciplinary procedures to shield illegal discriminatory conduct.
- (4)** We oppose voter suppression legislation such as strict photo ID laws, proof of citizenship requirements and restrictions on early voting, and support efforts to restore voting rights to ex-offenders. We support legislation to expand registration and voting opportunities and to restore the Voting Rights Act. We will continue to work with allies to ensure that the electorate is informed about its rights and the right to vote is protected.

- (5)** We will support comprehensive immigration reform to eliminate the exploitation of immigrant workers and improve incentives for employers to hire workers domestically. We believe all workers should be protected by labor and health and safety laws so that immigration does not undermine wages and working conditions or support those industries that rely on substandard wages, benefits and working conditions.
- (6)** We will call upon law enforcement officials to vigorously prosecute perpetrators of hate crimes, and we will work with other labor and civil and human rights organizations to counteract hate propaganda.
- (7)** In the United States, we will work vigorously to enact legislation that deters wage discrimination. In Canada, we will pressure governments to adopt proactive laws to establish and maintain pay equity in federal and provincial jurisdictions.
- (8)** We support non-discrimination in both employment legislation and in the workplace and support legislative and collective bargaining initiatives that include sexual orientation and gender identity and gender expression protections to guard workers from discrimination on the job.
- (9)** We commit to the inclusion of more women, people of color, people with disabilities, Aboriginal peoples, immigrants and other equality-seeking groups in our organizing efforts, leadership development and political action training programs and Back to the Locals education program.
- (10)** We support initiatives and legislation that ensure pay equity, employment equity, affirmative action programs and marriage equality. We will continue to work with other unions, civil and human rights and women's organizations to educate the public on affirmative and equality action, lobby for employment equity and related legislation, and reaffirm our right in the United States under Title VII to negotiate voluntary affirmative action programs.
- (11)** In Canada, we will advocate for the elimination of the Temporary Foreign Worker Program and its replacements with measures that ensure foreign workers be provided with full employment rights and a clear path to permanent residency and citizenship, and that those rights be aggressively enforced by appropriate provincial and federal regulatory bodies.
- (12)** We will work for the effective enforcement of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and human rights legislation in all jurisdictions.
- (13)** We urge involvement and membership in organizations with which we share the mutual goals of full employment, the elimination of discrimination,

advancing workers' rights and promoting an inclusive work force and labor movement.

- (14)** In our ongoing campaigns for fair trade, our union will demand equality for all workers and will hold governments and employers responsible for working conditions that violate labor and human rights. We pledge to fight racism and gender discrimination through global solidarity with organized and unorganized workers.

- (15)** We agree and affirm that all lives matter but we state categorically that Black lives do matter. We denounce racism and the resulting systemic, economic and societal marginalization that disregards and degrades Black lives. We will support legislation and policies to end mass incarceration and the school-to-prison pipeline to return people to full participation in our society and economy.