

2014 USW CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION

# RESOLUTION



## Resolution No. 27 - Worker Ownership and Workers' Capital

**WHEREAS**, our employers are earning record profits while the wages of working families stagnate; and

**WHEREAS**, Wall Street and Bay Street have left Main Street behind as our stock markets hit record highs, but unemployment and underemployment remain persistent problems; and

**WHEREAS**, in the United States, 95% of income gains since 2009 have gone to the wealthiest 1% of the population; and

**WHEREAS**, we now have the highest wealth inequality in the United States since 1928; and

**WHEREAS**, wealth inequality has increased in Canada over the past 25 years, with the wealthiest 86 Canadians having as much wealth as the poorest 11 million Canadians; and

**WHEREAS**, USW members have billions of dollars invested in pension plans, 401(k) plans and labour sponsored investment plans in Canada, such as the Quebec Federation of Labour Solidarity Fund; and

**WHEREAS**, history has proven that these investments of our savings can produce both a healthy monetary return and a social return that sustains and creates jobs and invests in our communities; and

**WHEREAS**, we have too often seen the opposite result when we do not influence those investments, leaving Wall Street and Bay Street to gamble with our money in ways that threaten our jobs and destroy our communities; and

**WHEREAS**, worker ownership has proven to be fruitful when ownership means much more than just the value of a share; and

**WHEREAS**, our former International President Lynn Williams was instrumental in forming the Western Labour/Worker Co-op Council in Saskatoon, SK in 2006; and

**WHEREAS**, the USW began efforts of collaboration in 2009 with the Mondragon Cooperatives, the world's largest worker-owned cooperative with 85,000 worker-owners, to develop unionized, worker-owned cooperatives in the United States and Canada; and

**WHEREAS**, our Union partnered with Mondragon and the Ohio Employee Ownership Center to release a Union Co-op model in 2012 to provide a roadmap for workers to gain ownership of their own businesses; and

**WHEREAS**, creating sustainable jobs that pay a living wage also helps to create sustainable communities; and

**WHEREAS**, we have been active in developing unionized, worker-owned Union Co-ops in Pittsburgh, PA; Cincinnati, OH; Buffalo, NY; and Reading, PA; and

**WHEREAS**, the USW has assisted in launching a new worker-owned Union Co-op in Worcester, MA in 2014, where all workers are proud members of USW Local 2936; and

**WHEREAS**, the USW supports 1worker1vote.org, a new non-profit formed by Mondragon USA to help incubate and network Union Co-ops in the United States; and

**WHEREAS**, we have launched a website ([www.usw.coop](http://www.usw.coop)) to provide resources and ongoing updates to our membership.

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that:**

**(1)** Our Union will continue to pursue every responsible avenue to ensure that the investments of the USW and of USW members collectively are used in a way that not only provides a reasonable monetary return, but also provides job security, job creation and invests in our communities.

**(2)** Our Union will continue to promote and develop unionized, worker-owned Union Co-ops, as well as other forms of worker-ownership, as a profitable and sustainable means to create jobs and support our communities.

**(3)** The USW supports the United States Federation of Worker Co-operatives ([www.usworker.coop](http://www.usworker.coop)) and the Canadian Worker Co-op Federation ([www.canadianworker.coop](http://www.canadianworker.coop)) in their efforts to promote and support worker-owned businesses. The USW further supports 1worker1vote.org in developing unionized, worker-owned Union Co-ops.