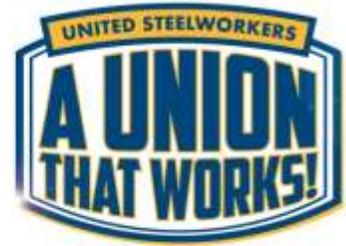


2014 USW CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION

RESOLUTION



Resolution No. 3 - A Union that Works

WHEREAS, Canada and the United States share a proud history of a strong middle class, economic security and living standards built on the productivity and solidarity of organized labor; and

WHEREAS, as USW members we are committed to the core principles that anyone who wants to work should have a job; that all workers and their families should live in dignity with health care and retirement security; that every worker should enjoy the freedom to form a union and bargain collectively; and that all workers should share equitably in a strong economy; and

WHEREAS, we will continually fight for nations where bridges will not collapse or levies break; where children are healthy, well-fed and well-educated; where workplaces are safe and wages sufficient to support families and communities; and

WHEREAS, economic outcomes are not random, but the result of deliberate policy decisions; and

WHEREAS, the philosophy of deregulation, de-unionization and race-to-the-bottom globalization known as neo-liberalism has shifted power, income and wealth from workers to corporations, leaving us with severe economic imbalances and a widening gulf between the very rich and everyone else; and

WHEREAS, the increasing amount of money in politics, made possible by the U.S. Supreme Court's Citizens United and McCutcheon decisions, gives corporations and wealthy individuals even more opportunities to buy elections, asserting their priorities at the expense of working Americans; and

WHEREAS, in Canada, much like in the U.S., the Harper Government's decision to end the public financing of elections and pass the so-called Fair Elections Act will give the wealthy more power in the Canadian political process while limiting the right of Canadian citizens to vote; and

WHEREAS, out-of-control political spending has gone hand in hand with attacks on both the economic rights of workers and our system of democracy. So-called "right-to-work" legislation strips workers of their collective bargaining rights, making it harder for workers to form and join unions, while voter ID laws make it harder for American citizens to vote, essentially excluding certain populations from the democratic process; and

WHEREAS, these neo-liberal policies have ensured that in the United States 95 percent of income gains since the Great Recession have gone to the wealthiest one percent, while good, community-sustaining jobs have been replaced with low-wage jobs, leaving nearly 10 million Americans still unemployed and 10 million more who are underemployed or have given up looking for a job; and

WHEREAS, these same destructive neo-liberal economic policies threaten to increase economic inequality in Canada as well. The distribution of wealth in Canada is less unequal than in the United States, with the top 10 percent controlling about half of the wealth, but in the past two decades, nearly all of the growth in income has gone to the wealthiest 10 percent. At the same time Canada's system of social insurance and retirement security is under attack and child poverty is growing; and

WHEREAS, while the super-rich disguise their assault on the middle class as budget balancing, cost cutting and government shrinking, these are just excuses to avoid addressing the real problems with our economies: the rapidly shrinking middle-class, soaring health care and education costs and the widening wealth gap; and

WHEREAS, 30-plus years of neo-liberal policies of deregulation have made workplaces less secure, services more expensive and companies indifferent to the damage they do to our environment; and

WHEREAS, despite all that they have, the very rich and the big corporations do not pay their fair share of taxes – many paying little or no taxes at all—even if this means cutting essential funding for education, infrastructure, environmental regulation and economic development; and

WHEREAS, the politicians in the United States who serve the very wealthy and big businesses by protecting them from paying their fair share are now targeting valued entitlement programs like Medicare, Social Security and Medicaid as well as long-standing middle class tax breaks; and

WHEREAS, bad trade deals and the so called free market have left us vulnerable to foreign dumping, putting American and Canadian jobs at risk, destabilizing our economies and further necessitating the diligent enforcement of trade laws; and

WHEREAS, we will always fight for Buy American and Buy Canadian provisions to promote quality products that support fair labor standards and protect good-paying jobs, despite local authorities who continue to make excuses for using foreign products for major infrastructure projects; and

WHEREAS, we believe that while the market is an effective way of creating and delivering products, as citizens we have certain social and economic rights that we must fight to maintain, including pensions, health care, employment insurance and employment equity; and

WHEREAS, through our union-wide education efforts, we are providing the resources to arm members with the information and skills needed to confront challenges in their workplaces and communities while becoming stronger leaders to fight for our future; and

WHEREAS, we take our values and vision to the bargaining table to build safer workplaces with fair wages, benefits and workplace rules. The collective action we take across sectors builds bargaining power, while departments like Strategic Campaigns help local unions face elevated bargaining challenges by honing their negotiating and advocacy skills. These factors combine to help us make the gains that benefit union and non-union workers alike; and

WHEREAS, through our organizing efforts, we continue to extend the benefits of collective bargaining to other workers, empowering them to negotiate for their futures and build economic security for themselves and their families; and

WHEREAS, the legislative and political processes in the United States and Canada continually demand our attention and involvement. From Washington to Ottawa, our members' interests are advanced through the collective efforts of our leadership, staff, and members. We fight against bad trade deals and right-to-work (for less) legislation, just as we fight for anti-scab legislation, stronger safety provisions and a guarantee that the voices of working families are heard in all aspects of state and local government; and

WHEREAS, in the United States, our union demands that trade laws be enforced. We pursue innovative cases to defend our members' jobs when they are threatened by illegal and unfair trade, initiating and winning major gains that have saved jobs in sectors ranging from steel to tire to paper. We have repeatedly taken on China's blatant disregard of trade rules, particularly through our union's history-making clean energy trade case; and

WHEREAS, in Canada we oppose bad trade deals such the CETA and we demand that Unions should be able to initiate unfair trade cases in Ottawa, because its workers are who ultimately suffer the consequences of unfair trade practices; and

WHEREAS, we utilize our education and activism networks, such as Rapid Response in the United States, to engage USW members in key legislative fights and to ensure that our members understand the policy implications of workplace issues; and

WHEREAS, programs like Women of Steel, SOAR, the Associate Member and Next Generation programs build activism within our union and bring important voices to our legislative and political engagement; and

WHEREAS, we have expanded our influence by creating new organizations with key partners like the Blue-Green Alliance, Blue Green Canada and the Alliance for American Manufacturing. Our work in the policy arena is magnified through these relationships and has helped us become the leading voice in Washington and Ottawa for a clean energy economy and manufacturing, helping us secure our members' jobs now and in the future; and

WHEREAS, as union members, we work globally for livable wages, safe working conditions and decent benefits, from the sweatshops of Jordan to the mines of Mexico, as well as in workplaces across the United States and Canada. We use our collective strength, bargaining ability and international relationships, and we acknowledge that a threat to one is a threat to all; and

WHEREAS, we believe that our communities shape who we are, and healthy communities develop when we care for each other, treat people fairly, keep them safe and help them achieve. Our economy must focus on creating good jobs and providing every worker with a fair opportunity to bargain for better working conditions and a better life; and

WHEREAS, we take on this challenge to preserve what the labor movement has fought for, what countless workers have died for and for what we believe our countries can become.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that:

- (1)** We will be a union that always fights for social and economic justice. People who work hard should earn family-supporting wages. Reducing economic inequality is not only the right thing to do, but is at the core of rebuilding our economies.

(2) We will as a union work to establish full employment and we reject the notion that stagnating wages are the new norm. We will be a union that works hard for legislation that facilitates organizing so that all workers have the opportunity to bargain collectively.

(3) We will be a union that works for economic stimulus programs in the United States and Canada to revitalize our economies and ensure that investments are made in infrastructure, education and technology. We will work as a union for policies that will redevelop a strong manufacturing base.

(4) We will be a union that always works for better healthcare and retirement security for all citizens. Security and dignity in retirement and access to quality medical care are fundamental, universal rights, regardless of an individual's economic circumstances.

(5) We will be a union that works to ensure that all levels of government are properly financed and empowered to ensure quality public services and education; provide effective regulation of our workplaces, marketplaces and economies; and protect us from environmental degradation. Governments at all levels have important roles to play in providing essential services, defending the vulnerable, encouraging environmental sustainability, facilitating economic growth and ensuring a fair and just society. We must have a progressive tax structure in which corporations and the wealthy pay their fair share. In the U.S. we must fight to eliminate the Bush-era tax cuts for the wealthy, while protecting tax policies such as the Earned Income Tax Credit and child deductions that help working families. In Canada we must fight to reverse the corporate tax cuts that have only benefitted wealthy corporations and we must fight for a return to higher tax rates on wealthy Canadians which were the norm in the 1960's and 70s when the middle class was growing and the fruits of prosperity were more evenly shared. Such changes could raise significant revenues and distribute the responsibility for funding the important services our governments provide more equitably.

(6) We will be a union that works to reregulate the financial sector and reestablish corporate accountability. As long as our economic policy puts the interests of corporations before the interests of working people, corporate short-term profiteering and financial speculation will jeopardize our economic future.

(7) We will work as a union to build a global economy in which the rights of all workers and the environment are protected, trade is fair and balanced and trade agreements do not trump the rights of sovereign governments or ignore the impact of globalization on workers and the environment. Trade agreements must include enforceable protections for workers and the environment as well as prohibitions against child labor, sweat shops, illegal subsidies, currency manipulation and other forms of unfair trade. Core sectors and technologies and the skills and talents of workers in those sectors must be protected, and tax incentives and loopholes that encourage corporations to invest abroad must be eliminated.