



UNITED STEELWORKERS
CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION



RESOLUTIONS

Resolution No. 11

International Trade

WHEREAS, the ability of United Steelworkers to influence international trade policy in the twenty first century continues to be one of the strongest international achievements our union has done to defend and improve workers' rights globally; and

WHEREAS, despite years of corporate led trade agreements, international forums like the World Trade Organization, inaction by elected leaders and apathy to the plight of middle-class families by mainstream press our union held true to shifting the balance of power on trade agreements away from deindustrialization and erosion of workers' rights towards fair trade; and

WHEREAS, the global pandemic and Russian invasion of Ukraine continue to highlight the failures of concentrated, globalized supply chains and the fallacy that corporate led globalization and free trade at any cost would foster democracy and improve workers' rights; and

WHEREAS, our union has participated in more trade investigations than any other single organization aiding on 187 individual anti-dumping and countervailing duty (AD/CVD) orders where the union has supported, testified, or been a petitioner out of the 664 AD/CVD duties the U.S. has put against illegally dumped or subsidized goods – USW has been party to over 1 in 4 trade cases in the U.S.; and

WHEREAS, our union in Canada has participated in over 30 trade investigations on anti-dumping, countervailing duty orders and safeguards where our union has supported or testified, more than any other union in Canada and recently initiated our first-ever trade case.

WHEREAS, the union in the United States continues to advocate for using policy tools with precision that will defend jobs and domestic industries such as the steel and aluminum 232 investigations, excluding against Canada, and the 301 investigations that holds the Communist party in China accountable for illegal trade practices; and

WHEREAS, our union was successful in removing the Section 232 tariffs on Canadian steel and aluminum and continues to advocate for a bilateral manufacturing and trade strategy, including a broad exemption for Canadian products under new Buy America rules; and

WHEREAS, in good part because of United Steelworkers work, a Rapid Response Mechanism was created in the first modern renegotiated trade agreement – the United States, Mexico and Canada Agreement (USMCA) – which has permitted workers in Mexico, the U.S. and Canada to hold companies accountable in Mexico for labor violations, allowing for thousands of workers in Mexico to choose free-independent unions for the first time; and

WHEREAS, the USW in both Canada and the United States has advocated for the inclusion of mechanisms similar to USMCA's Rapid Response in ongoing and upcoming trade negotiations; and

WHEREAS, the focus of recent trade discussions in both countries has been to develop and create “worker-centered trade” program that ensures that increased globalization leads to benefits for all workers and access to free and independent trade unions; and

WHEREAS, the efforts by multi-national corporations and state-run economies like the People's Republic of China continue to emphasize a trade at any cost model, which undermines the ability of workers to bargain with their employers and for countries to improve the environment for their communities; and

WHEREAS, large digital companies now see the old model of free trade as an ideal to prevent accountability on where your data is stored, where future technology jobs are created, and a method to prevent regulation that improves worker and consumer rights on digital platforms; and

WHEREAS, USW has relentlessly pursued national policies to maintain and grow a healthy manufacturing base over the last three decades. With no purely domestic advocate for manufacturing in the U.S., the USW created an innovative strategy to fund with some of our larger U.S. manufacturers, the Alliance for American Manufacturing (AAM). For over 10 years, AAM has widely amplified the USW's message that manufacturing is necessary for a strong middle class and a thriving economy; and

WHEREAS, the USW in Canada has led the fight to protect the Canadian steel and manufacturing sector by insisting on fair foreign investment laws and a national manufacturing strategy, including through the Stand for Steel Campaign; and

WHEREAS, USW is the largest industrial union in North America, representing workers producing a wide variety of trade impacted goods, such as steel, pipe, aluminum, wood products, chemicals, paper products, plastics, auto parts, tires, rubber, glass, and many other industrial and consumer products. Because our members have suffered disproportionately from unfairly traded imports and the offshoring of production and manufacturing jobs, USW has been at the forefront of the fight for fair trade in both Canada and the United States. Through public pressure and through concrete action, the USW has been a leader in the fight to level the playing field to ensure the rules are enforced so that our members and their industries have a fighting chance.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that:

1. The USW reaffirms its commitment to leading the fight against unfair trade policies and the trade agreements that so deeply affect workers both in North America and around the globe.
2. The USW will continue to monitor the effect of illegal trading practices by countries that export to the U.S. and Canada and we will use all available legal avenues to expose and stop these illegal practices and make the affected workers whole. The USW will also continue to fight to maintain and strengthen existing trade laws.
3. The USW will continue to work with its allies both in North America and in other countries around the world to advocate for “worker-centered trade” also known as “fair trade” standards, so U.S. and Canadian workers share in the benefits of international trade while including protections for human and labor rights and health, safety and environmental standards. With these tools, trade agreements can have the effect of raising workers’ living standards and human rights records among trading partners and reduce the incentive to move production to countries with the lowest standards.
4. The USW will educate our members and our communities on the impacts of digital trade and will work to prevent digital trade agreements from undermining workers’, environmental and consumers’ rights.
5. The USW will not just provide a voice for workers’ grievances on international trade but also solutions to ensuring that communities thrive, workers can bargain fair contracts, and that multi-national corporate interests do not overpower the elected leaders in countries where the USW has members.