



UNITED STEELWORKERS
CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION



RESOLUTIONS

Resolution No. 7

Civil and Human Rights

WHEREAS, the United Steelworkers wants to unite all working people and engage in activities to advance and safeguard their economic security and social welfare; and

WHEREAS, our union seeks to eliminate all forms of discrimination, to protect and extend our democratic institutions and civil and human rights, and to perpetuate and extend the cherished traditions of democracy and social and economic justice in the United States, Canada and the world community; and

WHEREAS, our union does not discriminate, nor does it condone discrimination on the basis of race, creed, color, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, disability, nationality, or other legally protected status; and

WHEREAS, our union is comprised of people, Indigenous, native-born and immigrants, whose cultures, religions, backgrounds, orientations, abilities, and views combine to form a union for all people, regardless of how long they have lived here or where they came from; and

WHEREAS, our union is a safe place for all; and

WHEREAS, COVID-19 has affected all of us, and we must not forget that stigma surrounding its source coincided with increased violence and racism against Chinese and other Asian groups; and,

WHEREAS, COVID-19 disproportionately impacted Black, Latino, Indigenous, and other racialized people who realized higher rates of mortality and complications due to pre-existing conditions and less access to affordable healthcare, which stem from the enduring effects of racism and economic discrimination; and

WHEREAS, the Brookings Institution reported that essential workers comprise about half of all workers in low-paid occupations, yet they kept our economy going by working and risking exposure to COVID-19 throughout the COVID-19 quarantine; and

WHEREAS, these essential workers are disproportionately women, immigrants and people of color; and

WHEREAS, in the U.S., Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) deportation practices can violate human rights and harm our nation economically; and

WHEREAS, immigrant workers contribute to the economy, but are exploited by unscrupulous employers; and

WHEREAS, comprehensive immigration reform with a path to citizenship will place many immigrant workers in compliance with labor, income tax, and social security laws, thereby increasing their contributions to society and the economy; and

WHEREAS, racial injustice, police brutality and killings of Black people have brought protests across the U.S. and Canada and around the world; and

WHEREAS, in both Canada and the United States, violence directed at places of worship and practitioners of non-majority-group religions, including Muslims and Jews, have resulted in many deaths and injuries; and

WHEREAS, the American Psychological Association and The Pew Charitable Trusts report that race discrimination harms the physical and mental health of Black people and is considered a public health crisis; and

WHEREAS, we appreciate our siblings who work in law enforcement, who protect and serve our communities without bias, and who responsibly demonstrate that we are all entitled to due process. We cannot ignore the enduring racial injustice within our criminal justice system; and

WHEREAS, we celebrate legal protection from employment discrimination for our siblings in the TwoSpirit, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex, Asexual, and Allies (2SLGBTQIA+, recognizing indigenous TwoSpirit as coming first) community, and we recognize that much work remains as members of the 2SLGBTQIA+ community are more likely to face unemployment, underemployment and homelessness; and

WHEREAS, diversity is an admirable goal that provides for the presence of people who reflect different backgrounds and perspectives, and we know that it means nothing without inclusion, which actually incorporates those backgrounds and perspectives into every facet and decision; and

WHEREAS, labor laws in both of our countries have long given employees the right to organize, but continue to exclude domestic and agricultural workers, and the legislative history shows these exclusions were based on racism against Black and racialized workers who disproportionately worked as agricultural and domestic workers; and

WHEREAS, these continued exclusions hurt millions of Latino workers who would benefit from having a voice in their terms and conditions of employment; and

WHEREAS, we celebrate when the unemployment rate declines, but we must not forget the many who are considered unemployable and part of an underclass because of criminal records; and

WHEREAS, the U.S. Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention reports that Black people have an arrest rate of 6,120 per 100,000 and Native Americans 4,633 per 100,000, compared to 2,797 per 100,000 for Whites, and the FBI's Uniform Crime Reporting Program reports in recent years that Hispanics account for 18.1% of arrests, and more than half of unemployed men in their 30's have a criminal history record according to RAND Corporation; and

WHEREAS, we know how to fight for second chances, and believe that there are those who may be employed if they were granted a pardon or an expungement; and

WHEREAS, we acknowledge that we live, work, and engage in all our union activities on Indigenous/Native American territories and that our union's membership includes many Steelworkers of Indigenous/Native American ancestry; and

WHEREAS, we support and value the Indigenous/Native American heritage of our members on both sides of the border; and

WHEREAS, workers living with disabilities face unacceptably high rates of unemployment, while USW members living with disabilities still face barriers to full participation in the life of our union, particularly when disabilities are other than those resulting from work injuries or work-related illnesses; and

WHEREAS, the continued presence of racism, sexism, homophobia, transphobia and other forms of oppression means our union needs to continue the battle against harassment and discrimination in the workplace, in our union, and in the wider world; and

WHEREAS, in Canada, positive steps have been taken against discrimination by offering USW educational courses such as "Promoting Mental Health in the Workplace and the Union", "Unionism on Turtle Island, "Be More than a Bystander", and workshops on gender identity and gender expression, and by creating materials such as "A Helpful Guide when Transitioning Gender in the Workplace"; and

WHEREAS, climate change affects people globally, but Black, Latino and Indigenous people experience environmental racism by having toxic-waste dumps and other industrial developments located on their lands and in their neighborhoods.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that:

1. We call upon all members of this Union, and all of our siblings in labor, to speak out against acts of bullying, discrimination, stigmatization, racism, xenophobia, and hate violence and to stand up for all those who are targeted for by such acts, and we will continue to create strong policies and programs in support of such actions.
2. We oppose deportations based solely on immigration status because they tear apart families and communities, and we call upon our Federal Governments to provide for a pathway to citizenship for undocumented immigrants.
3. We will lead by example in promoting safety, security, and respect for human and constitutional rights, and will seek opportunities to partner with people and their

communities, organizations and institutions that support and defend the rights of all people, especially those who live in the margins of our societies.

4. We will seek ways to partner with communities, organizations and institutions that work to improve employment opportunities for those with criminal arrest records, so that recidivism is reduced and the formerly unemployable are able to contribute to our society and economy.
5. We will seek ways to partner with communities, organizations and institutions that work to improve employment opportunities for Indigenous, Black, Latino and racialized workers and for workers living with disabilities.
6. We will be proactive in promoting diversity and inclusion in our Union and for our members, and will continue to create strong policies and programs in support of these goals and to remove barriers to participation.
7. We call for a return to community policing in which police officers see themselves as community members and are integrated into the fabric of the community. Law enforcement, to the greatest extent possible, should reflect the racial and ethnic diversity of the community they serve.
8. We will advocate for the end of racial profiling and to mitigating racial disparities in arrests, prosecution and sentencing, and for policing and other community-safety measures that will reduce the high rates of violence directed at specific groups in our countries, but particularly people of color, Indigenous women and girls and trans people.
9. We will fight for the dignity and respect of all workers, including the right to organize for some of the most vulnerable, including essential workers, and domestic and agricultural workers.
10. We will continue to recognize healthcare, including reproductive rights, as a human right, and will continue to advocate for healthcare and paid sick leave for all.
11. We will continue to support the passage of laws to prohibit discrimination against people based on sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression.
12. We will lobby governments to expand protections in human-rights legislation to include gender identity and gender expression, and to provide better legal protections against all forms of discrimination, including discrimination and harassment in the workplace.
13. We will encourage participation in human and civil-rights courses with the goal of increasing solidarity with union members, workers, and other citizens.
14. We will lobby governments at all levels to strengthen protections against hate speech and action motivated by religious bias.
15. We will recognize that civil rights and human rights activism includes struggles of Indigenous peoples globally as well as in the US and in Canada.

