



UNITED STEELWORKERS
CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION



RESOLUTIONS

Resolution No. 18

Renewing Labor Rights

WHEREAS, the ability of workers in the United States and Canada to bargain contracts that improve wages, hours and working conditions is not just a founding principle for the United Steelworkers but a mission that has improved the lives of millions, reduced workplace deaths by 60 percent, improved our air quality for our families, and ensured over 30 million Americans can count on their pension; and

WHEREAS, today over 65 percent of Americans approve of unions, one of the highest percentages in modern times, yet in the U.S. private sector union membership hovers at 6.1 percent; and

WHEREAS, in Canada, over 70 percent of people indicated they approve of unions, but Canadian private sector union membership is only at 15.3 percent; and

WHEREAS, for years, the USW and workers experience companies engaging in egregious union-busting activities to derail workers' attempts to form a union because of inadequate labor protections, while unscrupulous companies regularly fire union supporters, force employees to attend mandatory anti-union presentations after long and grueling shifts, and permanently replace workers who make the difficult decision to go out on strike in order to achieve to protect or improve their wages and working conditions for themselves and their families; and

WHEREAS, the Democratic-controlled House of Representatives, in an effort to improve U.S. workers' rights, has voted to pass the Protecting the Right to Organizing (PRO) Act twice in two Congresses (the 116th and 117th) but the divided Senate refuses to debate the bills and the minority uses filibuster rules to avoid responsibly or accountability to their voters; and

WHEREAS, the PRO Act will ensure workers voices will once again be equal to management when forming a union by:

- imposing stiff financial penalties on companies that retaliate against organizers;
- requiring the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) to fast-track legal proceedings for workers suspended or fired for union activism;
- empowering workers to file their own civil lawsuits against employers that violate their labor rights;

- empowering the NLRB to require corporations to enter bargaining with workers, if they interfere in union drives;
- ending mandatory anti-union propaganda meetings that employers regularly use to disparage organized labor and browbeat workers into voting against unions;
- requiring employers to post notices informing workers of their labor rights, helping to ensure that managers respect the law;
- enabling prospective union members to vote on union representation on neutral sites instead of workplaces where the threat of coercion looms;
- Preventing employers from artificially delaying a first contract for workers; and

WHEREAS, in the United States the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) has seen a flatlined budget since 2014 – preventing the agency from hiring staff that could timely process union elections, unfair labor practice charges, and other vital items to a functioning labor movement, while riders in the U.S. budget prevent the NLRB from improving election rights and hinders the board from researching ways to improve agriculture workers wages, hours and working conditions; and

WHEREAS, the right to form a union in the U.S. has been enshrined in statute since 1935 when Senator Robert Wagner, the lead author of the legislation, successfully led Senate passage of the National Labor Relations Act (NLRA) 86 years ago with a goal that unionization should be straightforward, highlighting in February of 1935: “It merely provides that employees, if they desire to do so, shall be free to organize for their mutual protection or benefit”; and

WHEREAS, the Bureau of Labor Statistics highlights nonunion workers had median weekly earnings that were 84 percent of earnings for workers who were union members (\$958 versus \$1,144), while Statistics Canada shows that median weekly earnings for non-union workers are 78 percent of those who are union members (\$903.75 vs. \$1153.80); and

WHEREAS the majority of Canadian provinces allow workers to form a union through majority sign-up – preventing employers from using ‘showing of interest elections’ to delay or stop the collective bargaining process; and

WHEREAS, the NDP-led government of British Columbia recently introduced legislation to allow card-check certification, joining several other Canadian provinces currently providing this right; and

WHEREAS, the Federal NDP recently announced it would support the governing party to pass new Anti-Scab legislation at the federal level; and

WHEREAS, the combined U.S. and Canadian spending by government is over \$6.8 trillion dollars and none of these dollars are conditioned to ensuring companies that receive a federal benefit remain neutral in union organizing; and

WHEREAS, businesses in the U.S. can deduct on their taxes the hiring of union busters which means the Federal government is providing an indirect subsidy to union bust; and

WHEREAS, anti-worker voices in both Canada and the United States continue to press for national right to work (for less) laws, further restrictions on union rights, and seek to erase the ability to collectively bargain

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that:

1. The USW will work to raise standards for our members and all workers by supporting changes to public policy that provide for protections and expansions of worker rights.
2. The USW will continue to work in all jurisdictions in Canada to preserve laws that facilitate organizing and collective bargaining, and to challenge and change laws that are anti-union and anti-worker. To that end, we will work to ensure that all jurisdictions in Canada have labor laws that include the following important provisions: card check certification, strong and meaningful penalties and remedies (including certification) when employers intimidate workers during organizing campaigns, better access to first contract arbitration, broad successorship rights, expanded definitions of the employment relationship, and anti-scab provisions.
3. The USW will not rest until comprehensive labor law reform is passed by Congress and signed by the President of the United States. This starts with passing the PRO Act to ensure workers have a fair shot at forming a union and getting a first contract. The USW will work to un-elect any elected official who does not support pro-union labor law reform.
4. Our Union will vigorously oppose the spread of right to work (for less) legislation and will work to defeat any politician who endorses such legislation.
5. The USW will use every policy tool in government to reduce opposition to forming a union and getting a collective bargaining agreement. This includes eliminating anti-union riders in annual appropriations bills, ensuring federal direct and indirect spending are conditioned with union neutrality clauses, and that companies cannot use the tax code to write off union busting on their taxes.