

# RESOLUTION 23

## SAFE JOBS—EVERY WORKER’S RIGHT

The right to a safe job is a fundamental worker right and a core union value. Every worker should be able to go to work and return home safely at the end of the day.

Throughout our entire history, through organizing, bargaining, education, legislation and mobilization, working people and their unions have fought for safe and healthful working conditions to protect workers from injury, illnesses and death. We have made real progress, winning strong laws and protections that have made jobs safer and saved workers’ lives.

Over the years, our fight has gotten harder as employers’ opposition to workers’ rights and protections has grown, and attacks on unions have intensified. We haven’t backed down. Most recently, after decades-long struggles, joining with allies we won groundbreaking standards to protect workers from silica, beryllium and coal dust, and stronger protections for workers to report injuries and exercise other safety and health rights.

Now all these hard-won gains are threatened. President Trump and many Republicans in Congress have launched an aggressive assault on worker protections. Two new safety rules—one strengthening requirements for federal contractors to comply with safety and other labor protections, and another to ensure accurate injury reporting by employers—were repealed. Other new safety rules, including OSHA’s silica and beryllium standards, were delayed, and some are targeted for weakening. Agency budgets and enforcement programs are on the chopping block. In response to an increase in mining fatalities, MSHA is emphasizing compliance assistance, instead of enforcement, cutting unions out of onsite mine reviews. The Trump administration, employers and members of Congress are seeking to limit employers’ joint responsibility to ensure labor protections for all workers where they control the work and conditions, allowing misclassification and exploitation of workers.

The president issued an executive order requiring that for any new rule issued, two existing safeguards must

be repealed. Republican leaders are pushing legislation, backed by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, that would radically alter our system of regulatory protections. The bill would make costs, not the protection of workers and the public, the primary consideration, and would add more hoops and hurdles to make it nearly impossible to issue needed rules.

We must fight back and push forward. Workers’ lives are at stake. Each day in this country 150 workers die due to job injuries and illnesses. Each year, millions of workers suffer serious workplace injuries. Long-recognized hazards, including most toxic chemical exposures, remain unaddressed. Workers face growing risks like exposure to infectious diseases and workplace violence, including sexual assaults and harassment, which disproportionately affect women workers. Many groups of workers, including immigrant workers, are at much greater risk; they work in some of the most dangerous jobs and are vulnerable because of their immigration status and lack of union representation. The growth in the use of temporary workers and independent contractors, and in the misclassification of workers, has made it harder to hold employers accountable for meeting their responsibilities.

The union movement must join with our allies to defend hard-won gains and to seek stronger protections and rights for all workers. Together, we will:

- Defend the OSHA and MSHA laws, safety and health protections and workers’ rights from right-wing and business attacks;
- Oppose and turn back the attacks on new OSHA rules on silica, beryllium, injury reporting and anti-retaliation, and the MSHA coal dust rule, and push for full compliance with these safeguards;
- Fight any attempts to cut job safety budgets or weaken enforcement, and ensure that job safety protections are fully enforced;
- Oppose so-called “regulatory reform” legislation that would make it more difficult or impossible for agencies to issue needed safeguards;

- Educate working people and the public about the attacks on worker protections and rights, and mobilize to fight back;
- Increase efforts to protect the safety and health of Latino and immigrant workers who are at much greater risk of death and injury, working in some of the most dangerous jobs and who are vulnerable to exploitation;
- Seek new protections on workplace violence, infectious diseases, combustible dust, toxic chemicals (including flame retardants) and other hazards through whatever means possible—including federal and state legislation, and regulations and collective bargaining;
- Strengthen the OSHA and MSHA laws to cover public-sector workers and all other workers who lack legal protection, and all work arrangements, toughen enforcement and provide stronger worker rights and anti-retaliation protections, seeking improvements both at the federal and state level; and
- Support workers' efforts to organize to form and join unions to seek fairness, justice, rights and protections, and the opportunity for a better life.