

RESOLUTION 3

ENGAGING OUR MEMBERS TO BUILD STRONG UNIONS

When working people decide to stand together in a union, we win better wages, better health care for our families and better retirement protections. The AFL-CIO understands that attacks against unions—including the *Janus* case at the Supreme Court, as well as proposals to impose “right to work,” prohibit payroll deduction, require annual union recertification, eliminate the prevailing wage and strip away bargaining rights in state legislatures across the country—constantly threaten the rights of workers to negotiate for better wages, benefits, pensions and workplace conditions.

The right wing is spending more than \$100 million per year in an organized attack on workers and their unions. The labor movement cannot rely on politicians and their corporate donors to hold back the corporate agenda in legislatures, state houses, courthouses, Congress and the White House.

Our leaders realize the best way to combat these threats is to focus on internal organizing, making sure all members and potential members see the value of remaining a part of or joining their union. If we fail to do this, our membership and communities will face ever-deepening challenges posed by income inequality, affordable access to quality health care, erosion of the middle class and the denial of basic workplace rights.

The denial of workers’ collective bargaining rights fundamentally contributes to the societal scourges of discrimination, xenophobia, crime and domestic violence, and disproportionately impacts women and people of color.

The internal organizing of our members across the labor movement should be expanded as much as possible, in order to tackle these problems by working cooperatively among all trades and sectors of work to share ideas and best practices.

Organizing rank-and-file members into union organizing is a gateway to engaging them as active leaders, using Common Sense Economics to align them with an understanding of the economy and how neoliberal policy choices have rigged the rules against working people, thereby connecting them to a broader vision for change.

Our central labor councils and state federations can serve as conveners and coordinators, wherein affiliates can move forward on planning, leader recruitment, training, messaging, worksite organizing and a method to evaluate the work.

We call on all unions to focus on internal organizing and member leader recruitment in order to maintain, if not grow, our density and activist capacity through a worksite program.

We call upon all state federations and central labor councils to set up a program that works with affiliates to develop standards and benchmarks for internal organizing to maintain density and power.

Both unions and federation bodies can set realistic goals to include a program of one-on-one conversations with every current and potential member, for signup, activist and leadership development.

Working America, the community affiliate of the AFL-CIO, can support these goals. Working with individual affiliates, Working America can sign up union members and garner member contributions to affiliate PACs, while persuading members of the public to support labor’s agenda. Working America builds the power of unions and reaches working people who don’t have a union on the job.