

RESOLUTION 15

The American Labor Studies Center

Submitted by Troy Area Labor Council (N.Y.) and Wisconsin State AFL-CIO
Referred to the Legislation and Policy Committee

WHEREAS, research conducted by Hart Associates indicates that, of all adults, 46 percent said they knew a fair amount or a great amount about unions, as opposed to 54 percent who said they knew just a little or did not know much about unions; and

WHEREAS, that same research found a great deal of misunderstanding and misinformation about unions and what they do; and

WHEREAS, Americans said their chief sources of knowledge about unions were personal experience (37 percent), people in unions (26 percent) and the media (25 percent) while schools were not mentioned at all; and

WHEREAS, while there are a number of well-documented reasons for the relative decline of American labor, it can be argued that the lack of knowledge or incorrect knowledge about unions contributed to this decline; and

WHEREAS, the lack of knowledge and support of the labor movement makes it more difficult to gain public and political support for its goals; and

WHEREAS, if the fortunes of the American labor movement are to improve, its story must be told and told more effectively; and

WHEREAS, there exists a number of excellent programs and curriculum about the rich history and the economic, political, social and cultural activities of workers and their unions but that

few find their way into American classrooms and labor education programs; and

WHEREAS, The American Labor Studies Center's (ALSC) mission is to collect, analyze, evaluate, create and disseminate labor history and labor studies curriculum and related materials through its website, *www.labor-studies.org*, to K–12 teachers nationwide in cooperation with the American Federation of Teachers and National Education Association as well as to apprenticeship directors and union education directors for inclusion in labor education programs; and

WHEREAS, in addition to its website, the ALSC develops curriculum, conducts workshops and seminars on teaching labor studies in schools and unions and offers programs on labor history to the public; and

WHEREAS, the ALSC is conducting a study of how the labor movement is treated in American history textbooks in cooperation with the Albert Shanker Institute; and

WHEREAS, the ALSC owns and is restoring the home of Kate Mullany, who formed and led the first bona fide all-female union in the United States—the Troy Collar Laundry Union—and was the first woman to serve as an officer of a national union, the National Labor Union; and

WHEREAS, the Mullany House has been designated a National Historic Landmark by the

Department of the Interior and a National Historic Site by Congress and is listed on New York State's Women's Heritage Trail; and

WHEREAS, Kate Mullany has been inducted into the National Women's Hall of Fame in Seneca Falls; and

WHEREAS, the Kate Mullany National Historic Site will provide a visible example of the 19th-century working class and Irish immigrant life and host programs on labor education primarily for students; and

WHEREAS, the ALSC is also constructing Kate Mullany Park adjacent to the house to honor trade union women pioneers; now

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the AFL-CIO strongly support the mission and programs of The American Labor Studies Center by promoting it and encouraging financial support; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the AFL-CIO support the restoration and interpretation of the Kate Mullany National Historic Site and development of Kate Mullany Park; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that the AFL-CIO urge state federations, area labor federations, central labor councils, international unions, local unions, foundations and other friends of the labor movement to support the American Labor Studies Center and the Kate Mullany National Historic Site.