

RESOLUTION 20

Call for a National JOBS Now! Initiative— An Agenda to Put Americans Back to Work

Submitted by Amalgamated Transit Union, International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers, International Union of Painters and Allied Trades and United Association of Journeymen and Apprentices of the Plumbing and Pipe Fitting Industry of the United States and Canada
Amended by the Legislation and Policy Committee

"We need jobs, dignified employment at decent pay; the kind of employment that lets a man—or a woman—say to his community, to her family, to his country, and most important, to herself, 'I helped build this country. I am a participant in its great public ventures. I am an American.'"

—Senator Robert F. Kennedy

WHEREAS, the worst economic downturn in more than 75 years is gripping the nation and the world. The official U.S. unemployment rate as of May 2009 lists more than 14.5 million Americans without jobs. But in reality, more than 30.2 million Americans are now unemployed; and

WHEREAS, each one of those 30.2 million Americans represents a family in danger of wiping out their life savings, losing their health care, becoming homeless or depending on dwindling food banks to feed their family; and

WHEREAS, President Obama's economic stimulus plan is a start toward economic recovery, but the program is not broad enough to create needed jobs now, rebuild our manufacturing sector, provide training for workers and children preparing for the future, maintain our national defense, provide a real Buy American program or reform labor law; and

WHEREAS, corporations and governments continue to slash payrolls and eliminate benefits and succeed only in increasing the downward pressure of this recession; and

WHEREAS, every laid-off worker, union or nonunion, is our brother and sister and we are bound to them in solidarity and a common concern for each other;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the labor movement's goal must be to win back the 30.2 million jobs that Americans have lost in this depressive economy and that the AFL-CIO act as a catalyst for a new JOBS Now! initiative to pressure local, state and federal governments to devise policies to put the unemployed and underemployed back to work; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the JOBS Now! initiative consists of the following components:

- A Works Progress Administration-style jobs program to rebuild America's manufacturing sector and put 7 million Americans back to work immediately;
- Investment tax credits for renovating existing factories and the purchase of new machinery, including bankable tax credits for when businesses return to profitability;

- A tuition-free, two-year commitment to post-high school skills training that will provide America's children, and our unemployed brothers and sisters, with the skills needed to dominate global manufacturing;
 - Investments in America's long-term defense capabilities, like the mid-air refueling tanker, the F-22 Raptor, the Army's Future Combat Systems and the DDG -1000 destroyer;
 - Operating assistance for America's transit systems that face massive layoffs even as new buses are purchased and high-speed rail tracks are laid, as well as investment in rebuilding America's transportation infrastructure;
 - New initiatives to expedite the creation of green jobs to alleviate unemployment among the building trades, as well as in the manufacturing, transportation and service sectors;
 - A Buy American law with teeth; and
 - Real labor law reforms that give workers a chance to exercise their First Amendment rights of free speech and assembly without employer intimidation; and
- BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that leading an initiative to create millions of JOBS Now! is what the American labor movement does best and what American workers need most in these extraordinarily trying times.