

RESOLUTION 43

Resolution on Permitting Remittances and Lifting Travel Restrictions to Cuba

Submitted by Metropolitan Washington Council (D.C.)
Amended by the International Labor Committee

WHEREAS, the AFL-CIO has always believed that the U.S. government and the world community should effectively support a peaceful transition toward democracy in Cuba, and has always stood in full solidarity with Cuban workers and with the Cuban people in their struggle for labor, human and democratic rights; and

WHEREAS, the AFL-CIO will continue to work with its allies in the global labor movement to realize the goals just mentioned, including efforts toward achieving increased international attention and action against those multinational enterprises that profit from the exploitation of Cuban workers and from the Cuban government's chronic violations of international worker rights, especially freedom of association (ILO Convention 87), collective bargaining (ILO Convention 98), protection of wages and wage payment (ILO Convention 95) and prohibitions on forced labor (ILO Conventions 29 and 105). Although Cuba has ratified all of these conventions, it willfully fails to comply with them; and

WHEREAS, the AFL-CIO condemns the Cuban government's continued imprisonment, arrest, torture and other acts of unconscionable harassment against independent trade unionists, human rights advocates and democracy activists; and

WHEREAS, the AFL-CIO has recognized that genuine improvement in worker and human rights practices is necessary to any reconsideration of U.S. policy toward Cuba, including any overhauling of economic sanctions and other restrictions; and

WHEREAS, the AFL-CIO has also recognized that the policy of the United States and other nations toward Cuba only makes sense if it truly empowers Cuban workers, advances authentic and democratic Cuban trade unionism, contributes to genuine improvement of labor and human rights and truly serves the humanitarian and democratic interests of Cuban workers and of the Cuban people. If any aspect of this policy is counterproductive to furthering such objectives and interests, it should be changed; and

WHEREAS, the current aspects of the U.S. economic embargo on Cuba imposing restrictions on individual and group travel of American citizens, including U.S. trade unionists, as well as what have been unjustifiable limits on family remittances, are counterproductive to the furthering of worker and human rights on the island. They have worked against getting more information and truth to Cuban workers on what genuine, independent and democratic trade unionism really means and what it can mean for a more free and democratic Cuba; and

WHEREAS, such restrictions have also failed to pressure the Cuban government to improve its worker and human rights record, have prohibited Cuban-Americans from sending desperately needed material aid to their loved ones, have only further isolated the United States from Latin America and the rest of the world, and have undermined U.S. efficacy and credibility in what is an otherwise justifiable condemnation of worker and human rights violations on the island;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the AFL-CIO urge the U.S. government to authorize the increase of U.S. economic remittances that can be made to family members residing in Cuba; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the AFL-CIO urge the U.S. government to end individual and group travel restrictions to Cuba involving U.S. citizens; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the AFL-CIO maintain and deepen its communication and solidarity with independent trade unionists and worker activists in Cuba; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the AFL-CIO make every effort to work with the International Trade Union Confederation, with the Trade Union Confederation of the Americas and with the global labor movement to further the cause of worker and human rights in Cuba, including campaigns and strategies employed against multinational companies profiting from the

violation of internationally recognized labor rights of Cuban workers; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the AFL-CIO call on the U.S. government to utilize and augment existing diplomatic channels and relations to implement an effective discussion with Cuba on the subject of worker and human rights; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the AFL-CIO do what it can to provide humanitarian assistance to the families of independent Cuban unionists and worker activists who have been wrongly detained for their legitimate exercise of freedom of association rights; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that the AFL-CIO call on the Cuban government to release all political prisoners, including the full liberation and exoneration of all imprisoned worker activists and independent unionists who have been wrongfully punished for their legitimate trade union activity.