

## RESOLUTION 7

# A Diverse and Democratic Labor Movement

Submitted by the Executive Council

Amended by the Civil, Women and Human Rights Committee

**AT THE 2005 AFL-CIO CONVENTION,** delegates unanimously passed Resolution 2, “A Diverse Movement Calls for Diverse Leadership.” The resolution was a bold call for diversity and full inclusion of women and people of color at every level of leadership and in every program of our union movement. The resolution called on the AFL-CIO, central labor councils, area and state federations and national and international unions to take steps to achieve diversity in leadership and throughout their organizations. It also laid out a vision for our movement and outlined steps to achieve those goals. The resolution said, “America’s union movement must stand as a model of inclusion.... In our hiring, organizing, representation, outreach and leadership, the union movement must embody our goal of equal welcome and equal opportunity for all.” It went further to state, “... we [labor] must act decisively to ensure diversity at every level and hold union organizations accountable to diversity standards. We must go beyond acknowledging where we fall short and move into full and committed action.”

The call for diversity was based on the voices of AFL-CIO constituency groups—A. Philip Randolph Institute (APRI), Asian Pacific American Labor Alliance (APALA), Coalition of Black Trade Unionists (CBTU), Coalition of Labor Union Women (CLUW), Labor Council for Latin American Advancement (LCLAA) and Pride At Work (PAW)—the Labor Coalition for Community Action (LCCA) and union members of color as well as women members, backed up by surveys and polling. Women and people of color overwhelmingly

said they believed (based on their experience and perception) there was a lack of commitment from the labor movement to address diversity issues; leadership at all levels of the movement in national and international unions, local labor councils and state federations was dominated by white males; and that the paths to leadership and full participation were blocked. We also examined available demographic data and considered anecdotal evidence. These measures indicated a lack of inclusion and diversity in our labor movement. We found this was in some instances rooted in tradition—“this is the way we have always done it,” and was often informal and sometimes systemic.

Whatever the cause, the outcome was unacceptable. Women and people of color remained underrepresented in our movement and there were real barriers to leadership and opportunity. Our movement was not benefiting from the skills, talents and experience of the majority of our members. In 2005, more than 40 percent of members were women and nearly one-third were people of color. Meanwhile, a study by Kate Bronfenbrenner, “Organizing Women: The Nature and Process of Organizing Efforts Among U.S. Women Workers Since the Mid-1990s,” found that women and people of color are most likely to champion and join unions. This is in large part because women and people of color have traditionally been shortchanged in the workplace, so they have the most to gain from union membership: Union women earn 32 percent more than nonunion women, African American union members earn 28 percent more than

their nonunion counterparts and the union pay advantage for Latino workers is 43 percent.

Ultimately, there was no question that passing Resolution 2 and expanding diversity at every level of the union movement in 2005 was the *right* thing to do. It was also the *only* thing to do if we were serious about building power for working families.

## **Resolution 2**

When the AFL-CIO 2005 Convention passed the historic Resolution 2, we pledged to increase leadership development, fully integrate the AFL-CIO constituency groups into state federation and central labor council programs, expand diversity at the highest levels of federation governance, call on affiliated unions to adopt diversity principles established by the Executive Council, require state federations and central labor councils to develop and implement target levels of diversity in leadership and make the federation a model in hiring and promotions. We also established a new federation policy that each union's credentialed delegation to the AFL-CIO Convention, the highest policymaking body of the federation, shall generally reflect the racial and gender diversity of its membership, and we encouraged affiliates to include young workers as delegates.

Through the resolution, the labor movement made a commitment to full participation and inclusion of all members, just as we have historically spoken out for equality for all people regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, faith, age, sexual orientation, disability or immigrant status. To ensure that the resolution moved beyond the business of the Convention, the federation sponsored a series of diversity dialogues across the country in 2007 to inform leaders and rank-and-file members about the resolution and create the best conditions for implementation. In addition, across the country the constituency groups informed union members about the resolution through town hall meetings, conferences and other methods. The pledge

made in 2005 was to make Resolution 2 and diversity real, not rhetoric.

## **Progress**

Four years later, we see results and progress. The AFL-CIO adopted its first diversity policy as an employer and purchaser of goods and services. It is a model for all labor organizations, calling for broad recruitment of women and people of color to achieve a diverse hiring pool, encouraging mentoring and establishing a permanent committee to monitor policy implementation. Changes were made to the AFL-CIO's governance to ensure diversity on the Executive Committee, the Executive Council and the General Board, where key decisions are made. The federation also made good on its promise to create additional paths to leadership through leadership development. Through the Leadership Development Institute for central labor councils and state federations, the participation of women and people of color increased nearly 100 percent. At the state and local levels, the AFL-CIO constituency groups became affiliates of the central labor councils and area and state federations. Nearly half of all state federations (46 percent) went beyond the mandate of Resolution 2 and established one or more seats on their executive boards for representatives of constituency groups. State and local bodies also made great strides forward in electing diverse leadership and in hiring diverse staff.

Progress can also be measured beyond the mandates of Resolution 2. Over the past four years, national and international unions have expanded their national boards to create more opportunities for diversity, started women's and other minority caucuses, sponsored diversity workshops and made extra efforts to increase diversity opportunities within their unions. Thirty-two percent of our unions have adopted the Diversity Principles established by the AFL-CIO Executive Council.

There is a growing consensus that we have made progress.

## **Building on Resolution 2**

The progress we have made does not leave us complacent. It leaves us inspired to build on Resolution 2 and commit to more aggressive steps to ensure that our union movement—in membership, action and leadership—truly reflects the face of America’s workforce.

In 2009, with the passage of national labor law reform, it will be more important than ever for the union movement to speak to, speak for and nurture leadership by women, people of color, immigrants, young workers, LGBT workers and workers with disabilities. We now are poised to extend the benefits of union membership to tens of thousands more workers and, in the process, build new strength and capacity that can serve millions and rebalance America’s economy.

All workers need and deserve unions. And they need a union movement that welcomes and recognizes the imperative of full inclusion, full participation and inclusive leadership opportunities at every level. With the potential to enable so many workers to improve their lives through union membership and collective bargaining, it is time to move forward beyond the progress of Resolution 2. At this Convention, we commit to:

**Expand leadership development.** Leadership development has proven to be a path to leadership.

- Working with our affiliates, we will expand and strengthen the existing Leadership Development Institute, which is now offered for central labor council and area and state federation leaders, so that it can also focus on recruiting the next generation of leaders, especially women, people of color and other historically disadvantaged groups.
- The federation urges national and international unions to recruit and support the attendance of at least one to two students at the institute per year.

## **State federations and area and central labor councils will create and sustain efforts and opportunities for diversity.**

- State, area and local bodies must have concrete goals for achieving progress in the diversity of their leadership and governing boards. These goals should be reported annually to the federation. The labor bodies should make every effort to promote diversity and inclusion throughout their organizations, including programs, meetings, conferences and committees created or sponsored by their organizations.
- Efforts on diversity will be used by the federation as a critical benchmark for evaluating the overall effectiveness of a state or local labor body.
- The federation, when reviewing proposed constitutional changes for state and local bodies, will evaluate the impact on diversity and will reject proposed actions if they undermine diversity.
- When hiring new staff, every effort should be made by state, area and local central bodies to recruit broadly to attract a diverse pool of applicants.
- The AFL-CIO will continue to provide training opportunities for new leaders and staff through the Leadership Development Institute.
- Beginning with the next regularly scheduled AFL-CIO Convention in 2013, state, area and local central bodies that send a regular and an alternate delegate to the Convention must ensure that at least one of these delegates is a woman or person of color.
- Annual reports should be made to the AFL-CIO regarding the ethnicity/race, age and gender demographics of officers, staff and executive boards and on the affiliation of constituency groups. This data will be provided to the AFL-CIO Executive Council and the State Federation/Central Labor Council Advisory Committee.
- In areas with one or more viable AFL-CIO constituency group, state, area and local labor bodies are required to designate one or more seats on their governing board for a representative(s) of constituency groups.

- Building on progress that has been made, the State Federation/Central Labor Council Advisory Committee will work with the AFL-CIO to collect a set of best practices for promoting diversity, including model constitutional language approved by the AFL-CIO for promoting diversity. The federation will distribute best practices to all labor bodies, and the Advisory Committee should play a leadership role in promoting their implementation.
- The federation will review the status of efforts under this resolution on an annual basis and take the necessary steps to ensure implementation.

**Increase commitment to the inclusion and full participation of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) workers in our society and movement.**

LGBT workers make a tremendous contribution to the labor movement.

- We must include LGBT brothers and sisters in all our efforts to achieve diversity within the union movement.
- LGBT workers must have every opportunity for full participation and representation at every level of the labor movement, including leadership.
- The rights of LGBT workers must be protected and the issues and concerns of LGBT workers must be addressed.
- The AFL-CIO supports the Employment Non-Discrimination Act (ENDA) and will do all in our power to see that it passes.

**Increase inclusion of workers with disabilities at all levels of the labor movement.**

Workers with disabilities form a large segment of the labor movement. Our initiatives for greater diversity in the labor movement should be inclusive of workers with disabilities.

- We will work to ensure that workers with disabilities are included in all aspects of the labor movement, including leadership.
- We will ensure the rights of workers with disabilities are protected and their concerns and issues are addressed.

**Young workers (16- to 34-year-olds) are the future of our movement.** They currently make up 25 percent of total union membership. However, they are not, in general, active in union leadership or in the life of the union movement.

- We will actively recruit, train and include young workers in all activities and programs, and provide opportunities for access to leadership.

**Recommit to the struggles and concerns of working women in the United States and around the world.**

The AFL-CIO remains committed to addressing the struggles and concerns of working women and considers this among our highest priorities, as we detail in the March 2009 Executive Council statement "Charter Rights of Working Women."

- The federation will make every effort to have conferences and programs on issues that particularly affect working women. We will educate, mobilize grassroots action and lobby Congress and state legislatures on policies and legislation critical to working women.
- We also will work with the AFL-CIO constituency groups to address the struggles and issues of working women.

**Continue the struggle for opportunity and inclusion for people of color.**

The AFL-CIO will continue to ensure that the struggle for diversity for people of color be a high priority in all areas of the work and leadership of the federation. We also will work with the AFL-CIO constituency groups toward this goal.

- The federation will make every effort to hold conferences on issues that are of particular concern to people of color, and continue opportunities for education, leadership development and inclusion in the programs of the federation.
- The federation will continue to diligently monitor the progress of diversity and full participation at all levels of the movement for people of color and all underrepresented union members.

**Build and maintain strategic partnerships with community organizations.**

As we have in efforts from local school funding issues to the Employee Free Choice Act and health care reform, we will establish and nurture strategic collaborations and coalitions with national community-based organizations that struggle against oppression, work for inclusion and diversity, support policies that benefit working families and advocate workers' rights. They are natural allies of the labor movement.

- The AFL-CIO and state and local bodies will build and strengthen our alliances with these organizations and together build the progressive movement for social change through joint work on issues of fairness, justice and equality.
- AFL-CIO constituency groups are bridges between the labor movement and many community organizations. These relationships are of great value to our movement. The AFL-CIO will work with the constituency groups and community organizations to build a progressive movement nationally and in communities across the country.

- We urge all national and international unions to support the work of these organizations and to establish partnerships with them at the national and local levels.

**Encourage affiliate unions to continue to build on their support for diversity.**

- We urge all national and international unions to appoint liaisons who will work with the AFL-CIO to focus on diversity and full inclusion of women, people of color, LGBT workers, young workers and workers with disabilities in their unions and in the labor movement.
- The federation also urges all affiliate unions to increase inclusion and diversity in leadership at all levels of their unions, to provide mentoring opportunities for potential new leaders and to report these efforts to the AFL-CIO annually.
- National and international unions are also encouraged to report demographic data on their membership and local and national leadership to the AFL-CIO through the annual Secretary-Treasurer's Questionnaire.

