Organizing for Change – Building our Future

Adopted
Constitutional Amendment & Resolutions

46th International Convention
May 24 – 29, 2017

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Constitutional Amendment #1

ARTICLE XXI

Regional Structure

Section I
The Coalition shall be divided into the following geographic regions for the purpose of electing regional representatives:

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<td>Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Minnesota and Wisconsin</td>
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<td>Region VII</td>
<td>Michigan</td>
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<td>Region VIII</td>
<td>Arkansas, Kansas, Missouri, New Mexico, Oklahoma and Texas</td>
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<td>Region X</td>
<td>Arizona, California, Nevada, Oregon and Washington</td>
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The regional structure may be expanded and/or altered by the President with the approval of the Executive Council.

Submitted by: CBTU Executive Council
Resolution #1

Keeping America’s Promise to our Retired Coal Miners and Widows

WHEREAS:

In 1946, faced with the prospect of a long strike that could hamper post-war economic recovery, President Harry S. Truman issued an Executive Order directing the Secretary of the Interior to take possession of all bituminous coal mines in the United States and to negotiate with the United Mine Workers of America “appropriate changes in the terms and conditions of employment”; and

WHEREAS:

After a week of negotiations, the historic Krug-Lewis agreement was announced and signed in the White House with President Truman as a witness; and

WHEREAS:

The agreement created a welfare and retirement fund that guaranteed lifetime payments to miners and their dependents and survivors in cases of sickness, permanent disability, death or retirement; and

WHEREAS:

The agreement also created a separate medical and hospital fund; and

WHEREAS:

In 1947, the government returned control of the mines back to their owners and a new collective bargaining agreement was reached with the companies that guaranteed retirement benefits to miners and their dependents and survivors for life; and

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WHEREAS:

For the next 70 years, miners bargained for money to be dedicated to their health care in retirement, because they knew when they retired they would be sicker than the average senior citizen, with more nagging injuries and a greater risk of black lung or some other cardio-pulmonary disease; and

WHEREAS:

The federal government has repeatedly confirmed its role in guaranteeing retirement benefits for coal miners; and

WHEREAS:

In 1992 Congress passed and President George H.W. Bush signed into law the Coal Act, which established an industry-funded mechanism for paying for the health care of retirees whose companies had gone out of business; and

WHEREAS:

In 2006, Congress and President George W. Bush amended the Coal Act to expand the financial resources available to the Fund; and

WHEREAS:

A depression reigns in America’s coalfields today, with tens of thousands of jobs eliminated; and

WHEREAS:

Multiple companies have filed for bankruptcy, and received approval from bankruptcy courts to shed their retiree obligations, leaving more than 26,000 retirees confronting the loss of their health care benefits; and
WHEREAS:

Like many other multi-employer pension funds, the UMWA 1974 Pension Fund lost a significant portion of its value in the 2008 – 2009 recession and due to the devastation of the coal industry will not receive enough contributions from the employers to make up the shortfall, leading the Fund to likely become insolvent by 2022; and

WHEREAS:

On December 9, 2016, Congress passed a Continuing Resolution (C.R.) to continue funding for federal programs and services until April 28, 2017, including a provision providing $45 million dollars for continued health care benefits for these retirees and their families until April 30, 2017; and

WHEREAS:

Senators Joe Manchin (D-W.Va.) and Shelley Moore Capito (R-W.Va.) have introduced legislation, Senate Bill 175, the Miners Protection Act of 2017, co-sponsored by Republicans and Democrats that would amend the Coal Act to allow retirees from recently bankrupt companies to get health care coverage from the UMWA Health and Retirement Funds and would repurpose the balance of an existing appropriation to provide funding to shore up the Pension Plan; and

WHEREAS:

Representative David McKinley (R-W.Va.) has introduced House Resolution 179, the Miners Protection Act of 2017, co-sponsored by both Republicans and Democrats; and
WHEREAS:

America’s coal miners have sacrificed much for our nation, with more than 105,000 killed on the job in the last century and more than 100,000 having died from coal workers’ pneumoconiosis, or Black Lung; and

WHEREAS:

Knowing those risks, miners have continued to go to work every day to provide for their families, build a secure future for themselves and produce the fuel that has allowed America to become the most powerful nation on earth.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED:

That the Coalition of Black Trade Unionists urge the United States Congress to pass the Miners Protection Act as soon as possible and provide the full measure of benefits – inclusive of pension plan benefits – these retirees were promised and have earned; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED:

That America has an obligation to our retired coal miners for the sacrifices they have made for our nation.

Submitted by: CBTU Executive Council
Resolution #2

Drinking Water Safety Standards in School Facilities

WHEREAS:

A USA TODAY Network investigation has identified almost 2,000 additional water systems spanning all 50 states where testing has shown excessive levels of lead contamination over the past four years; and

WHEREAS:

The water systems, which reported lead levels exceeding Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) standards, collectively supply water to 6 million people; and

WHEREAS:

About 350 of those systems provide drinking water to schools or day cares; and

WHEREAS:

The USA TODAY Network investigation also found at least 180 of the water systems failed to notify consumers about the high lead levels as federal rules require; and

WHEREAS:

Many of the highest reported lead levels were found at schools and day cares; and

WHEREAS:

Lead accumulation in the body can affect the central nervous system and damage growing brains and cause reduced IQs, attention deficit disorders and other problem behaviors putting children at high risk; and
WHEREAS:

Drinking contaminated water can cause skin diseases and can lead to cancer, reproductive problems, typhoid fever and stomach ailments in humans; and

WHEREAS:

Chemicals like fluoride, arsenic, lead, chlorine and petrochemicals in water can causes adverse effect on human health; and

WHEREAS:

Excess fluorides cause yellowing of teeth and damage to spinal cord and other crippling diseases.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED:

That the Coalition of Black Trade Unionists urge all supply water designated for human consumption be tested on a bi-annual basis with the results logged; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

That CBTU urge each school facility to immediately perform and document the testing and take necessary actions for remedy ensuring the safety standards level of consumable water are achieved and maintained in their individual jurisdictions; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED:

That all actions be reported to the proper authority.

Submitted by: Central Indiana CBTU Chapter
Resolution #3

Creation of a Law Enforcement Review Committee

WHEREAS:

According to both the International Business Times and Huffington Post, 228 Blacks and 156 Hispanics shot and killed by police officers in 2016 nationwide; and

WHEREAS:

In 2015, 258 Blacks and 172 Hispanics were shot and killed by police officers nationwide according to those same mediums; and

WHEREAS:

102 of those Blacks killed by officers in 2015 were unarmed, nearly 1 in 3 as identified by police as unarmed (although the actual number may be much higher due to under-reporting); and

WHEREAS:

37% of unarmed people killed by police in 2015 were Black despite Blacks making up only 13% of the nation’s population shows unarmed Blacks were disproportionally killed at a rate of 5 times that of whites; and

WHEREAS:

Only 10 of those 102 cases of unarmed Blacks killed by police in 2015 resulted in an officer being charged with a crime; and

WHEREAS:

Only two of those deaths out of the 10 cases – Matthew Ajibade and Eric Harris – resulted in convictions; and
WHEREAS:

Only one of those two officers involved in the Matthew Ajibade’s death received jail time which only amounted to one year and he was allowed to serve those exclusively on the weekends; and

WHEREAS:

The first week of July 2016 people saw the killings of Philando Castille and Alton Sterling as reported via the nationwide news agencies of the video recordings of their deaths by police officers; and

WHEREAS:

These shootings and the rising violence and deaths of African American women and children culminated in the rage that caused a lone gunman, Micah Xavier Johnson to retaliate against Dallas Police, killing five of them; and

WHEREAS:

These unfortunate shootings have once again exposed the flaws in the American justice system as it relates to minorities in general and African American males in specific.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED:

That the Coalition of Black Trade Unionists support the election of a Law Enforcement Review Committee to review all allegations of deadly and excessive force by law enforcement officers; and
BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED:

That the Law Enforcement Review Committee be empowered to investigate, subpoena and recommend a special prosecutor to prosecute when an investigation proves that probable cause exist to charge an officer with a crime.

Submitted By: Philadelphia CBTU Chapter
Resolution #4

Canada's Healthcare System and Privatization

WHEREAS:

The Canadian Healthcare Act provides for a publicly financed and delivered healthcare system that includes public administration, comprehensiveness, universality, portability and accessibility; and

WHEREAS:

The Supreme Court of Canada’s decision appears to recognize the importance of equal access to healthcare as essential to protect our right to life and security; and

WHEREAS:

The Canadian healthcare system already has systemic inequities that particularly affects vulnerable groups that include racialized, women, children, seniors, Indigenous and LGBTQ communities as well as other marginalized groups.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED:

That the Coalition of Black Trade Unionists lobby the federal government to ensure that the Canadian public healthcare services are protected for all, especially marginalized groups including seniors from racialized and Indigenous communities who cannot afford to pay for privatized healthcare.

Submitted by: Ontario Canada CBTU Chapter
Resolution #5

Combating the Rise in Extremism, Xenophobia and Racism

WHEREAS:

In the recent United States Presidential election, President Donald J. Trump’s campaign platform was fueled by xenophobia, division and hate; and

WHEREAS:

President Trump has attempted, twice since being elected, to ban travel to the United States from six predominantly Muslim countries, three of which are African Nations; and

WHEREAS:

The ripple effects of that xenophobia, division and hate are being felt in Canada, as made evident through a mass shooting in Quebec City that left 6 dead and the emboldening of various hate groups and hate media; and

WHEREAS:

Some Canadian elected officials are also running on a similar campaign of xenophobia, division and hate; for example, Minister of Parliament Kellie Llietch of the Conservative Party of Canada has promised that, if elected Party leader, she will work towards the vetting of new immigrants for the position of “Canadian Values”, all while failing to define what “Canadian Values” are and who decides what “Canadian Values” consists of.
THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED:

That the Coalition of Black Trade Unionists work with other like-minded organizations to expose and combat all forms of racism, extremism, xenophobia and hate on both sides of the Canadian/United States border; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED:

That the CBTU work with other like-minded organizations to expose and combat political electoral campaigns that possess extremism, xenophobia or hate at the root of the political platform.

Submitted by: Ontario Canada CBTU Chapter
Resolution #6

Hang Up On Abuse

WHEREAS:

Everyday thousands of call center workers in Canada are victims of various forms of abuse while dealing with the public, up to and including racist insults, death threats, and sexual harassment; and

WHEREAS:

This abuse seriously impacts a workers’ health and safety and causes chronic health conditions which affect workers and their families; and

WHEREAS:

Workers are expected to tolerate abuse and suffer reprisals, discipline, and/or termination if they end a conversation with an abusive customer; and

WHEREAS:

Harmful company policies such as ‘No Hang Up’ policies are hazardous to a worker’s health; and

WHEREAS:

Current legislation is not strong enough and/or enforced to fully protect workers in this type of precarious work.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED:

That the Coalition of Black Trade Unionists lobby all necessary levels of government to strengthen current legislation to protect workers from all forms of abuse and reprisals, and that there be aggressive enforcement action against companies and their representatives who do not comply with the protective legislation; and
BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED:

That CBTU encourage all members to sign the petition available at www.HangUpOnAbuse.ca to help call on all Canadian call center employers to adopt the Hang Up on Abuse Policy, empowering their workers to end or pass on abusive calls – without fear of losing their jobs.

Submitted by: Ontario Canada CBTU Chapter
Resolution #7

Missing Black and Racialized Girls and Women in North America

WHEREAS:

There are reports of nearly 75,000 cases of missing black girls and women across the United States as of March 23, 2017, representing over 35% of all missing persons’ cases according to columnist Shaun King, including a cold case recently cited by United States President Donald J. Trump about 8-year-old Relisha Rudd that went missing in Washington, D.C. three years ago; and

WHEREAS:

In the media Canada has focused on seeking justice for missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls, as a country Canada does not openly compile such statistics to even provide the community with an idea of how many missing black girls and women cases there are; and

WHEREAS:

There is very little publicity or fanfare in the media about this disastrous phenomenon on both sides of the border, and the stories of our young black girls and women are seldom cited in primetime exposés, or even on nationwide news, which could assist their parents in having clues called in to help find their children, and have police treat their cases as top priorities; and
WHEREAS:

Organizations such as the Black & Missing Foundation have sought to create public safety campaigns to bring awareness about missing persons of color, there is still much work to be done to protect the lives of black women and girls in our community with the same fervor as other women.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED:

That the Coalition of Black Trade Unionists hold the media, public servants and law enforcement officers accountable for ensuring that cases of missing black and racialized girls and women be given equal attention and dedication as non-black women in the community.

Submitted by: Ontario Canada CBTU Chapter
Resolution #8

Overhaul of the Child Welfare System

WHEREAS:

The Ontario Association of Children’s Aid Societies struck a committee funded by the Ministry of Children and Youth Services, made up of 18 African Canadian community leaders. During 16 public consultations across Ontario, the committee heard concerns about black families “being over-scrutinized and over-surveilled by educators, police and medical professionals” (groups that refer cases to children’s aid societies), and heard widespread complaints about children’s aid workers with no understanding of black culture making biased judgments that unnecessarily remove black kids from their homes. Subsequently, these children were quite often placed with white foster parents living in white communities, making the development of positive racial pride impossible; and

WHEREAS:

The Committee compiled and analyzed the information and created a two-volume report called “One Vision One Voice: Changing the child welfare system to better serve African Canadians”. The report is a 17-page “practice framework,” detailing how children’s aid societies should change the way they interact with black families; and
WHEREAS:

The Committee report includes 18 recommendations calling for changes to the Child and Family Services Act, provincial child protection laws, the children’s ministry, Ontario’s 47 privately run children’s aid societies, and to the way educators, police and medical staff refer children suspected of being at risk of abuse or neglect.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED:

That the Coalition of Black Trade Unionists initiate a letter-writing campaign to petition Children’s Minister Michael Coteau and the Ontario Association of Children’s Aid Societies to implement the recommendations included in the “One Vision One Voice: Changing the child welfare system to better serve African Canadians” report in an effort to keep black children out of foster care, or alternatively, favor placing black children with extended family or black foster parents.

Submitted by: Ontario Canada CBTU Chapter
Resolution #9

Public Postal Service and the Expansion of Canada Post Services

WHEREAS:

Canada Post is a trusted national institution, with a physical and social infrastructure in communities large and small throughout the country; and

WHEREAS:

As part of a review of Canada Post, a Parliamentary committee recommended:

1) The restoration of home mail delivery, but only for those who lost it as of the 2015 election call,

2) The maintenance of the moratorium on rural post office closures, and

3) The initiation of new services at Canada Post, including the possibility of delivering broadband Internet and improved cellular service to rural areas; and

WHEREAS:

The review did not seriously consider postal banking even though thousands of rural towns and villages do not have a bank and nearly two million Canadians desperately need alternatives to payday lenders; and

WHEREAS:

Many postal services are responding to falling letter mail volumes by diversifying into new services built upon their strengths; and

WHEREAS:

Postal banking has the support of over 600 municipalities and close to two-thirds of Canadians.
THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED:

That the Coalition of Black Trade Unionists call on the federal government to restore home mail delivery in Canada to everyone who lost it; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED:

That CBTU advocate for the expansion of services offered through Canada Post, such as a national check-in service program for seniors using carriers, and advocate for the implementation of community hubs at post offices throughout Canada in order to provide basic public services, postal banking, and improved communication services where such a need exists.

Submitted by: Ontario Canada CBTU Chapter
Resolution # 10

Against Debtors’ Prisons & Private Probation Companies

WHEREAS:

Unfair criminal justice laws and policies brought about by modern-day debtors’ prisons and probation companies are a significant threat to African Americans, Hispanics, immigrants, poor people and struggling families in rural and inner-city communities; and

WHEREAS:

These unjust laws and policies now being imposed are a severe threat to the constitutional rights of individuals too poor to pay fines, court fees, “pay-only” probation fees, traffic tickets and misdemeanors; and

WHEREAS:

All of our citizens regardless of ethnic background, income, race, gender, religion, and orientation should not be jailed, imprisoned or denied counsel due to their inability to pay fines, probation and court costs; and

WHEREAS:

Freedom and justice for all American citizens must remain one of the keystones to which our republic continues to aspire; and that our people should not be unfairly imprisoned or punished for being poor; and

WHEREAS:

Our municipalities, courts and law enforcement agencies should not target poor citizens, probationers, or incentivize judges to find individuals guilty in order to coerce payment by threatening jail; and

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WHEREAS:
Our municipalities, courts, law enforcement and probation agencies should not target poor citizens or incentivize judges to find individuals guilty in order to coerce payment by threatening jail; and

WHEREAS:
The Coalition of Black Trade Unionists joins with the Southern Poverty Law Center and other civil rights organizations in requesting that all upon hearing this proclamation, join together in solidarity to protect, poor and low income Americans and citizens impacted by these unjust and unconstitutional policies.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED:
That the Coalition of Black Trade Unionists oppose the practice of modern day debtors’ prisons in the criminal justice system in which a court can sentence someone to prison over “willfully” unpaid criminal fees, usually following the order of a judge – for example, in some jurisdictions in the United States, people can be held in contempt of court and jailed after willful non-payment of child support, garnishments, confiscations, fines or back taxes; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:
That CBTU support policies that calls for:

1) Courts to halt the practice of debtors’ prisons for citizens too poor to pay their traffic tickets; fines probation fees and court fees; and

2) An end to practices that provide an incentive to find individuals guilty to coerce payments; and

3) Restitution to citizens who have been unjustly and unconstitutionally targeted or punished because of their inability to pay; and
4) Prosecution of judges, law enforcement agencies and probation companies that illegally jail, coerce or punish citizens because of their poverty; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED:

That CBTU stand united against debtor’s prisons.

Submitted by: Capital District Chapter CBTU
Resolution #11

Support Fair Crime Reduction and Public Safety Policies

WHEREAS:

The policies now being proposed by the administration of President Donald J. Trump in Washington, DC pose a severe threat to civil and human rights of many Americans and foreign-born students, workers and residents, in a biased attempt to reduce crime and restore public safety; and

WHEREAS:

The new crime and public safety policies now being proposed pose a severe threat to many Americans, especially African-American, Hispanic, Latino, Tribal, Muslim, Immigrant, LGBT and individuals who live in our nation’s urban areas; and

WHEREAS:

Many of our law enforcement agencies have significant diversity deficiencies and biased practices that make them less effective in reducing crime and providing equal protections to all American citizens; and

WHEREAS:

The President has called on the Attorney General to establish a National Task Force on Crime Reduction and Public Safety which shall be composed of individuals appointed or designated by him;

WHEREAS:

Diversity in age, race, ethnicity, region, occupation, religion and other unique needs are necessary to ensure that said Task Force is responsive to the needs of our nation’s communities and stakeholders; and
WHEREAS:

The Coalition of Black Trade Unionists requests that all upon hearing this proclamation, join together in solidarity to advocate for the implementation of a fair, just and diverse task Force to identify crime reduction and public safety policies that protect, shelter, and shield our citizens.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED:

That the Coalition of Black Trade Unionists support Crime Reduction and Public Safety policies that call for:

1) Fair and unbiased treatment of all Americans, including African Americans, Hispanics, immigrants, Muslims, LGBTQ and especially those whose human and civil rights have been violated by law enforcement agencies; and

2) Reject practices that are not fair to all citizens, in addressing drug trafficking, violent crime and public safety; and

3) Developing public safety diversity initiatives that reflect State, tribal and local community stakeholders; and

4) Utilization of non-partisan, fact-based data that will aid in the understanding of and overall reduction in crime in our urban area communities; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED:

That CBTU stand for law enforcement policies and public safety approaches that protect our constitutional rights and serve all American citizens and foreign-born students and visitors with dignity and respect.

Submitted by: Capital District Chapter CBTU
Resolution #12

Support Immigrant Rights and Public Education

WHEREAS:

The harsh policies now being proposed by the administration of President Donald J. Trump in Washington, DC pose a severe threat to public education, organized labor and teacher unions through vouchers and tax credits for families whose students attend private schools; and

WHEREAS:

The new policies now being proposed pose a severe threat to individuals in a diverse nation; sanctuary, safety and bully-free protection are provided in public schools; and

WHEREAS:

All students deserve high-quality public schools that teach the whole child, provide enrichment and address students’ social and emotional needs in addition to core academic subjects regardless of income, race or ethnicity, religion, country of birth or their unique needs and abilities; and

WHEREAS:

Free and equitable public education for all students must remain one of the keystones to which our republic continues to aspire; and

WHEREAS:

Local accountability for our public schools is necessary to ensure that schools are responsive to the needs of their students, community and stakeholders; and
WHEREAS:

Many immigrant students and their families have expressed fear, anxiety, sadness and concerns over recent U.S. immigration policies.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED:

That the Coalition of Black Trade Unionists join with the American Federation of Teachers (AFT) and the Alliance to Reclaim Our Schools (AROS), in requesting that all upon hearing this proclamation, join together in solidarity to protect, shelter, and shield public school students and employees; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

That the CBTU support policies that call for:

1) Schools and campuses to be sanctuary spaces from deportation of immigrants, racism toward students of color, bullying because of gender identification, body image, religion and/or culture; and

2) No to vouchers, tax credits for private schools, and expansion of charter schools; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED:

That CBTU stand united for public education for all students.

Submitted by: Capital District Chapter CBTU
Resolution #13

Oppose Betsy DeVos and other Trump Appointees that

Negatively Impact Free Public Education

WHEREAS:

President Donald J. Trump announced Betsy DeVos as his choice for secretary of education; and

WHEREAS:

Ms. DeVos has never been in a public school prior to her appointment for secretary of education; and

WHEREAS:

Ms. DeVos’ children did not attend public schools although the public schools in Ada, Michigan, where they lived, were excellent schools; and

WHEREAS:

The DeVos family of billionaires has spent many millions of dollars pushing for vouchers for private and religious schools and millions to advance for-profit charter schools; and

WHEREAS:

Vouchers and charter schools rob desperately needed funding from public schools, while removing local control; and

WHEREAS:

The charter schools Ms. DeVos championed in Michigan, according to a 2015 federal review, had “an unreasonably high” percentage of those schools on Michigan’s list of the lowest-performing schools; and

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WHEREAS:

Ms. DeVos’ selection is an obvious attempt to expand taxpayer-funded vouchers for private and religious schools at the expense of public schools; and

WHEREAS:

A DeVos-backed group was the major contributor to the defeat of legislation that would have established standards for charter schools that, if not met, would result in the closing of charters not meeting the standards; and

WHEREAS:

Ms. DeVos has camouflaged her attempts to undermine public education by supporting vouchers and charter schools by saying that she is advocating for “choice”; and

WHEREAS:

Education Week stated Ms. DeVos, “Would be the only person to head the department in more than 35 years who has neither attended public school nor sent her own children to them” and “had never served in a school system or state education agency”; and

WHEREAS:

As free public education is the cornerstone of our democracy; and

WHEREAS:

It is the responsibility of the secretary of education to advocate for and support the education of all children and our public schools; and
WHEREAS:

    You should not, based upon your wealth, be able to buy the important position of secretary of education;

WHEREAS:

    President Trump had full control of the legislative and executive branches and he could only get Ms. DeVos confirmed by an unprecedented tie-breaking vote by his vice president.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED:

    That the Coalition of Black Trade Unionists work to prevent Secretary of Education Betsy DeVos from diverting public education funds to vouchers, charter schools and private schools; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED:

    That CBTU will work with all national, state and local organizations opposing other destructive Trump appointments, e.g. judges, heads of agencies, ambassadors, and the like.

Submitted by: Capital District CBTU Chapter
Resolution #14

Every School Succeeds Act

WHEREAS:

The newly authorized Every School Succeeds Act (ESSA) offers a measure of relief from punitive federal testing and other mandates; and

WHEREAS:

Regulations promoted by the outgoing secretary of education, implementing and interpreting ESSA continue excessive emphasis on testing and excessive restrictions on professional autonomy, despite congressional intent to give schools and teachers more freedom to address individual student needs; and

WHEREAS:

President Donald J. Trump’s secretary of education has no history or experience in understanding challenges facing public school parents, students, teachers and administrators; and

WHEREAS:

ESSA does give greater latitude to the states in the adoption of regulations regarding testing and accountability.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED:

That the Coalition of Black Trade Unionists give scrutiny of Every School Succeeds Act (ESSA) implementation a high priority on both the federal and state levels; and
BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

That CBTU remain alert to the potential for reductions in funding programs for students with special needs, such as English language learners and students with disabilities, as states exercise new discretion granted under the ESSA law; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

That CBTU continue its efforts to have every state become a beacon of innovation, inspiration and freedom in our pursuit of excellence and equity in all our public schools; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED:

That as states wrestle with ESSA implementation, CBTU work aggressively and creatively with state legislatures, governors and state Boards of Educations to make radical changes in the current Annual Professional Performance Review evaluation system so as to restore to individual schools and teachers the freedom to teach without the burdens inflicted by the obsession of high-stakes testing.

Submitted by: Capital District CBTU Chapter
Resolution #15
Organizing Working Inmates

WHEREAS:

The U.S. Prison population stands at 2.3 million with another 7 million on parole
or probation today; and

WHEREAS:

The U.S. prison population stood at 184,000 in 1954; and

WHEREAS:

Union membership stands at approximately 7% today; and

WHEREAS:

Union membership at its peak stood at 35% of the workforce in 1954; and

WHEREAS:

Incarcerated workers make less than minimum wage at a rate of between $0.90
to $2.00 a day; and

WHEREAS:

There are at least 13 major U.S. corporations making record profits off prison
labor; and

WHEREAS:

This shows a direct correlation between the decline of union participation in the
workforce; and

WHEREAS:

Approximately 66.7% of the U.S prison population is people of color although
they only comprise of 36.3% of the United States population.
THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED:

That the Coalition of Black Trade Unionists affirmatively stand in solidarity with and support other organizations working to unionize incarcerated people and fight for their right to collectively bargain; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

That CBTU support raising the minimum wage for all workers including incarcerated workers; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED:

That CBTU join forces with the International Industrial Workers and other organizations working to improve the quality of life of all by increasing overall union membership.

Submitted by: Central Illinois CBTU Chapter
Resolution #16

Remove Carl Paladino from the Buffalo Board of Education

WHEREAS:

Buffalo, New York Billionaire Carl Paladino is one of America’s biggest supporters of President Donald J. Trump’s un-American, anti-labor, anti-Muslim, anti-people of color, anti-LGBT; anti-worker agenda; and

WHEREAS:

Mr. Paladino was President Trump’s New York State Presidential Campaign Co-Chairman and is an elected member of the City of Buffalo Board of Education; and

WHEREAS:

On many occasions as a sitting School Board Member, Mr. Paladino has routinely insulted and embarrassed the students, parents, and residents of Buffalo with his hurtfully racist words and deeds; and

WHEREAS:

Mr. Paladino in the past has called Native Americans “thugs” and has proposed taxes on sovereign tribes in New York; and

WHEREAS:

Mr. Paladino has a long and disgusting history of saying hurtful comments and spreading insulting emails like his 2008 dissemination via email of a video of dancing African Tribesmen entitled “Obama Inauguration Rehearsal;” and
WHEREAS:

In 2008 he also spread around a racist anti-President Barack Obama email showing chimpanzees dancing under the title of “Proof the Irish discovered Africa;” and

WHEREAS:

In April 2010, while a candidate for Governor of New York State, Mr. Paladino admittedly authored a series of racist and sexually explicit e-mails; and

WHEREAS:

In October 2010, Mr. Paladino, who is opposed to same-sex marriage, admitted he made an anti-LGBT speech to a religious group in Brooklyn while campaigning for Governor of New York State; and

WHEREAS:

In July 2016, Mr. Paladino called for the assault and lynching of United States Attorney Loretta Lynch, an African-American woman; and

WHEREAS:

In August, 2016, in an interview with The New York Observer, Mr. Paladino called President Barack Obama “a secret Muslim;” and

WHEREAS:

In December 2016, in an interview with a Buffalo-area publication, Mr. Paladino made more embarrassing international headlines when he wished that President Obama “would die of mad cow disease,” and that then First Lady Michele Obama “would go back to being a male and living in a cave with Maxie the gorilla;” and
WHEREAS:

Mr. Paladino in many interviews after his hurtful comments, stated that his comments were “old-style humor”; and

WHEREAS:

His continued outbursts are a clear indication that he will not, nor desires, to stop saying or promoting racists viewpoints; and

WHEREAS:

After being elected to office he is still spewing racial epithets and insulting a role model for all the children of Buffalo by continuously denigrating former President Barack Obama, former First Lady Michele Obama and countless others; and

WHEREAS:

Mr. Paladino’s actions have proven he is a tried and true racist. As a school board member, he has consistently injected his racist views on how Buffalo schools are run and how our children of color are treated in an overwhelmingly black and brown school district; and

WHEREAS:

The Buffalo School Board introduced and successfully passed a resolution on January 18, 2017 to remove Mr. Paladino from the School Board with a vote of 6 to 3.
THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED:

That the Coalition of Black Trade Unionists affirmatively state that Carl Paladino does not have the right to sit in a position of power as an elected member of the Buffalo Board of Education and influence the lives of our youth through his racist lens; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

That the good people of Buffalo; New York State; CBTU; New York State Branches of the NAACP; New York State United Teachers; Citizen Action of New York and the nation have seen and heard enough from Mr. Paladino; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED:

That CBTU and the collective of civil rights and social justice advocates previously mentioned demand New York State Education Commissioner Mary Ellen Elia exercise her powers and immediately remove Mr. Paladino and others like him from office, for his continued disrespectful comments and racist behavior.

Submitted by: CBTU Region 1 – Connecticut, New Jersey, New York, Massachusetts and Ontario Chapters
Resolution #17

Supporting the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions

WHEREAS:

For the first 5 years of Zimbabwe’s independence, relationships between the ruling party, the Zimbabwe African National Union – Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF), and the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU) were largely compatible; and

WHEREAS:

In 1985, after the ascension of Jeffrey Mutandare to the presidency of ZCTU, the unions steered a more independent and increasingly confrontational course relative to the government – in an effort to improve the lot of Zimbabwe’s workers; and

WHEREAS:

Mr. Mutandare and ZCTU opposed the Labour Relations Act of 1985, which centralized control over the trade union movement in the Ministry of Labour: ZCTU opposed the introduction of a one-party state in Zimbabwe in 1987; and

WHEREAS:

In 1991, ZCTU opposed the introduction of the Economic Structural Adjustment Program (ESAP), ostensibly instituted to make Zimbabwe’s economy more attractive to World Bank and International Monetary Fund investment; and

WHEREAS:

As hardships arose, in part from the ESAP’s market-based reforms, and the government under President Robert Mugabe resorted to draconian measures to shore up its flagging political support, ZCTU became the torch bearer for governance more responsible to the needs of Zimbabwe’s masses; and
WHEREAS:

In 1997, several civic organizations joined ZCTU in decrying the deteriorating economic conditions and the marginalization of civil society through the implementation of ESAP: a record 231 national and industrial strikes took place; and

WHEREAS:

In 1999, ZCTU was the leading force behind the formation of Zimbabwe’s opposition party, the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC), of which ZCTU’s former Secretary-General, Morgan Tsvangirai, later became president; and

WHEREAS:

After the Mugabe-sanctioned seizure of white-owned farms and the parliamentary elections of 2000, Zimbabwe earned itself a “high risk” rating, pariah status and international community economic sanctions: relationships between Zimbabwe and the powerful Western economies reached unprecedentedly low levels – resulting in a shortage of foreign currency and the emergence of a thriving parallel market; and

WHEREAS:

In 2017, full, decent and durable employment in Zimbabwe’s formal sector has receded to the extent that the informal economy is now the mainstay, employing more than three times the number of people working in the formal sector; and

WHEREAS:

The average wage of about US$250 per month is half the Poverty Datum Line (PDL) of US$500 per month – creating a large pool of the working poor; and
WHEREAS:

The economy of Zimbabwe is in a deep crisis characterized by: deflation; a cumulative economic decline of about 70% over the last 15 years; chronic shortages of fuel, water and electricity; unemployment approaching 95%; declining levels of productivity; the HIV/AIDS pandemic; endemic poverty afflicting 90% of the population; and widespread corruption; and

WHEREAS:

The ZANU-controlled government has been brutally suppressing trade union activities and curtailing freedom of assembly and association; and

WHEREAS:

In 2015, police in Harare prevented ZCTU from demonstrating against job losses and arrested seven people, including the ZCTU president: they raided ZCTU offices and detained several journalists; trade union leaders have been denied access to their largest sector of potential members and dues following the farm invasions; and the government registered and supports a competing union to destabilize ZCTU affiliates; and

WHEREAS:

ZCTU has debts of about $1.4 million that threaten its existence; and

WHEREAS:

The International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC), in its 2015 Global Rights Index, listed Zimbabwe as a country with “No guarantee of rights” and among the worst in the world for workers.
THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED:

That the Coalition of Black Trade Unionists affirm and unequivocally support the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU) and its affiliates in their fight for democracy, better lives for all Zimbabweans – and for workers in particular; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

That CBTU do whatever possible to help ZCTU and the workers of Zimbabwe in their hour of need – including advocating for ZCTU within the International Labour Organization (ILO); and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

That CBTU argue, before the ILO and other bodies with potential influence in Zimbabwe, that the government of Zimbabwe be precluded from using the country’s Criminal Code, the Public Order and Security Act (POSA) and other repressive laws to suppress union freedoms and impede union activities; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED:

That CBTU argue, in the appropriate forums, that the government of Zimbabwe must not use arrests, detentions, threats, harassment or violence against unions calling for a strike, gathering, commemorating historic events, publishing and circulating information, fundraising or undertaking other trade union activities.

Submitted by:  DC CBTU Chapter
Resolution #18

One Person: One Equal Vote

WHEREAS:

Gerrymandering is a method, a practice, a process, by which governmental jurisdictions manipulate electoral boundaries to establish political advantage for one political party or group; and

WHEREAS:

Gerrymandering is often used to satisfy the national Voting Rights Act requirement that African Americans and other minorities have opportunities to be fairly represented; and

WHEREAS:

There are two overarching approaches to gerrymandering: “cracking,” which disperses the voting power of the opposing party’s supporters among several districts; and “packing,” which concentrates the opposing party’s voting power in one district—to diminish its influence in contiguous districts; and

WHEREAS:

Ohio legislators employed the “cracking” style of gerrymandering to split the urban, mostly liberal, mostly Democratic-voting, population of Columbus into thirds, attaching each third to a much larger number of conservative Republican voters in surrounding suburbs; and
WHEREAS:

Though “packing” is sometimes used to create majority-minority districts and to avoid possible racial discrimination, in recent past, it has been used by Republican-controlled state legislative redistricting processes to gain and maintain majorities in the U. S. House of Representatives and dozens of state houses for at least a decade – and maybe longer; and

WHEREAS:

A U. S. District Court, in 2016, ruled against district lines drawn, in 2011, by the Wisconsin legislature: Republicans had 48.6% of the two-party votes but won 61% of the 99 districts as a result of gerrymandering; and

WHEREAS:

Wisconsin was only one of the states targeted, in 2010 and 2011, by the GOP Redistricting Majority Project (REDMAP) which was designed to flip state legislative chambers in enough key states, especially Pennsylvania, Ohio, Michigan, North Carolina, Florida and Wisconsin, so that they could control redistricting in these states and build a Republican firewall in the U. S. House of Representatives; and

WHEREAS:

REDMAP was enormously successful – the GOP locked in control of the U. S. House of Representatives for at least a decade and took dozens of previously competitive races out of play; and
WHEREAS:

For a little more than $30 million, REDMAP helped Republicans take control of 21 new state legislative chambers and gain control of both state legislative houses in 25 states; and

WHEREAS:

Assisted by the flood of money released by the *Citizens United* decision and amazingly precise map-making technology, gerrymandering has become the loaded gun for partisan control of elected offices; and

WHEREAS:

Districts in the 115th Congress, represented by Congressional Black Caucus members, with the largest African American populations are MS-2 (66.3%) and AL-7 (63.6%): those with lesser black populations are UT-4 (1.8%), FL-10 (12.5%), Tx-33 (16.4%), MN-5 (17%), and CA-13 (17.4%): not including UT-4 for statistical reasons, the Average African American Population of districts represented by African Americans in the 115th Congress is 44.2%: the Median African American Population of congressional districts represented by blacks in the 115th Congress is 49.6%.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED:

That the Coalition of Black Trade Unionists oppose gerrymandering designed to minimize African American and other minorities’ electoral influence either through “packing” African Americans and other minorities into a single voting district – to diminish their influence in other districts – or by “cracking” significant African American and other minority populations to divide them among many voting districts – in order to deny them a sufficiently large voting bloc in a particular district; and
BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

That CBTU work with all its partners and allies to oppose both cracking and packing; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED:

That CBTU and its allies pay close attention to proposed districts that would include more than fifty percent minority populations – as these districts are often used by redistricting strategists to appear to be advancing minority empowerment, when in fact they are used to minimize minority influence in contiguous districts.

Submitted by: DC CBTU Chapter
Resolution #19

Afro-Colombians and the Implementation of the
Colombian Peace Accords

WHEREAS:

Afro-Colombians were arguably those most adversely affected by the 52-years-long war between the Colombian government and the guerillas of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia – People’s Army (FARC-EP) – which officially ended with the ratification by the Colombian Congress of a Peace Accord, on November 30, 2016; and

WHEREAS:

Afro-Colombians were disproportionately the victims of murder at the hands of rightwing paramilitary forces and forced displacements in the countryside – caught and uprooted by the fighting among guerillas, the government and militias backed by the state and financed by drug-traffickers and multinational corporations; and

WHEREAS:

Though Afro-Colombians are only 10.6% of the country’s population, at least 22.5% of the displaced population identified themselves as Afro-Colombian, in a 2010 government survey – though the percentage was certainly larger, as many feared reprisals if they registered as “officially” displaced; and

WHEREAS:

While the national poverty rate in Colombia was 49.2%, in 2011, 78.5% of Afro-Colombians lived below the poverty level; and
WHEREAS:

Though the Peace Accords are between the government and FARC, they will directly affect the lives of those most marginalized by the war, among them poor, urban and rural Afro-Colombians; and

WHEREAS:

For years, African descendant and Indigenous communities have been fighting for a place at the negotiating table, to help determine their own destinies in Colombia: they organized themselves into the Ethnic Commission, comprised of the Afro-Colombian National Council of Peace (CONPA), the Association of Small and Medium Miners of Choco, the National Indigenous Organization of Colombia (ONIC), the National Coordination of Afro-descendant Organizations and Communities, Chao Racismo and other black and indigenous organizations; and

WHEREAS:

The final peace agreement reflects, in part, the aspirations of the Ethnic Commission, by including an “Ethnic Chapter” in the accords; and

WHEREAS:

The Ethnic Chapter explicitly recognizes that the injustices inflicted upon black and indigenous communities were the historic “product of colonialism, slavery, exclusion and dispossession from their lands, territories and resources”; and

WHEREAS:

The Ethnic Chapter guarantees protection, participation and self-government to black and indigenous communities; and
WHEREAS:

The Peace Accords include the Consulta Previa mechanism, the “prior, free and informed consultation” of ethnic communities, as the main safeguard for ethnic communities’ rights – to be applied in the implementation of all the Accords: the Accords acknowledge the legitimacy of ethnic authorities as key actors; and

WHEREAS:

The Accords propose the creation of special mechanisms for consultation about and implementation of each accord – comprehensive rural reform, political participation, victims, solution to the problem of drugs and implementation and verification.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED:

That the Coalition of Black Trade Unionists support the Colombian Ethnic Commission organizations in their efforts to access and implement the protections and guarantees of political participation and self-government promised in the “Ethnic Chapter” of the Peace Accords between the Colombian government and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia – People’s Army (FARC-EP), which was ratified in November 2016; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

That CBTU work with national and international allies to encourage the Colombian Congress to include, in all relevant legislation, the principles, safeguards and guarantees promised to Afro-Colombians and indigenous populations, by provisions of the Accord’s Ethnic Chapter; and
BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED:

That CBTU and its allies urge the Colombian Congress to provide adequate money and training to the Afro-Colombian and indigenous organizations and communities which must develop the capacity and resources to effectively participate in the mechanisms proposed for the implementation of the Accords.

Submitted by: DC CBTU Chapter
Resolution #20

Oppose the Working Family Flexibility Act and
Expose the Proposed Overtime “Flexibility” Fraud

WHEREAS:

In February, Martha Roby (R-AL) once again introduced a Working Families Flexibility Act, H. R. 1180 – 115th Congress (2017-2018), which would amend the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) to allow private sector employers to offer employees compensatory time off, instead of the premium time-and-a-half pay for overtime hours worked; and

WHEREAS:

As in past GOP legislative proposals, private sector employees would have the option to get an hour-and-a-half paid time off, in the future, instead of cash for every hour of overtime worked – an option available to public sector employees since the 1980s – as a means of cutting costs; and

WHEREAS:

Labor history indicates that voluntary comp time in the public sector worked because a greater percentage of public sector employees were unionized and because there was no profit incentive for employers to coerce workers into opting for compensatory time off; and

WHEREAS:

Supporters of the bill argue that the change in FLSA would give more employees newfound “flexibility” to better balance their work and family, by using compensatory time off; and
WHEREAS:

“On the contrary,” say workers’ advocates, who argue that a key effect of the FLSA’s overtime provision is that the pay premium beyond 40 hours provides a disincentive to employers who would overwork their employees; and

WHEREAS:

According to the proposed legislation and its advocates, employees would be able to use their accrued compensatory time off whenever they chose; and

WHEREAS:

In reality, according to the legislation, employers could deny an employee’s compensatory time off request if it would “unduly disrupt” business; and

WHEREAS:

The GOP compensatory time off scheme is being proposed at the very time that the Trump administration is proposing a 21 percent cut in the Department of Labor’s budget – which if implemented would diminish the department’s already inadequate ability to enforce wage-and-hour laws.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED:

That the Coalition of Black Trade Unionists oppose H. R. 1180 – 115th Congress (2017-2018), the Working Families Flexibility Act, which would provide financial incentives for private sector employers to coerce employees into taking compensatory time off as opposed to receiving time-and-a-half pay for time worked over 40 hours weekly; and
BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED:

That CBTU, its chapters and members urge members of the U.S. Congress in both houses to oppose H. R. 1180.

Submitted by: DC CBTU Chapter
Resolution #21

Minimum Wage Crisis

WHEREAS:

The federal minimum wage in the U.S. has not been raised since July 24, 2009 (from $6.55 to $7.25). This is a poverty wage and has an effect on millions of jobs; and

WHEREAS:

In the U.S., the wealthiest nation in the world, the federal minimum wage from 1979 ($2.90) to 2017 ($7.25) had an increase of $4.35; and

WHEREAS:

The federal minimum wage has been eroded by decades of inflation; and

WHEREAS:

If the federal minimum wage had been raised since 1968 at the same growth rate as average wages of U.S. typical workers the minimum wage would stand at $11.35 today; and

WHEREAS:

In the absence of federal action, 21 states and D.C. has changed their minimum wage law since 2014, helping 4.3 million workers; and 32 localities have adopted minimum wage laws above their state minimum wage; and

WHEREAS:

There are 29 states and D.C. that have a higher minimum wage than the federal wage; and
WHEREAS:

The minimum wage is indexed for inflation in 18 states and D.C., meaning it is automatically adjusted each year for increases in prices; and

WHEREAS:

Nationwide 58.3 million (43.7 percent) workers earn under $15.00 an hour and 41.7 million (31.3 percent) earn under $12.00 per hour; and

WHEREAS:

5.9 million (38 percent) of African-American workers earn less than $12.00 per hour and 8.2 million (53 percent) earn less than $15.00 per hour. For African-American and Hispanic women, the numbers are even more dramatic. In every state, women make up the majority of workers under $12.00 per hour, with the highest percentage being in the state of Louisiana (59.4 percent); and

WHEREAS:

African-Americans have a disproportionately higher rate of poverty in their population and increasing minimum wages at local, state and the federal level would be greatly beneficial for their households, communities and the entire nation; and

WHEREAS:

Low wage workers do vital work that keep the economy humming, they care for the young and elderly, prepare food, clean offices and help customers. These jobs are essential but the economy has stopped adequately compensating the workers who do them; and
WHEREAS:

Some Republican majority state legislatures has passed legislation to repeal their cities minimum wage ordinances that exceed the state minimum wage law.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED:

That the Coalition of Black Trade Unionists call on its regions and chapters to hold town hall meetings and forums that provide information and organize campaigns to increase the minimum wage at all levels of government; to oppose all efforts of state legislatures to repeal their municipalities minimum wage laws; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED:

That CBTU call on the AFL-CIO, Change to Win and other allies and friends to join campaigns at local, state and federal levels to increase the minimum wage.

Submitted by: CBTU Executive Council
Resolution #22

Support the Barack H. Obama Presidential Library and Museum

WHEREAS:

The former 44th President – Barack H. Obama – has announced the building of his library and museum on the South Side of Chicago; and

WHEREAS:

This will be the first of the already 13 existing presidential libraries in the United States that will be built in a city with a majority African American population; and

WHEREAS:

The Obama Foundation is tasked with raising $500 million in order to build three buildings on the site with groundbreaking starting in 2018 and completion accomplished by 2021; and

WHEREAS:

President Obama and his wife Michelle want to build community support by hosting lectures, educational programs, cultural events and public forums.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED:

That the Coalition of Black Trade Unionists call upon unions and other organizations to assist in raising funds for the constructions of the Barack Obama Presidential Library and Museum.

Submitted By: Chicago CBTU Chapter
Resolution #23

A Place at the Table for Constituent Groups

WHEREAS:
The leadership and members of the Coalition of Black Trade Unionists recognize the necessity for the retrenchment and reorganization of the AFL-CIO national union, in response to federal and state political and legislative attacks, the loss of jobs in AFL-CIO organized core industries and the public sector and loss of union density; and

WHEREAS:
As a result of this reorganization, the AFL-CIO has effectively eliminated the Federation’s Civil, Human and Women’s Right Department.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED:
That the Coalition of Black Trade Unionists urge the AFL-CIO, in the strongest terms, to include the operations and functions of the defunct Civil, Human and Women’s Rights Department as a principle section of any organization design and structure; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:
That the AFL-CIO constituent groups be assigned roles in establishing priorities and designing programs defined and outlined in this section of the reorganization; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED:
That CBTU urge the AFL-CIO national union to provide a “place at the table” in all decision making forums which affect community outreach – as such outreach is necessary to the survival of the labor movement and to the improved quality of life for all working families.

Submitted By: CBTU Executive Council