



BUILDING STRIKE POWER



**POLICY BOOK
2023 - 2025**

Contents

Aggressive Struggle.....	1
Collective Bargaining	3
Organize the Unorganized: The UE National Organizing Plan	4
Independent Rank-and-File Political Action	8
UE Education: Essential for Rank-and-File Unionism	11
International Solidarity	14
Fight Racism.....	16
The Battle for Equal Women’s Rights.....	20
Stand Up for the Rights of Immigrant Workers.....	24
End Discrimination Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity.....	28
Medicare for All.....	30
A Green New Deal for People and the Planet	33
A Safe and Healthy Workplace for All	36
Labor Law Reform	39
Collective Bargaining Rights for Public Workers	42
Restore the Right to Strike.....	46
A Just Economy for All.....	48
Stop the Dismantling of Public Education	52
Defend Our Civil Liberties	55
For Jobs, Peace and a Pro-Worker Foreign Policy	59
Report of the Policy Action Committee	64

Aggressive Struggle

Aggressive struggle through concerted action is an essential feature of rank-and-file unionism. We do not see the union as an insurance agency to which members pay a fee in exchange for the services of high-paid business union staff who say they'll "take care of it for you" through legalism, lobbying, and backroom deals. A union is a workers' organization, built by members to improve their conditions through collective action.

In contract negotiations, this means involvement of the members in developing their demands. It also means using tactics in the workplace that show support for the bargaining committee and keep pressure on management. Too many union leaders believe the best way to negotiate a contract is to keep their members in the dark and keep them quiet. Our approach is to give the members as much information as possible to engage in action to support their proposals and to develop strategies and tactics to maximize membership participation.

The same is true in dealing with violations of workers' rights that occur between contract negotiations. Stewards often find the chance of resolving a grievance is greater when members collectively express their discontent to management. Many locals have effectively used such tactics as mass grievances signed by every worker in the shop or department, or even delivered to the boss by a mass delegation. Locals find creative ways, while a grievance is going through the formal steps of the grievance procedure, to remind management of rank-and-file support for the union's position. Our reluctance to take our grievances to arbitration grows from our unwillingness to place our fate in the hands of a third party.

The UE approach to political action — collective action for political change, rather than attempting to buy influence with politicians through campaign contributions or via paid lobbyists — is closely related to our concept of workplace struggle. For our members in the public sector, political action and workplace struggle are frequently inseparable.

Aggressive struggle requires building solidarity beyond our ranks, with other unions and community organizations. UE left the Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO) in 1949, when the CIO had lost its militant and progressive direction, but we have always found ways to interact with trade union and community allies who share our approach. Among those places are Jobs with Justice (JwJ) chapters, Labor Notes conferences, the Southern Workers' Assembly, and local alliances in many communities. These include Workers' Assemblies in Durham, Charlotte, Raleigh and Fayetteville, NC. These assemblies, encouraged by the Southern Workers' Assembly, are groups of unions, activists, and community members organized around workers' rights in the South, and are currently supporting UE organizing campaigns.

For the past 42 years, Labor Notes and its network of supporters have actively promoted this kind of cross-union rank-and-file solidarity. It has become an indispensable resource for trade unionists. UE leaders, rank-and-file members, and staff contribute regularly to Labor Notes, sharing our experiences and analyses with other trade unionists worldwide. Labor Notes conferences are now the largest gatherings of rank-and-file union members in the country. UE continues to provide some of the largest union delegations at national Labor Notes conferences and plays an important role in conducting workshops and plenary sessions.

The basis for UE's participation in local, national and international coalitions, organizations and gatherings has always been a desire to build a more vigorous, responsive, and relevant working-class movement that can carry out aggressive struggle on all fronts to improve conditions for the whole working class.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT THIS 78th UE CONVENTION:

1. Calls on the union at all levels to educate our members about the necessity, effectiveness, and most useful strategies of workplace struggle, including the purchase and use of books such as the Troublemaker's Handbook, published by Labor Notes;
2. Calls on locals to ensure that proper democratic practices are in place to involve members in workplace struggle, including, when appropriate, stewards' meetings and trainings;
3. Urges greater publicity for gains achieved by our members through workplace struggle in the UE Steward, UE News, local union newsletters, and other union communications;
4. Commits to transparency in all forms of negotiations with the employer;
5. Calls on the union at all levels to:
 - a. Participate in, support, and join Jobs with Justice, the Southern Workers' Assembly, and other formations that bring together unions and community organizations;
 - b. Participate in the next Labor Notes Conference in Chicago on April 19-21, 2024;
6. Encourages members and locals to participate in or assist the formation of Labor Notes Troublemaker schools, subscribe to Labor Notes, purchase bulk subscriptions and books, and submit articles for publication.

Collective Bargaining

Since the last convention, workers, including UE members, have gotten leverage over bosses not seen in generations. The tight labor market means workers can be choosy regarding their jobs, and employers must be careful to retain their workforce. UE members have taken advantage of this to negotiate a historic round of agreements, a testament to what a rank-and-file union can accomplish.

Nowhere have the advances of the current period been stronger than in wages. Most agreements across the private sector achieved substantial increases, reaping long-term benefits because inflation is now dropping. Across historically lower-wage shops, in sectors ranging from food co-ops, to rail-crew driving, to government contracting, to manufacturing, some of the best wage settlements in decades, or in some cases ever, were reported. Some locals, when approached by the employer mid-contract about raising wages for new hires, leveraged the moment further to win substantial additional increases which applied to all members.

While not every UE shop saw historic wage increases, the tight labor market and rise in militancy reaped dividends everywhere. No reported contracts across UE were concessionary over the past two years. Many locals were able to leverage the current conditions, in concert with aggressive shop-floor action, to block company attempts to gut benefits, paid leave, and work rules, in many cases making substantive improvements across some or all of those areas.

The conditions which gave workers an edge over bosses in the U.S. economy show no signs of ceasing. Inflation subsided without a recession or any increase to unemployment. Pay increases are now going further, and employers still cannot take their workers for granted. UE members, through their militancy, creative use of tactics, and internal organization, are well positioned to continue winning advances in 2024 and beyond.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT THIS 78th UE CONVENTION:

1. Calls for education and mobilization of members in preparation for the aggressive campaigns that are necessary for favorable contract settlements;
2. Calls for broadening contract struggles beyond the bargaining table by including strategic campaigns, shareholder actions, and labor-community alliances;
3. Calls for building solidarity with other unions (both domestic and international), especially those of the same employer, engaged in contract fights;
4. Calls on locals to keep members informed and mobilized at every stage of negotiations;
5. Directs the national union to continue providing;
 - a. Research packets to UE workplaces entering contract negotiations, and to continue including in these materials the suggested bargaining goals list based upon best practices of UE locals developed through years of struggle;
 - b. Trainings, workshops, and in-person support by regional or national officers.

Organize the Unorganized: The UE National Organizing Plan

UE was organized from the bottom up by electrical, radio and machine workers who understood that only a militant and member-run union could take on the large corporations in their industries. These early UE members acted on their belief that only through uniting all workers — irrespective of race, gender, nationality, political or religious beliefs — to confront their employers could the working class achieve a measure of justice. From our inception, the rank and file played the leading role in our organizing efforts. That same idea — that workers can and must do the work of organizing — is animating thousands of workers today and driving the largest wave of worker organizing into UE since the 1940s.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, workers sacrificed their health and wealth with little recognition or compensation while America's 719 billionaires in the U.S. saw their fortunes increase by more than \$1.6 trillion. The minimal economic safety net put in place during the pandemic — including income supports, subsidized child care, paid leave and moratoriums on evictions and student loan payments — has largely expired. Coming out of the pandemic, workers were met with sharp increases in food, rent, healthcare, and other necessities of life. Rising costs for housing, childcare and other basic needs ate up any wage gains.

But even paltry increases in wages — canceled out by price increases — were too much for corporate America. Executives waged an offensive during this period to convince the public that inflation could only be cured by attacking workers' standard of living. Meanwhile, these same corporations used the excuse of rising inflation to gouge consumers and fatten profits. Corporate leaders handsomely rewarded themselves, with executive bonuses topping \$33 billion last year.

Only ten percent of workers in the country belonged to unions last year, the lowest number on record. Low union density is the result of several factors, including the rightward shift of the mainstream of the U.S. labor movement, the intensification of employer attacks against the working class, and the erosion of protections of the right of workers to organize and collectively bargain. While the Biden NLRB recently made some needed changes to address the lack of meaningful organizing protections, labor law in the U.S. still largely rewards employers who break the law.

Despite this, workers are fighting back. Employees of name-brand firms such as Amazon, Starbucks, Apple and Trader Joe's have used bold and innovative tactics to force their employers to the bargaining table. Strikes and stand-downs, such as those waged by UE Locals 506 and 618 at Wabtec in Erie, PA, Local 1004 at Henry Mayo Hospital in Santa Clarita, CA and Local 150

in Durham, NC are on the rise. UE members waged long fights to secure first contracts at Refresco in Wharton, NJ, the University of New Mexico, New Mexico State University, Planned Parenthood of Western PA and PTI in California. Filings for union elections with the National Labor Relations Board increased by over 50 percent from 2021 to 2022, and filings for the first half of 2023 show a continued rise.

More often than not, young workers are leading these efforts. Having grown up under the threat of economic crisis, climate catastrophe, war and the decay of the political system, young people are undergoing a significant leftward shift in political consciousness. Eighty-eight percent of eighteen-to-thirty-four-year-olds support unions — the highest rate of any age group. As recent high-profile organizing drives and initiatives like the Emergency Workplace Organizing Committee (EWOC) — a joint project of UE and the Democratic Socialists of America (DSA) — have shown, young workers are ready to take the organizing process into their own hands, just as the 1930s generation did when building industrial unions like UE.

Young workers not only played critical roles in recent UE strikes and contract fights, but have led UE's successful efforts to organize over 24,000 graduate employees across nine universities (and counting). These workers, who work in laboratories, conduct research, teach classes, and grade papers — who perform crucial labor that makes universities run — are rarely paid enough to live on. They face a variety of challenges, from dangerous working conditions in laboratories to harassment by their supervisors, who are often also their academic advisors. In the face of these conditions, organizing committees at Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Northwestern University, Johns Hopkins University, University of Chicago, Dartmouth College, the University of Minnesota and Stanford University waged vibrant, militant and participatory campaigns that mobilized thousands of workers and led to union election victories by remarkable margins.

During this period, UE also deepened its work in Virginia and North Carolina by launching the Southern Worker Justice Campaign, an effort aimed at organizing primarily Black municipal workers in both states. In 2022, municipal workers in Virginia Beach launched a public campaign for collective bargaining, winning an important victory when the city adopted a budget with significant improvements. In the fall elections, workers helped to elect a new pro-collective bargaining majority on the council, and the union is pressing forward with efforts to bring hundreds of municipal workers in Virginia's largest city under the UE banner. In Charlotte, NC and Greensboro, NC, UE Local 150 members organized to win substantial wage increases and other concessions.

Thousands of workers joined UE over the past two years because of our firm commitment to our principles: aggressive struggle, rank and file control, uniting all workers, political independence

and international solidarity. We have stuck to our principles for 87 years. Our forebears fought difficult battles to keep these principles alive for future generations. As more and more workers seek a fighting, democratic organization, it is time for our generation to ensure that “Them and Us Unionism” not only survives, but plays a leading role in the years to come.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT THIS 78th UE CONVENTION ADOPTS THE FOLLOWING ORGANIZING PLAN TO BUILD OUR UNION:

1. UE will continue to serve as the “Union for Everyone” and will organize across the industrial, service and public sectors of our nation’s economy, serving as a beacon for workers seeking a fighting, member-run union and uniting workers from a wide range of occupations in the common pursuit of aggressive struggle to improve our conditions;
2. UE will provide a home to workers across the economy, placing special emphasis on waging campaigns at sister shops and in industries where we have an existing presence, building our bargaining strength in order to defend past gains and improve our conditions. These sectors include rail manufacturing, higher education, government contractors, rail crew transportation and retail groceries.
3. UE will continue to build its ranks in existing UE base areas, prioritizing areas with viable organizing targets, the active support of member volunteers and community allies, and other key strategic factors that enhance our prospects for success;
4. UE recognizes right-to-work as a relic of Jim Crow laws and understands the racist origins of modern anti-union law. We further recognize the role that racism and white supremacy play in furthering corporate campaigns against labor rights and we therefore affirm efforts to organize predominantly Black public-sector workers in Virginia, which now has limited bargaining rights for municipal workers, and in North Carolina, where our members’ struggles for the past 25 years have served as a model for workers organizing throughout the South;
5. UE will continue to welcome the historic movement among thousands of graduate workers to build strong, militant and democratic unions on their campuses, and will work to win strong first contracts covering the thousands of workers who have recently organized into UE.
6. UE will look for opportunities for joint organizing work with allied organizations, such as the Emergency Workplace Organizing Committee, the Southern Workers Assembly, Warehouse Workers for Justice, and other unions and worker centers.
7. UE will build, defend and support rank-and-file unions among state, county and municipal employees in states where we currently have public workers under contract, as

well as in states where our public employee members are denied the right to collective bargaining, and we will fight to win full bargaining rights for public workers in states where those rights are abridged;

8. UE will not shy away from taking on large private-sector corporations. As resources allow, UE will test bold and innovative strategies to organize large private sector employers in industries such as e-commerce, tech, manufacturing and retail.
9. UE will continue building its worker-led organizing model, seeking to synthesize both long-standing UE organizing approaches and our experience during the pandemic with the recent influx of thousands of new members and apply these lessons to the organizing campaigns ahead. We will continue to test new organizing strategies, such as building pre-majority unions where formal recognition cannot be achieved in the short term, waging recognition strikes, and employing other militant organizing tactics;
10. UE will invite independent unions to join us as the national home of independent, member-run unionism, and we will offer refuge to workers in other unions who are seeking to escape corrupt, undemocratic conditions;
11. UE will build our ranks through internal organizing wherever open-shop conditions exist and will develop new plans and materials to assist locals in states that have adopted right-to-work-for-less laws or other measures to undermine union strength and security;
12. UE will involve our rank-and-file members in organizing whenever possible and will take the following steps to encourage more members to help organize the unorganized:
 - a. We will provide training and support for members who wish to become involved in organizing and we will provide members with the tools for reaching out to nonunion workers in their communities and industries and engaging them in the organizing process;
 - b. We will continue joint sponsorship with regions and locals of organizing trainings, blitzes and other special programs for which lost time and other costs are shared by the national and the region or local to make greater member participation possible;
 - c. We will encourage locals to negotiate for better union leave provisions to enable more members to get time off the job to assist in building the union;
 - d. We will respect cultural and language differences in our organizing work, and we will continue to reach into our ranks to find more volunteer organizers from diverse backgrounds.

Independent Rank-and-File Political Action

Working people continue to face daily assault. The economic and political attacks and repression against working-class and oppressed communities and organizations have intensified. Organized labor — barely one-tenth of the workforce today — is the last defensive bastion of the working class. Corporate executives, Republican, and corporate Democrat leaders know that if they destroy the union movement, they eliminate the last substantial obstacle to their greedy agenda. Workers are responding with strikes, new political insurgencies, and many other forms of mass fightback.

At UE's 76th Convention, delegates unanimously endorsed the presidential campaign of Senator Bernie Sanders, who has been a staunch ally to our union since his days as mayor of Burlington, VT in the 1980s. His campaign platform read like the UE policy book. Putting Bernie Sanders in the White House would have been a historic achievement for the working class. While Sanders' campaign was unable to overcome the corporate and establishment forces in the Democratic Party, his two historic campaigns for president fundamentally shifted the political terrain, highlighting the fundamental conflict between the working class and the corporations who seek to exploit us.

President Biden and the Democratic establishment have clearly abandoned delivering anything of substance for working people on the federal level. In the first few months of Biden's presidency, the American Rescue Plan Act delivered real benefits to working people — and boosted Biden's popularity. Since then, however, Biden and Democrats in Congress have ended pandemic aid, increased taxes on the working class, maintained cruel immigration policies, crushed a potential rail strike, and expanded fossil-fuel drilling. Rather than deliver for working people, the Democratic establishment seems to be relying on voters' rejection of Republican extremism.

Even more disturbing — and insulting — is establishment Democrats' unwillingness to support working-class struggles in so-called “red states,” or even “red” areas of swing states like Ohio. Neither Biden nor any other prominent Democratic politicians were to be found anywhere near the nearly two-year-long strike by the United Mine Workers of America at Warrior Met in Alabama; Biden similarly declined to visit East Palestine, Ohio after a train derailment dumped massive amounts of toxic chemicals into that rural community. These two high-profile cases could have provided Democrats an opportunity to demonstrate that they are allies to working people facing the onslaught of corporate greed. Instead, right-wing demagogues Donald Trump and J.D. Vance — neither of whom has the slightest intention of regulating the railroads or forcing them to make restitution — flocked to the area, making the unfortunately plausible claim that Biden and the Democrats “don't care” about rural working-class communities like East Palestine.

The Democratic Party, after years of being largely dominated by corporate interests, is now facing an internal battle as unabashedly pro-worker candidates are running and winning at the congressional, state, and local levels. This, combined with campaigns like Fight for \$15, strikes across the economy, and other pushbacks against economic inequality, has put pressure on Democratic politicians to stand up for working people. However, much of the Democratic Party establishment remains quietly indifferent or even hostile to our agenda.

The Republican Party is not leaving anything to chance. Having convinced a significant part of their base that the democratic process is not legitimate if it results in Democrats being elected, Republican-controlled state legislatures have been busy passing legislation designed to suppress the votes of working-class people and people of color. While legislation was introduced in Congress to protect the right to vote in 2021 (the For the People Act, S. 1), it was defeated by Republican intransigence and the defection of corporate Democrats.

It is essential that working people defeat the anti-worker and anti-democratic Republican Party in 2024, even as we are clear-eyed about the shortcomings of the Democrats and the need to build an independent party of working people. Faced with this clearly corrupt and dysfunctional political system, it is hardly surprising that both Biden's and Trump's 2024 candidacies are opposed by clear majorities of Americans.

The remarkable working-class upsurge that rose in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic shows no signs of abating. We are seeing this in both fights in the shop, as union members take advantage of the leverage afforded by a tight labor market to press for higher wages, and on the new organizing front. However, this upsurge has yet to find a coherent or consistent political expression, as our nation's politics continue to be defined by increasingly sharp rhetorical divisions between the two corporate parties, neither of which is interested in uniting the working class.

UE locals have been active in the Medicare for All campaign throughout the nation, working with other progressive unions like National Nurses United. UE continues to educate our members through workshops and member meetings about the importance of getting involved and supporting the Medicare for All movement. Rank-and-file leaders from UE Local 1008 have participated in Medicare for All actions in southern California, and UE Local 150 has been an active member of the North Carolina Medicare for All coalition.

We also need to continue to fight for higher wages. Thanks to the Fight for \$15 movement that UE is actively involved in, many states and local governments have passed \$15 minimum wages, which have helped secure larger wage increases at the bargaining table. We need to continue to build a movement that brings attention to wages and continue to fight for a federal minimum wage of \$15 per hour.

The pandemic has made the public aware that workers are essential and without us, the working class, society cannot function. As workers, we have the power to run society. Billionaires and the ruling class are not essential to society. We need to continue to fight and organize independently from both major political parties and unite all workers around our class interests as workers and build more working-class politics. As UE, we need to push for reforms that help the masses of working people like Medicare for All, canceling student debt and free higher education, national hazard pay for all essential workers, health and safety for essential workers, the right to form unions and bargain collectively, a federal minimum wage of \$15 per hour, national rent control, and to form our political party for the workers, by the workers.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT THIS 78th UE CONVENTION:

1. Calls on the union at all levels to:
 - a. Educate and mobilize the membership to carry forward a working-class political program;
 - b. Support only lawmakers and candidates who consistently take concrete actions to defend working people;
 - c. Mobilize the membership and work with allies to promote worker issues, including full collective bargaining rights for all workers, and to elect pro-worker candidates;
2. Calls on locals and regions to contact lawmakers on key issues through petitions, letters, phone calls, emails, lobby visits, annual political action days, town hall meetings, rallies, marches, civil disobedience, and other means to gain positive political action;
3. Urges all locals to undertake workplace campaigns to register members and their families to vote, and to encourage participation in all elections, from the local to the national level;
4. Encourages locals and regions to engage in local independent political action to ensure that all people are able to exercise the right to vote;
5. Encourages UE regions, locals, and members to become involved in Our Revolution, Labor for Our Revolution, Black Lives Matter, Fight for \$15, the Poor Peoples' Campaign, and other working-class movements for economic and racial justice;
6. Reaffirms our support for the formation of an independent working-class political party.

UE Education: Essential for Rank-and-File Unionism

In order to have robust rank-and-file participation in UE at all levels, member education must remain a top priority. We must provide the skills and knowledge to empower our members to take on the boss, to engage in community struggles that advance worker rights, and to run the union. We must prioritize time for this education at every opportunity.

Our union's educational work provides members with the tools to resist employer attacks on wages, benefits, and working conditions. UE's geographic structure of regions and sub-regions enables us to bring a variety of educational workshops to a broader layer of local union leaders, activists, and members. Educational events help members and local union officers learn about policies on union financial integrity and practices, grievance handling, workplace representation, preparation for bargaining, and other leadership skills. Combined with workshops in regional council meetings, national conventions, and training sessions organized by local unions, this education helps members fight back in an era of increased anti-worker attacks.

Spurred on by necessity during the pandemic, the UE Education Department converted traditional workshops to online learning formats, which contributed to our efforts to bring forward new activists and leaders who will carry the union's work into the future. In the fall of 2022 and spring of 2023, UE offered a new multi-part online education series, *Building Union Power*, which aimed to strengthen local unions by encouraging members to mobilize around workplace issues to win. UE also advanced member education with a new workshop on inflation and how to fix it.

The union continues to benefit from its education initiatives of recent decades, including our most recent publication, *Them and Us Unionism*. The *UE Steward Handbook* and the *UE Leadership Guide* – both published in the late 1990s — remain the most thorough and useful training materials for rank-and-file leaders. The *UE Steward*, a newsletter of useful information and tips for shop leaders, continues to be one of the most sought after publications, and since December 2017 has been distributed via email, website and social media in addition to print. The UE NEWS provides not only reporting on our recent struggles and other activities, but also in-depth analysis of current issues facing union members and UE and working-class history, helping members understand our legacy. In areas with significant Spanish-speaking membership, the union provides these and other materials in Spanish to enable more members to participate. Given new organizing and turnover in other shops, *UE Aims and Structure* received a refresh to provide a clear resource to orient new members to the organization. The Spanish translation of this booklet was also updated, and it was translated into Vietnamese at the request of multiple

locals — UE’s first document translated into that language. These materials are also available on the union’s website.

Our website (ueunion.org) contains information and news helpful to union members and unorganized workers, including dozens of issues of the *UE Steward*, and links to access the *UE News* archives maintained by the University of Pittsburgh. Our social media accounts regularly publicize UE educational materials, and many UE locals also have an interactive web presence through Facebook. UE launched an all-new online portal at ueunion.net to provide members with access to electronic versions of materials such as the *UE Leadership Guide*, handouts from workshops, UE logos and art, and internal forms.

A strong and effective union depends on an educated, informed leadership, an effective steward system, and an involved membership.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT THIS 78th UE CONVENTION:

1. Commits the national union to provide both in-person and virtual educational materials and workshops to assist members in running effective local unions and successfully waging local, national and international struggles, including:
 - a. Democratic operation of a local, including steward training and grievance handling, local union finances and integrity, and preparing for escalating shop floor campaigns, negotiations, and in-shop struggles, with training tailored to the needs of each local;
 - b. Sub-regional educational and training conferences;
 - c. A day of workshops at the national convention and workshops for use at regional, sub-regional, and local membership meetings;
 - d. The *UE Steward* and other materials for local officers, stewards, and members;
 - e. Political education that counteracts corporate media influence and promotes a working-class consciousness;
 - f. Protecting the union in a right-to-work state and implementing strategies to maintain member unity and combat right-to-work laws;
 - g. Maintenance and promotion of the UE website and social media;
 - h. Continued publication of UE NEWS;

- i. Continued translation of materials into Spanish and/or other languages;
 - j. Providing language interpretation of meetings where appropriate;
 - k. Continued use of video teleconferencing to conduct educational training;
 - l. A revised *UE Leadership Guide*;
 - m. Coordinating leadership development programs to build the skills of UE leaders;
2. Encourages all locals to:
- a. Commit to leadership development of African Americans, women, LGBTQ+ members, young workers, members with disabilities, and workers of other nationalities;
 - b. Educate members about UE history and principles using the *Them and Us Unionism* and *Aims and Structures* booklets;
 - c. Regularly publish local newsletters;
 - d. Conduct classes to introduce new members to the union, explaining policies, structure, and collective bargaining agreements;
 - e. Seek the right to conduct union orientation for new hires during work time;
 - f. Establish websites, use social media, and regularly update union bulletin boards;
 - g. Negotiate employer-paid lost time for members to attend training and educational events;
 - h. Hold regular steward trainings and membership involvement classes;
 - i. Organize team building activities to educate members and the public in an engaging manner;
 - j. Educate membership about the history of their local;
 - k. Establish partnerships between locals to foster skill exchange, UE local history, and general mentorship.

International Solidarity

Workers around the world face the same conditions: bosses who maximize their profit by moving their investments without regard to their impacts on communities or the environment. As long as there are places where workers toil for starvation wages without health and safety protections, it's hard to achieve or maintain good wages or conditions anywhere. We must work collaboratively across borders in order to effectively fight back against the multinational corporations that dominate our economy.

UE encourages our members to build relationships with workers in other countries through international travel and other exchanges. Due to the pandemic, our opportunities for in-person international exchanges were curtailed until recently. In the past two years, UE members, officers, and staff participated in numerous online exchanges with union allies around the world, and hosted allies from FIOM (Italy) and Zenroren (Japan) in Chicago. UE representatives also attended union conventions in Canada and Brazil.

International partnerships inspire UE's approach to a wide variety of our work. UE's strong stance on the renegotiation of the North American Free Trade Agreement and other trade and tariff changes was informed by our alliances with the Authentic Labor Front (FAT) in Mexico and Unifor in Canada. As demonstrated in the new scrapbook we developed documenting our 30-year relationship with Zenroren in Japan, our two unions have solidified our positions on the need for peace for working people, and on the need to organize nonunion workers, especially among the growing number of precarious, subcontracted workers.

By remaining unwavering in our commitment to international solidarity in the coming period, we advance our interests in promoting democratic, rank-and-file worker control at home and abroad.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT THIS 78th UE CONVENTION:

1. Reaffirms support for the Strategic Organizing Alliance with the FAT;
2. Reaffirms the deepening of our relationship with Zenroren;
3. Reaffirms support for the UE-Unifor North American Solidarity Project;
4. Reaffirms our participation in and support of the global union federation IndustriALL;

5. Reaffirms solidarity with: the CSN of Quebec; FIOM of Italy; Brazilian Central Union of Workers (CUT); CGT of France; New Trade Union Initiative of India; Workers Advice Center (MAAN) in Israel/Palestine; Kilusang Mayo Uno and Partido ng Manggagawa of the Philippines; Unite the Union of the United Kingdom; Korean Confederation of Trade Unions, Sintraproaceites of Colombia; and other democratic worker movements around the world;
6. Stands in full solidarity with allied unions as they fight austerity, attacks on union rights, xenophobia and other policies pushed forward by corporate-backed, right-wing governments;
7. Commits to building relations with unions abroad through direct contact, progressive forums and networks, and other means, as well as establishing and deepening relationships with workers in sister shops who globally share our employers;
8. Condemns the murder and persecution of trade unionists, harassment of unions, and union busting anywhere in the world;
9. Encourages locals and members to increase their involvement in our international program and to make contributions to the UE-FAT Solidarity Fund and UE Research and Education Fund;
10. Commits to ongoing worker-to-worker exchanges with our allies and educational work with our members in order to deepen our alliances and understanding of global labor conditions so that we may engage in collective action together;
11. Encourages the participation in global alliances to fight the rise of precarious and contingent (part-time, temporary, subcontracted, and insecure) jobs.

Fight Racism

Racism is one of the greatest evils and has always been a roadblock to building a strong labor movement. Racism is a specific form of discrimination based upon the false belief that some groups of people are inherently and biologically superior to others. It is a form of institutionalized systematic oppression and exploitation that is foundational to American capitalism.

Racism and white supremacy were promoted by capitalists to condone exploitation and oppression, the stealing of land and resources of indigenous peoples, and the erasure of their history and culture. They were also a means of dividing the working class and justifying the brutal system of coerced labor called slavery, vigilante murders, and police brutality and killings.

The persistence of institutional racism affects all peoples of color, and is evident in the economic and social oppression and exploitation experienced by Black people in particular. Black people suffer from disproportionately higher unemployment, lower wages, and poorer working conditions. On average, Black people are twice as likely to die from disease, police murders, accidents, and homicide as whites. Black people are three times more likely to become prisoners once arrested, and serve longer terms. Racists and white supremacists blame the victims of these conditions, rather than blaming the capitalist system that creates these injustices.

People of color, especially Black people, are more likely to be stopped by police, searched, arrested, and become the victims of police and vigilante violence. The murder of countless people of color by police is outrageous. This is not merely the result of individual racist police officers but of a widespread, systematic disrespect for the lives of Black people and other people of color.

America has had a long history of racism, The Republican Party now mainstreams racism directly or with dog whistles. Alabama Senator Tommy Tuberville said, “They (Democrats) want reparations because they think the people that do the crime are owed that.” Former President

Trump invited white supremacist Nick Fuentes to Mar-a-Lago for lunch. Congresswoman Marjorie Taylor Greene and Paul Gosar have spoken at the white supremacist America First Political Action Conference sponsored by Nick Fuentes.

The right-wing Supreme Court's 2023 ruling on affirmative action is a continuation of over forty years of judicial attacks on the rights won by the civil rights movement. Republicans openly promote false hysteria on "critical race theory." They fan the flames with the "great replacement theory." Some southern states are banning the teaching of Black history in any public school, from elementary to university level. Even when the Supreme Court upheld an element of the Voting Rights Act, the state of Alabama ignored their ruling. In Tennessee, a supermajority of white Republicans expelled two Black state representatives for refusing to be silent regarding the mass murder of three adults and three children at Covenant House School.

Police brutality and state repression continues to deepen and broaden, being further encouraged by Trump allies who still hold power. In Circleville, Ohio truck driver Jadarius Rose was pulled over for a missing mud flap only to have automatic weapons trained on him. When Rose surrendered, with his hands up and on his knees, police released a dog to brutalize the man. In Brandon, Mississippi six officers known as the "goon squad" conducted an illegal raid without probable cause and tortured two Black men. They forced the men to strip; tased, waterboarded, and sexually assaulted them; and shot one of them in the mouth. In Memphis, Tennessee, six officers known as the SCORPION unit beat Tyre Nichols to death.

In response to continued police violence against Black people, Black Lives Matter became a mass movement. After the police murders of George Floyd and Breonna Taylor, somewhere between 15-26 million people participated in demonstrations across the U.S., making the Black Lives Matter protests the largest protest movement in U.S. history. UE members were a part of these protests, and marched and bravely stood up to white supremacy, hatred, racism, and violence.

Since our last convention, two cohorts of UE leaders have participated in the UE Leadership and Staff Development Program, designed to develop the leadership of UE members from racial and ethnic backgrounds who are underrepresented in UE leadership or on UE staff. The first cohort began in late 2021 and graduated 11 leaders from seven locals, three of whom joined UE staff, and two of whom were elected to the General Executive Board during the course of the program. The second cohort is on-going and includes nine leaders from eight locals.

Working-class unity can never be taken for granted. Winning depends upon our success in the fight against racism. UE and the wider labor movement is not immune from racism. We must consciously work to overcome racism in our diverse working class.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT THIS 78th UE CONVENTION:

1. We must fight racism by first affirming that it exists;
2. Reaffirms UE's policies of aggressive struggle against racism and in support of equal rights;
3. Calls on locals to defend our members aggressively against racism and discrimination;
4. Calls on locals to develop pressure campaigns against any employers that discriminate against people of color in their workplace, including in promotions, hiring practices, wages and otherwise;
5. Declares its support of workers and their communities' fight against divisive racist terror;
6. Opposes the assault on affirmative action;
7. Directs the UE Education Department to continue providing workshops on racism and discrimination at all levels of our union;
8. Reaffirms the union's commitment to developing the leadership of members of color, including through our Leadership and Staff Development Program;

9. Calls for elimination of racial profiling, police brutality, and “stop-and-frisk,” a repeal of “stand-your-ground” laws and stands in opposition to the politicians that would support these policies;
10. Urges the union at all levels to support and work with local organizations like Southern Workers Assembly, Black Workers for Justice, NAACP, National Conference of Black Lawyers, Southern Movement Assembly, National Movement for Black Lives, and other organizations fighting racism and discrimination;
11. Condemns all attacks on the basis of ethnicity, religion, race, color, or creed, particularly those on Arab-Americans, Muslims, Hispanics/Latinos, Jews, and Asian Americans;
12. Calls on UE at all levels to make our members and communities aware of the increase of hate groups in our workplaces and communities, to provide information to help them to recognize and combat all forms of hate, and to expose racism in the media, and urges UE locals to regularly monitor such activities in their local communities;
13. Urges regions and locals to set up unity councils on the model pioneered by Local 506;
14. Demands strict enforcement and just punishment for violation of existing anti-discrimination and hate crime laws;
15. Urges the union movement to expose and condemn racially biased and selective reporting which blames people of color for the poverty they are suffering as a result of government and corporate policies;
16. Urges locals to study the Freedom Manifesto and mobilize their African-American members to attend National Assemblies for Black Liberation events;
17. Urges locals to work with local municipal workers’ unions and community groups to reallocate funds from over-bloated police departments to meet the needs of city workers and community wellness;
18. Calls upon the union at all levels to support political candidates that vehemently oppose racism and discrimination of all kinds and at all levels of government.

The Battle for Equal Women's Rights

UE has been leading the fight for equity for women workers since the 1940s. Women need unions more than ever, as they are the best way to ensure greater earnings, benefits, and protections from discrimination in the workplace. Until women have full and equal rights, all workers are held back.

Working women face a persistent pay gap. Women earn only 82 cents for every dollar men earn, and this pay gap is worse for women of color. Black women make only 70 cents for every dollar white men bring home, Latinas only 65 cents, and Native American women only 51 cents.

Though the Civil Rights Act protects against discrimination based on sex at work, the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission continues to receive many thousands of charges of sexual harassment each year. Even more cases of workplace sexual harassment go unreported. The vast majority of sexual harassment cases are filed by women. In 2022, the U.S. Congress took some initial steps to remove some of the hurdles women face when filing sexual harassment cases, passing legislation to ensure non-disclosure agreements are unenforceable in instances of sexual assault and harassment, and to stop mandatory arbitration proceedings from being used in cases involving sexual assault or harassment.

Workers who choose to become parents face additional discrimination at work. New federal laws, the Pregnant Workers Fairness Act (PWFA) and the Providing Urgent Maternal Protections (PUMP) for Nursing Mothers Act in 2022, provide important new protections and accommodation requirements for pregnant or nursing working parents.

Despite these advances, working women's rights have been under attack elsewhere. In June 2022, the Supreme Court's decision in *Dobbs v. Jackson* reversed *Roe v. Wade*'s protection of legal access to abortion. In the first half of 2023, 25 bills restricting abortion access were enacted, and abortion was completely banned in 13 states. As abortion bans exacerbate existing inequity in healthcare access and disproportionately harm women of color, we must fight to protect those at most risk from the harm caused by these policies.

The pandemic highlighted the challenges working women face at all times: juggling responsibilities related to children's care and education as well as health needs across a family, all while being impacted by job losses across the economy, but particularly in sectors that disproportionately employ women. The Department of Labor noted that it took until late 2022 for mothers' workforce participation rates to return to pre-pandemic levels, and Black mothers still lag behind slightly. They cite unreliable and expensive childcare as the major problem:

“Childcare-related employment disruptions have increased since the start of the pandemic and ... mothers are more likely to suffer employment disruptions compared with fathers.”

The Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) provides eligible workers with 12 weeks of unpaid leave per year, but 44 percent of U.S. workers do not qualify for FMLA because of the size of their employer, the number of hours they work, or exhausting FMLA eligibility prior to giving birth. Workers of color are less likely to be eligible for FMLA, and many workers who qualify for FMLA cannot afford to take unpaid leave. The National Partnership for Women and Families estimated in 2022 that 10.9 million workers in the U.S. needed leave but did not take it. Relatedly, the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists recommends all parents welcoming new children into their homes should receive at least six weeks of paid parental leave, and the World Health Organization recommends at least 18 weeks of maternity leave with at least $\frac{2}{3}$ pay. Yet the U.S. is one of six countries in the world without national paid maternity leave. Furthermore the U.S. has the highest maternal mortality rate of any high-income country, with even worse outcomes for Black women, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

UE members need to apply ever-greater pressure on politicians and bosses to advance and maintain women’s rights. This war on women’s rights needs to stop and we must remain leaders in this fight.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT THIS 78th UE CONVENTION:

1. Calls on the union at all levels to:
 - a. Support locals in fighting legislation that negatively impacts women’s and families’ rights;
 - b. Demand and bargain for gender equality and to fight women’s oppression in the workplace, including in our own organization;
 - c. Demand pay equity, recognize the intersection of race and gender, acknowledge and address the urgent political and safety issues experienced by women regardless of gender at birth, and commit to address pay inequality at all levels;
 - d. Create a consistent environment to educate and support women to assume positions of leadership within their locals, regions, and the national union, including a leadership development program for women or gender non-conforming members;

- e. Educate members, officers, and staff on sexual harassment and programs to combat harassment, intimidation and sexist attitudes wherever found, through trainings and developed programs;
 - f. Continue the implementation of the anti-harassment policy for regional councils and national conventions, including continued training of ombuds as needed, at least one of whom will be a woman;
 - g. Educate members, officers, and staff about, and encourage participation in, resources available to families who need assistance, particularly those with children with disabilities, such as 2-1-1, early-childhood intervention, and other local programs;
 - h. In jobs primarily held by women, demand that employers file timely injury report forms for all worker injuries, as well as report such injuries to all appropriate state agencies, while creating strong health and safety language to be placed in collective bargaining agreements;
 - i. Press for employer-paid training programs which allow women to upgrade their skills to enter jobs that have been traditionally reserved for men;
 - j. Renew the fight for employer-funded childcare and family leave policies, both through legislation and within the union;
 - k. Negotiate leave policies with employers to cover workers who are not eligible for FMLA;
 - l. Support pro-labor candidates, particularly women, that openly support women's choice and family planning;
 - m. Provide dedicated time, space, and proper advanced notice for women's caucuses at regional and national levels within UE;
 - n. Provide quality childcare for meetings and conferences to allow parents and guardians to participate in the activities of the union;
 - o. Educate workers and employers on rights available to pregnant and nursing parents in the PWFA and PUMP for Nursing Mothers Act, including providing a safe, clean and private space for nursing parents;
2. Supports the human right to decide whether and how to have children and raise families, regardless of economic status, by fighting internally and externally, through workplace policy and legislation to ensure:

- a. Access to free, confidential, and effective birth control and family planning services;
 - b. Protection from forced sterilization;
 - c. Protection from discrimination based on reproductive health issues or caregiving responsibilities;
3. Demands Congress:
- a. Pass the Women’s Health Protection Act (H.R. 12), which would establish federal legislative protections for women’s right to choose to terminate a pregnancy;
 - b. End all restrictions on reproductive health care, including repealing the Hyde Amendment;
 - c. Improve and expand the Family Medical Leave Act and ensure all workers receive full benefits to care for any family member;
 - d. Enact:
 - i. A federal paid parental leave program and a high-quality federal day care program;
 - ii. Legislation to improve maternal healthcare, such as the Black Maternal Health Momnibus Act, which would extend Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) eligibility in the postpartum and breastfeeding periods, provide funding to community-based organizations that are working to improve maternal health outcomes and promote equity, grow and diversify the perinatal workforce to ensure new parents receive health care and support from people they trust, and more;
 - e. Create a subsidized system for child care which does not penalize individuals for providing homecare and which provides a living wage and quality care;
 - f. Enact a new federal law to reduce pay disparities by prohibiting employers from asking about pay history;
 - g. Protect and expand the WIC program, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), and other programs that assist low-income families and children;
4. Demands that, in states which restrict access to a woman’s right to choose to terminate a pregnancy, the state legislature take immediate action to repeal such restrictions;
5. Encourages UE members to engage with organizations fighting for women’s rights.

Stand Up for the Rights of Immigrant Workers

Immigrants helped build this country and continue to play a central role in our union. Since its inception UE's aim has been to fight for all worker rights, regardless of status. Employers and the politicians that represent them seek to exploit divisions between immigrant and native-born workers, driving down wages and stripping away hard-won workers' rights.

While the U.S. has for decades had policies which were harsh and retributive against immigrants, under former President Donald Trump there was a concerted effort to punish asylum seekers and new immigrants through twisted, illegal, and immoral policies. Nearly every aspect of immigration policy was redesigned in an explicit effort to reduce the number of non-white people in the U.S., from placing new arrivals into literal concentration camps to turning immigration judicial proceedings into kangaroo courts where individuals have no hope of prevailing.

Proponents of immigration reform — including UE — had some guarded hope with the inauguration of President Joe Biden. The odds of comprehensive immigration reform are long, and so we must rely upon executive action. Biden's record here, rather than his rhetoric, has been disappointing, and at times appalling. In the two and a half years of his presidency, Biden has failed to dismantle many of the Trump-era policies penalizing asylum seekers and green card holders. Indeed, his administration defends them in court. Biden continued and expanded Title 42, an archaic public-health order which allows the expulsion of most adult migrants without access to the asylum process, purportedly due to the COVID-19 public health emergency, although cases were much lower in the countries of origin for most of these migrants.

Now that Title 42 has expired, Biden has reinstated Title 8. While Title 8 has more pathways to asylum, it can be just as burdensome as Title 42. For example, Title 8 is more punitive for those caught crossing the border. The current situation is untenable, shelters and detention centers are at capacity, with it being reported that there are shelters who turn away at least ten families with children everyday. Those seeking an interview for asylum are forced to use an app called CBP One, which immediately excludes asylum seekers with older cellphones or without cellphones at all. Other problems with this app include facial recognition biases for those with darker skin, giving applicants appointments thousands of miles away, and separating families by giving them different appointments.

The Supreme Court's *Hoffman Plastic Compounds* ruling in March 2002 decreed that immigrant workers fired for organizing a union are not entitled to back pay or reinstatement. The court effectively decided that immigrant workers "have no rights that bosses need respect." Employers now routinely use the Hoffman ruling to fire union activists. But, there are examples where immigrant workers have stood up for their rights and have won. Fermin Rodriguez, an undocumented worker fired for his union activity in Los Angeles, was reinstated in 2015 by the National Labor Relations Board after the evidence showed his employer El Super grossly violated the union rights of Rodriguez and his coworkers.

Those in power use the threat of deportation to scare immigrant workers. Florida's Senate Bill 1718 requires employers to use The Social Security Administration's (SSA) E-Verify program, which by SSA's own admission contains 17 million errors. The E-Verify program is an online program which checks employees' I-9 form information with records in the U.S Department of Homeland Security and the SSA. This bill fines employers \$1,000 a day for failing to report, and license revocations for employing people without legal status. The E-Verify system has a long history of issues, and a 2020 estimate suggested that 760,000 workers with legal documentation have been negatively impacted since 2006 by E-Verify. Who knows the countless that will be affected by SB 1718?

Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agents use heavy-handed raids to terrorize communities and workplaces. Following workplace raids, children who are U.S. citizens remain in the country while parents are jailed and then deported. Our immigration detention system unnecessarily locks up hundreds of thousands of immigrants every year, exposing detainees to brutal and inhumane conditions of confinement at massive costs to American taxpayers. Since the inception of the 287(g) program, which deputizes local law enforcement to enforce federal immigration laws, immigrant communities have been driven further into the shadows. Some have been forced to self-imprison in sanctuaries, like churches, in order to avoid deportation actions. They may go for years without seeing outside the walls which confine them.

Denying immigrant workers decent wages and conditions undermines the wages and conditions of all. All workers, regardless of immigration status, must have the right to form unions, to file complaints against unfair treatment without fear of reprisal, to receive unemployment, disability and workers' compensation benefits, and to have access for themselves and their families to affordable housing, healthcare, education and transportation.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT THIS 78th UE CONVENTION:

1. Demands an end to all concentration and/or internment camps for immigrants, and an end to the criminalization of asylum seekers, refugees, and those who provide humanitarian aid to them;
2. Demands the federal government impose an immediate moratorium on all ICE raids, arrests, deportations, harassment, seizures, I-9 audits, Secure Communities, the 287(g) and E-Verify programs, and other abuses of undocumented workers;
3. Calls for an end to all political attacks against the sanctuary city movement and encourages all locals to actively support all efforts in their community to defend immigrants from abuse and harassment;
4. Supports the inclusion of immigrants in all current and proposed public healthcare programs, including Medicare for All;
5. Calls for the Biden administration to expand access to asylum interview appointments;
6. Demands that Congress enact immigration reform legislation that:
 - a. Includes a legalization program, allowing all immigrants currently living in the U.S. to remain here permanently and without penalty;
 - b. Protects worker rights for both current and future immigrants, including overturning the Hoffman Plastics decision;
 - c. Prioritizes family unification;
 - d. Liberalizes political asylum procedures;
 - e. Rejects guest-worker programs;
 - f. Repeals the REAL ID Act;
 - g. Ensures immigrants have equal access to higher education, including student loans, financial aid, and in-state tuition;
7. Urges locals to negotiate contract language that:
 - a. Protects jobs and contract rights regardless of immigration status;

- b. Allows undocumented workers to update immigration status without loss of rights;
 - c. Prevents the employer from taking adverse action in the event of the receipt of a Social Security “no-match” letter;
 - d. Prevents the employer from participating in voluntary ICE enforcement programs;
 - e. Obligates the employer to refuse entry to ICE agents who do not possess a valid warrant and to notify the union if contacted by ICE;
 - f. Requires the employer to supply an independent translator and allow union representation when communicating on important matters with workers not fluent in English;
 - g. Makes available copies of the contract in each language spoken by employees;
8. Encourages locals to work with and financially support local immigrant rights coalitions which assist undocumented workers and fight to fix our broken immigration system;
 9. Calls on locals with immigrant members to educate employers on the rights of immigrant workers, the employer’s right to resist ICE harassment and intimidation, and the perils of ICE’s voluntary enforcement initiatives;
 10. Urges locals to educate themselves about federal laws related to immigrants and refugees, and to assist their immigrant members in attaining documented status and citizenship if they so desire;
 11. Calls on the state of Florida to repeal SB 1718;
 12. Demands that state motor vehicle agencies change policies and programs that make it impossible for immigrants to legally own and operate vehicles;
 13. Calls upon the union at all levels to continue to provide education and materials for members and the community about the real causes of worker migration to the U.S.

End Discrimination Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

Working class unity is a core belief of our union. Article IV of UE's constitution stipulates that all working persons are eligible for membership "regardless of skill, age, sex, nationality, color, race, religious or political belief or affiliation, sexual orientation, disability or immigration status."

While the ability to legally marry was a great victory for the LGBTQ+ community (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, and Queer/Questioning), more than half of this community in the U.S. continues to struggle for such basic rights as safe and affordable housing, freedom from workplace violence, and not to be discriminated against just because of who they are. This discrimination is heartbreakingly even more prevalent amongst LGBTQ+ people of color, who experience exponentially greater threats of violence simply because of the color of their skin.

As of January 1, 2023, only 22 states and 375 municipalities explicitly prohibit such discrimination. By May of the same year, 520 anti-LGBTQ+ bills advanced through state legislatures, with 70 of these bills enacted (an-all-time record, with much of the year left to report). Although President Biden reversed the previous administration's policy and extended federal protections against discrimination to LGBTQ+ individuals, this is not enough as many state attorneys general continue to try to roll back this policy.

Many states continue to push "religious liberty" laws which allow for anyone to claim religious belief as an excuse to discriminate against LGBTQ+ individuals, including in employment and access to healthcare. These laws are also often constructed so as to allow discrimination — up to and including firing — against unmarried women for being pregnant or using birth control. They are so vaguely worded as to sometimes allow further forms of bigotry, such as against interracial marriage, to be protected as well, as long as the individual claims a "religious" conviction. This is all done in an effort to control people who don't conform or who are seen to be different, by those who are quite possibly just scared of these differences.

Violent acts against LGBTQ+ people still occur far too frequently, with the majority of those murdered being black or brown trans women. We must unite and fight against all discrimination,

starting within our own communities and families. We must take up the cry that an injury to one is an injury to all.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT THIS 78th UE CONVENTION:

1. Encourages the formation of LGBTQ+ caucuses at all levels of the union.
2. Calls on locals to bargain for protections against discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity, health insurance and pension coverage for couples of all genders and sexual identities, and contract language that gives domestic partners the same rights as married employees;
3. Directs the UE Education Department to develop and disseminate anti-oppression workshops and materials at all levels of the union to educate our members and the community on the destructive nature of anti-LGBTQ+ discrimination.
4. Support organizations fighting for the rights of LGBTQ+ people;
5. Urges members to boycott establishments that discriminate against LGBTQ+ people.
6. Urges locals to demand gender-neutral language in our collective bargaining agreements;
7. Encourages all members to be conscious and make use of gender-neutral language in their everyday life.

Medicare for All

The Covid-19 pandemic continues to expose the dysfunction and cruelty of the U.S. healthcare system. The pandemic caused the world's life expectancy to drastically decrease. While life expectancy has bounced back throughout the world, it continues to decline in the U.S. In 2019, the average life expectancy in the U.S. was 79 years. Today, it is 76.4 years, the lowest since 1997, and continuing to decline. People of color experienced the starkest drops in life expectancy after 2019. For the average American, the reduction in life expectancy after 2019 is 2.6 years. Indigenous people of America saw their life expectancy decrease by 6.5 years. Hispanic people saw their life expectancy decrease by 4.2 years. Black people saw their life expectancy decrease by 4 years. Our broken healthcare system has failed to protect decades worth of progress made improving the health and longevity of the American people. It is clear now more than ever before that the U.S. healthcare system is unable to protect our most vulnerable communities.

According to the CDC, the lingering effects of Long Covid are still causing harm. Long Covid is when an individual continues to have Covid symptoms long after the infection passes. A report from June 2023 indicates that one third of all workers infected with Covid suffered or continue to suffer from Long Covid. They found that five percent of all workers who get infected with Covid in the future will not be able to return to work for at least a year.

The health inequities of the U.S. healthcare system are felt the most by people of color. Members of racial and ethnic minority groups disproportionately suffer from inequitable health insurance coverage, higher rates of medical debt, and Covid-19 death and infection rates. The CDC reports that these racial groups also experience higher rates of illness and death across a wide range of health conditions. These conditions include heart disease, cancer, diabetes, hypertension, and more.

The U.S. is the only major country not to guarantee healthcare to all as a fundamental human right. Despite this fact, and despite the lack of effectiveness in protecting our health, the U.S. system costs twice as much per capita as any other healthcare system in the world. We spend more money on healthcare, and we have much less to show for it. The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services reports that the U.S. spends nearly \$13,000 per capita on healthcare. Meanwhile, other countries which provide guaranteed universal care to everyone spend much less than this. The United Kingdom spends \$5,387 per capita, and Canada spends \$5,905 per capita. Even though they have significantly reduced healthcare costs, they still achieve better healthcare outcomes while guaranteeing healthcare to all.

The U.S. healthcare system is not designed to protect the health of Americans. Instead, it is designed to accumulate as much profit as possible for health insurance and pharmaceutical companies. An analysis of the 2022 financial statements from the major health insurance companies shows that their profits have increased an outrageous 287 percent since 2012. The

cost of health insurance increases every year not because it is necessary for the healthcare system to function, but because these companies want to maximize their profits. This is where the money Americans are spending on healthcare is going. Not towards the application of healthcare, but into the pockets of massively wealthy corporations.

To help pay for these corporate profits, Americans are drowning in medical debt. An investigation by the Kaiser Family Foundation (not affiliated with Kaiser Permanente) found that there are over 100 million people in America struggling with medical debt, including 41 percent of all adults in the U.S. They also found that, in the last five years, more than half of U.S. adults have gone into debt because of dental or medical bills. About one in five of those in medical debt reported that they didn't expect to ever pay their debt off. About two thirds of those in medical debt have reported that they have delayed care for themselves or a family member because of cost. In 2022, 38 percent of all Americans reported they had to delay medical treatments due to cost, a huge increase from the 26 percent who reported the same thing in 2021. Medical debt is the leading cause of bankruptcy, accounting for 66.5 percent of all bankruptcies in the U.S.

At a time when *Roe v. Wade* has been overturned, and the rights of women and all people who get pregnant are under attack, Medicare For All would empower all those disenfranchised by the Supreme Court's indefensible decision to receive the critical healthcare services they now struggle to access. Even before *Roe v. Wade* was overturned, access to reproductive healthcare services was limited and varied heavily based on where one lived. Now that states are implementing abortion bans, these healthcare services will become more expensive and harder to find for those who rely on them. With Medicare For All, the cost of reproductive health services would be covered, so that those who rely on these services will be able to use them. Passing Medicare For All is one of the major ways we can support women and all those who get pregnant during a time in which their rights are being stripped away from them.

Transgender people and all who rely on gender-affirming care are systematically excluded from healthcare coverage. As of 2023, only 26 out of 50 states require government insurance to cover gender affirming care. Many states are attacking LGBTQ+ rights and are restricting access to life-saving gender-affirming care. Trans people also suffer from higher rates of mental illness, including anxiety and depression. According to the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention, about one in 200 adults have made one suicide attempt. This number is one in five for trans people. About five percent of all people experience symptoms of depression. For trans people, that number is around 70 percent. Treating gender dysphoria with gender-affirming care saves lives. Medicare For All would cover gender-affirming care and mental healthcare for everyone.

Senator Bernie Sanders and Representatives Pramila Jayapal and Debbie Dingell have introduced the Medicare For All Act of 2023 to the House (H.R. 3421) and Senate (S. 1655). The Medicare For All Act would provide universally guaranteed healthcare coverage to all; eliminate the racial disparities in healthcare coverage; eliminate co-pays, deductibles, and premiums;

provide reproductive healthcare and gender-affirming care; allow unions to negotiate higher pay and benefits; reduce our healthcare costs; eliminate medical debt; reduce preventable death; and make our healthcare system about health instead of about profit. Thanks to the organizing efforts of the labor movement and other activists, a majority of the Democratic caucus are co-sponsoring the bill. Even so, it will still take a mass movement of workers applying pressure on every level to win it.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT THIS 78th UE CONVENTION:

1. Demands Congress enact the Medicare for All Act and in the meantime expand Medicare to include full coverage of dental, vision, and hearing, negotiation of drug prices, and lowering of the age of eligibility;
2. Supports efforts to institute similar programs at the state level;
3. Encourages locals and regions make use of UE's "How to Fix Healthcare" workshop and to follow the action steps outlined in the workshop, including:
 - a. Use UE's Healthcare Cost Calculator, including with members in the shop especially during contract negotiations;
 - b. Educate members about the real cost of their existing healthcare and organize members to call and visit their congresspeople in support of Medicare for All;
 - c. Collaborate with their employer on a mutually-agreed-upon public statement in support of Medicare for All;
4. Opposes all efforts to undermine the Affordable Care Act, Medicare, Medicaid, and Veterans' Administration (VA) health benefits;
5. Encourages the union at all levels to participate in coalitions for universal healthcare, including Labor Campaign for Single Payer, Physicians for a National Healthcare Program (PNHP), and Healthcare NOW!;
6. Urges locals to contact their local VA to learn what medical benefits are available to our veteran members, and to lobby for restoration of fully-funded medical benefits for veterans and their families and preventive testing and screening of all veterans potentially exposed to depleted uranium or other toxins;
7. Encourages locals to support the growing campaign for paid sick days and family leave in cities and states across the country;
8. Calls upon the local, state and federal governments to expand coverage for mental health and substance abuse issues.

A Green New Deal for People and the Planet

Climate change poses an existential threat to humanity. The science is unquestionable: 97 percent of peer-reviewed scientific literature affirms that human activity is causing global warming. The UN Intergovernmental Policy on Climate Change (IPCC) described their August 2021 report as a “code red for humanity.” The changes are unprecedented across thousands, if not hundreds of thousands of years. Some changes such as continued sea level rise are irreversible.

Since the IPCC report, the impacts of climate change continued to inspire headlines no one would ever have considered possible: “Colorado River crisis is so bad, Lakes Mead and Powell are unlikely to refill in our lifetimes.” The Colorado River crisis illustrates the challenges people face to obtain safe and clean drinking water and water for crops and industry. The river supplies drinking water for 40 million people.

Since UE’s last convention, we have seen monumental wildfires in the U.S. West, Canada, the Arctic, Siberia, Greece, and Turkey. We have also seen record-breaking typhoons, floods, hurricanes and cyclones, and deadly heat waves across the South and Southwest. Global temperatures will continue to rise unless we massively reduce our use of fossil fuels.

In the 1930s and 1940s, faced with the economic devastation of the Great Depression and the existential threat of Nazism and fascism, working people played a leadership role in the political and economic movement known as the “New Deal.” The New Deal helped our country recover from the Great Depression, facilitated the establishment of the industrial unions (including UE) that brought a decent standard of life to tens of millions of working-class people, and positioned our economy to be able to transition to defeating Nazism and fascism in World War II.

Like the transformation of our manufacturing infrastructure and economy that took place during World War II, a just and successful transition to a sustainable industrial and manufacturing base will require massive infusion of federal and state resources, coordination between government, industry and labor, and democratic participation of workers through widespread unionization. Millions of workers could be employed strengthening our infrastructure, rebuilding our rail and transit systems, converting to renewable energy sources, protecting against the effects of rising temperatures, and in many other areas.

A just transition also requires a real commitment to guaranteed income, benefits, and direct assistance for workers and communities. Workers who lose fossil-fuel jobs should retain their pay and compensation as they transition into new types of work, and should be provided with education and retraining opportunities well before they get laid off, and guaranteed jobs when

their facilities close. Communities that have been devastated by pollution or damaged by the effects of rising global temperatures, which are disproportionately low income communities of color, should receive massive investments which ensure good union jobs and a healthy future.

The labor movement has a leading role to play in ensuring that this transition is just, humane, and based on solidarity and valuing people over profit.

The Green New Deal proposed by the youth-led Sunrise Movement, Congresswoman Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez and Senator Ed Markey, and others offers our best hope to meet the challenge of climate change while creating millions of good union jobs. While the current situation in Congress makes immediate passage of the Green New Deal unlikely, the fight by UE locals representing workers of Wabtec and Hallcon to push the railroads and policymakers to invest in green locomotives shows the future we must fight for. Drivers at Hallcon, a railroad crew transportation company, have stepped up activity in the fight for the Green New Deal by testifying before the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). Members highlighted the polluting nature of the railroad industry, and how the negative effects are predominantly located in working-class neighborhoods.

Wabtec employs members of UE Locals 506, 610 and 618 and dominates the freight locomotive market within the U.S. It has the capability to build new, low-emission locomotives, as well as fully battery-powered locomotives suitable for use in rail yards; however, demand for new locomotives is currently low, which has led to less work.

Nearly two thirds of locomotives operated by major North American railroads are more than 20 years old — and are dirty locomotives that, without outside pressure, railroads will continue to operate for decades to come. Forcing railroads to replace or upgrade older locomotives with purchases of new cleaner or zero-emission models would result in hundreds of new jobs in Erie, Greensburg, and Wilmerding, as well as considerable reduction of pollution, particularly in rail yards often clustered in urban areas near communities of color. The Green Locomotive Project has built relationships with environmental activists and other trade unions, worked with federal politicians to draft legislation, and while the outcome is still in flux, has come closer to making a major breakthrough in Washington than UE has managed for decades.

It is also time to renew the demand raised by our union in the 1970s in response to the energy crisis: bring the energy industry under democratic control through public and social ownership. Public and cooperative utilities have a long history in this country and the conversion to renewables provides us with an opportunity to provide power for the many — not the few.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT THIS 78th UE CONVENTION:

1. Endorses the Green New Deal legislation introduced by Representative Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez and Senator Ed Markey;
2. Endorses the Civilian Corps for Jobs and Justice Act of 2023, which would use the AmeriCorps model to create 1.5 million living-wage jobs, working to help communities respond to climate change and implement a just transition;
3. Demands Congress implement the policy prescriptions of the Green Locomotive Project;
4. Commends the Sunrise Movement on their bold campaign of organizing young people to take direct action to force our elected representatives to address the pressing issue of climate change;
5. Encourages UE members to find creative ways to participate in activities that educate, organize and mobilize our members and the community at large to support the Green New Deal, and do so without violating collective bargaining agreements if applicable;
6. Encourages the union at all levels to educate members about:
 - a. Climate change and creative solutions that reduce carbon output while creating good union jobs;
 - b. Environmental justice struggles, including the struggle of UE members in West Virginia and eastern North Carolina threatened by pipeline projects in their areas;
7. Urges all UE members to become involved in environmental justice organizations and struggles;
8. Calls on environmental organizations to incorporate a just transition into their platforms;
9. Demands Congress hold fossil fuel corporations accountable for the damage they created, including but not limited to criminal liability and punitive fines;
10. Demands that all environmental policies, including those targeting climate change, incorporate a just transition for workers and communities affected;
11. Supports UE's participation in worker-oriented efforts to address climate change such as Trade Unions for Energy Democracy (TUED), Labor Network for Sustainability, the Blue-Green Alliance, and the Just Transition Alliance;
12. Reaffirms the solution UE proposed to the energy crisis in the 1970s: public ownership of the energy industry and increased investment in rail transportation;
13. Supports continuing efforts to build alliances with environmental and community organizations and to develop organizing strategies for renewable-energy workers.

A Safe and Healthy Workplace for All

The struggle for a healthy and safe workplace is fundamental to the labor movement. It was one of our earliest major demands alongside higher pay and a shorter work week. It is every union's obligation to encourage and, if necessary, force the boss to correct dangerous situations. Our goal, as a union, is to enforce being able to get through a shift safely and making it home.

Workers can spend up to half of their day in the workplace, and workplaces impact health and well-being. It benefits both employers and employees if workplaces are safe and support healthy behavior patterns. A healthy workplace is more than just safe; it considers health practices, the physical work environment, the psychosocial environment, and is supportive of healthy eating and physical activity. Natural light, ergonomics, green space, noise, food choices, exercise, commuting, fairness and flexibility are all important to employees. Employers who provide healthier options at the workplace see benefits such as reduced insurance costs and absenteeism, along with increased job satisfaction, morale and productivity.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), "while employers have a responsibility to provide a safe and hazard-free workplace, they also have abundant opportunities to promote individual health and foster a healthy work environment." The workplace can influence healthier social norms. Healthy workplaces support healthy eating and regular physical activity which can prevent obesity and chronic diseases. Furthermore, workplaces can improve their employees' knowledge of healthier lifestyle choices and be a place for preventative health screenings.

Prior to the passage of the Occupational Safety and Health Act (OSHA) in 1970, those lacking a union contract containing strong health and safety language had little to no protection. OSHA was a great step forward, but left out many workers, including independent contractors and public-sector employees on the state and local level. While some states have adopted safety and health legislation to cover their public employees, many states have adopted no protections at all and others have very little enforcement of their own rules. This results in situations where public-sector workers have been severely injured or even died on the job with no penalties faced by their employers. In addition, the Act remains broken and underfunded, with infrequent inspections and nominal fines.

There were 5,190 fatal work injuries recorded in the U.S. in 2021, an 8.9 percent increase from 2020. Out of this total, 2,258 (47 percent) were in either transportation and material moving occupations or construction and extraction occupations.

Health and safety was a key issue for the 250 workers at the Refresco bottling plant in Wharton, New Jersey, who now make up UE Local 115. Workers walked out in the early days of the COVID-19 pandemic after their employer failed to take adequate precautions to protect their

lives. After organizing with UE, the workers highlighted dangerous conditions, including being forced to work multiple machines simultaneously, wet floors, and fires on the shop floor. Their employer made the National Council for Occupational Safety and Health's 2022 "Dirty Dozen" list of unsafe employers who put workers, families and communities at risk, and National COSH provided important support for their struggle. Local 115's first contract, ratified in June 2023, includes strong health and safety protections.

Most workers and most UE members no longer work on a factory floor. Workers in the service industry have workplace safety issues which are not heavily regulated by OSHA, even if the workers themselves are nominally covered. Office workers often suffer from repetitive stress injuries like carpal tunnel syndrome, yet there are no ergonomics standards established by the federal government. Workers in retail, education, health care, and social services often have to deal with customers, students, or patients who threaten their physical safety, yet OSHA has largely been silent on establishing best-practice procedures to deal with these hazards. Female workers, workers of color, LGBTQ+ workers, and differently-abled workers all have different needs which should be addressed to ensure equity in workplace safety.

Workers with differing abilities also have a right to a healthy and safe workplace. Although much progress has been made since the passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), much remains to be done. Public access, workplace accommodation, accessible transit, legislative representation, access to education and vocational training, and job opportunity should be a priority of the labor movement as much as any other front on the fight for worker- and human rights. Fellow workers, regardless of circumstance or ability, deserve full access to society and opportunity, and the dignity of labor.

While only some of the jobs our members perform are recognized as being dangerous, all of us can be exposed to situations which threaten our safety and impact our health. Our obligation is to look after the health and well-being of our fellow workers through the collective action of our union. But we also must force legislators to adequately protect working people through a strengthening of our nation's health and safety laws.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT THIS 78th UE CONVENTION:

1. Calls on locals to:
 - a. Make health and safety a top priority both during and outside of contract negotiations;
 - b. Set up strong independent health and safety committees, and ensure training on health and safety for their members;
 - c. Exercise their right to accompany OSHA inspectors on workplace visits;

- d. Contact the national union before becoming involved with Voluntary Protection Programs (VPP);
 - e. Engage the membership in aggressive struggle to address hazards in the workplace;
 - f. Support local labor-initiated Committees on Occupational Safety and Health (COSH) groups;
 - g. Demand their employers provide access to paid time off for testing and quarantine for all reportable diseases as defined by the CDC, with no loss of sick time;
2. Demands Congress expand OSHA to include:
- a. Coverage for all workers, including those in the public sector and federal contractors;
 - b. Significant rulemaking regarding safe working procedures when dealing with risk of attack from patients, students, customers, or other individuals;
 - c. A better funded inspection process, which includes unannounced and unrestricted inspections;
 - d. Sharply increased penalties on employers, including punitive damages and blacklisting from government contracting opportunities;
 - e. Prosecution of bosses for conditions which lead to death or severe injury on the job.
3. Supports strengthening workers' compensation laws in all states, with improved provisions on injuries sustained from physical attacks in the workplace;
4. Opposes any attempt to further restrict the rights of workers to sue their employers over job-related injuries, and unsafe conditions;
5. Demands the Biden Administration develop a permanent OSHA standard related to contagious diseases;
6. Demands Congress strengthen the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Labor Law Reform

The Bill of Rights has never been applied in the workplace, where employers are empowered to maintain near-absolute control. With our constitutional rights shredded by our employers, our rights to organize into unions are also ignored by bosses. Our freedom to be protected from unreasonable searches and seizures ends at the entrance to the workplace. Our freedoms of speech and assembly are virtually nonexistent while at work — unless you have a union.

The National Labor Relations Act (NLRA), passed in 1935, was the closest labor got to a “workers’ bill of rights.” The NLRA provided labor for the first time the legal right to organize, to bargain, and to strike without interference from the employer. For the first time employers were required to recognize and bargain with a union of the workers’ choice.

In response to five million workers striking in 1946 — mass action intended to force employers to share their profits with workers who had gone through years of hardship during World War II — a reactionary Congress voted to amend the NLRA with the 1947 Taft-Hartley Act. The law took away the right of unions to engage in secondary boycotts, made closed union shops illegal, allowed states to pass “right-to-work” laws, allowed the President to interfere in strikes, and gave employers more tools to stop workers from organizing.

The Taft-Hartley Act, passed with the votes of Southern Democrats, was in part a consequence of the failure of the labor movement to organize the South. The South has historically had low union representation; the proportion of workers represented by a union in Southern states is less than half of that outside the South. This lack of union rights disproportionately affects Black workers, as at least 55-60 percent of all Black people in the U.S. live in the South. This is a legacy of the Confederacy, and the legislative project of Jim Crow that followed.

Under Jim Crow, state legislatures sought to formalize white supremacy by targeting and disempowering Black workers, particularly in the public sector, by advancing a blitz of anti-union legislation. The South led the way in passing right-to-work legislation in the 1940s and 1950s and in stripping public-sector workers of collective bargaining rights.

A second grievous body blow to labor rights happened in 1981 with Ronald Reagan’s busting of the air traffic controllers union (PATCO). A heretofore little-noticed judicial ruling allowing for the “permanent replacement” of strikers was increasingly used by bosses to de-unionize workplaces and drive down wages and working conditions. The threat of permanent replacement, high unemployment, and the shrinking number of unionized jobs led to a precipitous decline in the number of strikes. Since militant action is the basis of all collective power in the workplace, this created a self-sustaining downward spiral in both unionization and worker power that has yet to be completely arrested.

In the last decade, employers have imported Jim Crow-era legislation from the South to the rest of the country. They have passed right-to-work legislation in states with deep union history like Michigan (finally overturned in 2023) and Wisconsin, stripped collective bargaining rights from public-sector workers in Wisconsin and Iowa, and established a dangerous Supreme Court precedent in *Janus v. AFSCME*, which imposed right-to-work conditions on the public sector nationwide.

Today, employers brazenly violate or manipulate the law and victimize working people who dare to challenge their complete control. Almost 10 percent of workers who engage in organizing are fired by their employers, amounting to tens of thousands every year. In 92 percent of union organizing campaigns, workers are subjected to the psychological warfare of captive audience meetings, such as we saw in UE's recent campaign at Refresco. Of those workplaces which successfully manage to organize in spite of employer-run terror campaigns, only half will obtain a first union contract. The ranks are cut in half yet again, as only half of these units in turn win second contracts. The percentage of unionized workers in the U.S. declined from 24 percent in 1979 to 10.8 percent in 2020 to 10.1 percent in 2022, with only 6.1 percent in the private sector. These levels are the lowest since before the great organizing drives of the 1930s. In other industrial countries, union density is many times higher.

In the public sector, workers in some states are prohibited from bargaining collectively. North Carolina and South Carolina have blanket statutes that prohibit collective bargaining for all public-sector employees. Even where collective bargaining is comprehensive, public workers are usually banned from striking, and are instead shunted into legalistic binding arbitration procedures. This has had a negative effect on both the militancy which allowed mass organization of the public sector in the 1970s, and the ability of members to coordinate against assaults on their working conditions and collective bargaining rights.

President Joe Biden has made some limited improvements regarding labor law since coming into office. Within less than an hour of being inaugurated he began the process of removing odious former General Counsel Peter Robb—a corporate consultant who actively worked with Ronald Reagan to crush PATCO. The Biden NLRB has a pro-union majority which has reversed several anti-worker decisions made by the Trump board, but the precedent has been set many times now that the incremental changes to labor rights won under Democratic presidents are undone under the next Republican president. Anti-labor Supreme Court cases like *Janus v. AFSCME* remain in full force with no prospect of reversal.

Given all executive orders and favorable judicial rulings are fleeting, we must look to legislative action if we wish to achieve changes which will endure beyond the current administration. The most comprehensive labor law proposal before the current Congress is the PRO Act (H.R. 20). The bill would rein in most employer lawbreaking around organizing a union and negotiating a first contract, with punitive fines for labor law violations, a streamlined election procedure,

making it harder for an employer to interfere in the election process, banning captive audience meetings, and making abuse of the terms “supervisor” and “independent contractor” by employers much harder. The bill also undoes many critical elements of Taft-Hartley, essentially ending the enforcement of “right-to-work” laws and re-legalizing secondary strikes. Notably, it also would make the permanent replacement of economic strikers illegal, once again allowing for the use of the strike as a regular tactic to achieve a measure of justice in the workplace. UE locals have been actively supporting the passage of the PRO Act by engaging in delegation marches, mass phone call actions and letter-writing campaigns to their congressional representatives.

Now is the time for a law that protects workers and grants all rights and freedoms under the Constitution. In order to really safeguard workers, the right to associate — the right of working people to have the ability to say under what conditions they will or will not labor — must be enshrined in the U.S. Constitution. Workers whose rights were fully protected under the Constitution would be free to assemble, speak and associate anywhere and at all times, to organize without employer intervention, to bargain collectively, to strike, to boycott, or to refuse to handle goods.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT THIS 78th UE CONVENTION:

1. Calls on Congress to:
 - a. Amend the Constitution to include worker rights;
 - b. In the meantime pass the PRO Act, and any other legislation giving workers the same constitutional rights to organize without restriction or limitation in the workplace that we enjoy outside the workplace, including substantial penalties for employers who violate these rights;
 - c. Repeal the Taft-Hartley Act;
2. Urges UE locals to:
 - a. Challenge state laws (such as right to work for less) that restrict the rights of workers in the public and private sectors to organize, bargain, strike, and function freely;
 - b. Build coalitions with unions and the community to expand the rights of workers;
 - c. Meet with their local congressional delegation to get them to sign on to and actively support the PRO Act;
 - d. Include as part of their political action work a demand for the restoration of the right to strike for private and public workers without retaliation or replacement.

Collective Bargaining Rights for Public Workers

Protecting public workers' rights is crucial for creating thriving workplaces and communities. Public workers provide vital services such as healthcare, sanitation, and education at all levels. But in many states, public workers do not have the right to collectively bargain with their employer. While their labor is vital to communities across the country, these public workers are left without a voice in their workplace. Silenced and unprotected, these public workers are exposed to unfair treatment and unjust working conditions. Violating public workers' right to collectively bargain is not only unjust to the workers, it is unjust to the communities they serve. UE is committed to fighting for public workers' rights to collectively bargain and fights for those workers in states where collective bargaining is banned or nonexistent. In those latter states, UE stands by public workers demanding to be respected by their employers.

Collective bargaining is a right for all workers. The right to collectively bargain is essential for public workers in the fight for better working conditions and better public services for local communities across the country. Through collective bargaining, workers can directly participate in deciding the conditions of their labor. When workers have a voice, workplace democracy is possible.

In 1935, the U.S. passed the National Labor Relations Act (NLRA), which protected private-sector workers' rights to collectively bargain. However, the Act was silent on the issue of public employees. Due to the lack of federal protections for public workers, the right to collectively bargain varies drastically from state to state. For example, in West Virginia public workers have no legal framework for collective bargaining, and in 2022 the right for payroll deduction for union dues was rescinded. In North Carolina, public workers are explicitly banned from collective bargaining. State governments have gutted long-established collective bargaining laws for public workers in Wisconsin and Iowa.

Brought to North Carolina by UE Local 150, members of the International Labor Organization (UN) ruled that the state's ban on public-sector collective bargaining violates international

human rights standards. Denial of collective bargaining in the southern states is a vestige of slavery and Jim Crow; the fight for public-sector collective bargaining requires multi-racial and multi-generational coalitions to come together and fight for workers' rights.

Despite legal setbacks, public workers are speaking up and fighting back with renewed energy. In response to organizing efforts, Virginia partially repealed their ban on collective bargaining for public workers in 2020, demonstrating that the legacy of Jim Crow can be repealed. The new legislation provides that individual municipalities can pass resolutions allowing their workers to bargain collectively. Municipal workers in Virginia Beach, the state's largest city, are actively organizing with UE and have made significant progress towards passing such a resolution.

In North Carolina, the Southern Workers Justice Campaign and the Hear Our Public Employees (H.O.P.E.) coalition are leading the fight to repeal the prohibition of collective bargaining, forging unity and solidarity between the labor movement and the civil rights movement. The work of our locals in North Carolina, Virginia, and West Virginia, with their multi-racial membership and leadership, represents a powerful weapon for social progress.

While our union fights to repeal the bans on collective bargaining, public workers on the ground can fight for their rights with "Workers' Bill of Rights" campaigns. A Workers' Bill of Rights is a list of demands that articulate the basic rights of workers in a given workplace. For example, state mental-health workers and municipal workers in UE Local 150 have developed strong Workers' Bill of Rights campaigns to elevate basic demands such as safety, adequate staffing levels, proper training and equipment, the right to refuse excessive overtime, family-supporting wages, and more. Many advances have been made establishing standards as part of Workers' Bill of Rights campaigns.

The Public Service Freedom to Negotiate Act, introduced in the last Congress, would set minimum standards for collective bargaining rights for public sector workers nationwide, ensuring that states such as North Carolina create a legal framework for exercising those rights and restoring those rights in states such as Iowa where they have been curtailed. Reintroduction

and passage of the Act would result in a sea change for millions of public workers at the state and local level.

While new federal legislation would be a welcome development, public-sector collective bargaining rights were originally won through struggle. In the 1970s, a series of strikes happened across the country at federal, state, and local levels. These strikers had no legal protection, and could have been terminated for their participation, but worker unity was strong enough to protect their jobs. Ultimately, public officials decided to “tame” the ferocity of public employees through the offering of collective bargaining rights — usually in exchange for a ban on strikes and forcing workers through legalistic methods of contract settlement such as arbitration.

In order to restore what rights have been lost, and to bring them to states where they were never won, worker power must be a credible threat to the employer. We must return to a period of widespread workplace agitation and mobilization. We must develop and revitalize public-sector worker unions and unite with allies to establish laws that grant full labor rights to all public workers.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT THIS 78th UE CONVENTION:

1. Calls for the union at all levels to initiate campaigns for public worker collective bargaining rights, including the right to strike. Campaigns will fight to establish these rights in states where we lack them, retain and strengthen them in states where they exist, and restore them where they have been stripped away;
2. Demands that North Carolina repeal its ban on collective bargaining, General Statute § 95-98 that prohibits state and local governments from entering into collective bargaining agreements with their employers and strikes;
3. Calls on local governments in Virginia, specifically the city of Virginia Beach, to pass resolutions protecting public workers’ right to collectively bargain;
4. Demands that the state of Iowa reverse its 2017 changes to its collective bargaining law;

5. Demands the state of Wisconsin repeal Act 10 of 2011, which stripped public workers of their rights;
6. Demands Congress pass the Public Service Freedom to Negotiate Act;
7. Supports the Southern Workers Assembly in its call to organize the South;
8. Supports the Southern Workers Justice Campaign building awareness and support for collective bargaining rights of public workers in North Carolina and Virginia;
9. Encourages locals to discuss with their members solidarity dues and donations to the Southern Worker Justice Campaign.
10. Supports the education of elected officials and the general public regarding the need for collective bargaining for public employees;
11. Supports work at the international level challenging the violation of public workers' rights;
12. Calls on the union at all levels to support Workers' Bill of Rights campaigns for public sector workers in states where collective bargaining is currently banned;
13. Calls on locals to mobilize in support of candidates for elected office who will restore and improve collective bargaining rights for public-sector employees;
14. Calls on state and local governments to stop attacks on public employee's right to pay union dues through payroll deduction, including bans and charging high administration fees.

Restore the Right to Strike

The right of workers to withhold their labor — to strike — is among the most important of human rights. No society can truly claim to respect liberty and deny workers the right to strike. International law recognizes the right to strike as a fundamental human right.

One of UE's core principles, embedded in the preamble to our Constitution, is to "pursue at all times a policy of aggressive struggle to improve our conditions." Throughout history, strikes have been critical to the growth of the labor movement, including UE. The right to strike is vital to maintain and improve our wages, benefits, and working conditions, and to resist the attack on democracy by anti-working class elements.

The ten-week strike by members of UE Locals 506 and 618 in Erie, PA in the summer of 2023 got national attention for their bold demands, including their efforts to regain the right to strike over grievances mid-contract. While they did not win everything they wanted to, they were able to vastly improve the company's economic offer and make many non-economic gains, including forcing much greater accountability and corporate responsiveness to shop-floor problems.

The Wabtec strike in Erie was a model UE strike: the locals spent months preparing their membership, making arrangements to sustain their members during a long battle if necessary, and keeping the members informed during both negotiations and the strike itself. They had the full support of their community, of politicians across the political spectrum, and of allies throughout the state and the country.

Strike action, and credible strike threats, played an important role in securing several UE contracts over the past two years. In March of 2023 the nearly 700 members of Local 1004 engaged in a one-day unfair labor practice strike against their employer, Henry Mayo Newhall Memorial Hospital, which helped to achieve the settlement of a new three-year agreement. Strike authorization votes by Locals 228, 1008, 1123 and 1137 were essential to securing satisfactory new contracts, and the memory of Local 625's one-day strike in 2019 helped them secure a one-year contract extension with no increases to health insurance and a decent wage increase.

In the public sector, workers in 39 states lack the legal right to strike. As UE's public-employee members can attest, mandatory arbitration disempowers the rank and file in the negotiation of their own contract. Recent legislative attacks on public workers included rollbacks of the right to strike where it once existed.

As was the case with the public-sector labor upsurge in the 1970s, just because a strike action is nominally “illegal” doesn’t mean it can’t be successful. Just two weeks before our convention, solid waste workers in the city of Durham, NC refused to load their work trucks on September 6, demanding that the city make up for the two years their step pay plan was essentially frozen during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The strike is far from dead. The current strike by 170,000 writers and actors in Hollywood is enjoying wide public support, a strike authorization vote by the Teamsters won historic gains in the largest private-sector union contract in the U.S., and as we meet, UAW members have initiated a rolling strike during negotiations with the “Big Three” auto companies. However, a broad grassroots campaign by labor and its allies is necessary to reestablish our right to strike without limitation, without the threat of being replaced, and, if necessary, during our contracts to ensure that our employers are accountable for honoring those agreements.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT THIS 78th UE CONVENTION:

1. Calls for the continued use of the strike as the primary weapon against the employer, characterized by careful planning and timing, full membership involvement, and mobilization of community and political support;
2. Directs the national union to provide renewed member education on UE strike policy;
3. Urges locals to seek the right to strike on grievances as part of their collective bargaining demands;
4. Calls upon locals and regions to include as part of their political action work a demand for the restoration of the right to strike for private and public workers without retaliation or replacement;
5. Encourages UE members and locals to learn more about the need to restore the right to strike by reading Joe Burns’ books *Reviving the Strike* and *Strike Back*; and learn about their legal rights and effective tactics in strikes by reading Robert Schwartz’s *Strikes, Picketing and Inside Campaigns*; and the UE pamphlet *Preparing For and Conducting A Strike: A UE Guide*.

A Just Economy for All

As the COVID-19 pandemic began to ease in 2022, working people confronted a new problem: inflation. Not only were rising prices eating into our household budgets, but corporate, media, and political elites were claiming that our wages, and the government programs that helped sustain many of us through the pandemic, were in fact causing inflation. Instead of addressing the real causes — supply chain issues, corporate price-gouging, the war in Ukraine, and our dysfunctional healthcare system — the federal government opted for a series of interest-rate hikes, in a transparent effort to trigger a recession and throw people out of work.

Fortunately those rate hikes did not result in a recession. However, corporate Democrats used the false argument that putting more money into the economy would make inflation worse as an excuse to block the extension and expansion of important government programs — ones that would have helped working people better afford basic necessities of life like food, housing, and healthcare.

As a result, poverty soared, especially among children. The overall poverty rate jumped from 7.8 percent in 2021 to 12.4 percent in 2022, and the children's poverty rate, only 5.2 percent in 2021, also rose to 12.4 percent. However, the expiration of pandemic-era programs, combined with the bite of inflation, affected all working people, not just the poorest: median household income, adjusted for inflation, fell 2.3 percent.

Meanwhile, corporate profits soared, reaching an all-time high in the third quarter of 2022. A 2022 study by the Economic Policy Institute found that fatter corporate profit margins accounted for over half (53.9 percent) of the price increases we saw during 2021 and 2022. Corporations used this windfall, not to reward workers or invest in socially useful production, but to enrich executives and stockholders through stock buybacks and fat bonuses for those at the top.

Fundamental political changes are needed to reverse this massive inequality of wealth and income.

The COVID-19 pandemic, and the federal government's response to it, demonstrated that government intervention in the economy to help working people is not only feasible, but necessary. Faced with the massive economic dislocation caused by the pandemic — and the potential for widespread social unrest — Congress provided for direct cash payments to all Americans, extended and enhanced unemployment benefits, paid sick leave, an increased child tax credit and monthly prepayments thereof, and support for homeowners, renters, students, businesses and state governments. Throughout the pandemic, COVID-19 tests and vaccinations were provided free of charge through what was essentially a single-payer system.

While corporate Democrats and Republicans have joined together to repeal or block extension of virtually all of these benefits, the growing pro-worker, anti-corporate wing of the Democratic Party, inspired by Senator Bernie Sanders's 2016 and 2020 presidential campaigns, has embraced and promoted ambitious solutions to economic inequality. Bills and proposals from Sanders and his allies to enact Medicare for All (single-payer healthcare), raise the federal minimum wage to \$15 per hour, establish free college tuition, and abolish student debt would go a long way to relieve economic pressure on working-class families. During the height of inflation in August 2022, Representative Jamaal Bowman introduced the Emergency Price Stabilization Act, which would allow the government to investigate corporate profiteering and issue appropriate controls and regulations to stabilize prices. The climate policy framework known as the "Green New Deal," would create millions of good, union jobs while addressing the threat of climate change — with the UE-led Green Locomotive Project providing a concrete example of how this would work. The boldness of these policies has inspired even more ambitious proposals to direct our society's wealth into other projects that are socially useful and create good jobs, including infrastructure, public and cooperatively-owned housing, and a social wealth fund.

A wave of strikes as the country came out of the pandemic brought national attention to the control that employers try to exert over their workers' entire lives through mandatory overtime and the imposition of "suicide shifts," that make a mockery of the eight-hour workday which the labor movement fought for over a century ago. Our union has long supported further shortening the workday and workweek. We should resist any attempt by employers to weaken one of the labor movement's most fundamental victories — the eight-hour day and forty-hour workweek — and instead push our employers and government to shorten the workday with no cut in pay.

As record numbers of Americans approach retirement, the right to retire comfortably and with dignity is threatened by attacks on pensions, Social Security, wages, and working people's ability to save. With defined-benefit pensions increasingly rare, and 401-style accounts typically woefully underfunded by employers, Social Security is the main source of retirement income for most Americans. The drafters and supporters of the Social Security Act of 1935 hoped eventually to significantly increase the benefits, broaden the groups of Americans covered, and add medical care and other benefits. Retirement security, like healthcare, is a fundamental right for all people. We need an expansion of Social Security into a "single-payer" source of adequate retirement income, increasing the benefits to ensure that all Americans can look forward to a secure retirement.

Workers and farmers have a strong mutual interest in an America where economic growth and social justice have higher priority than rewarding corporations, their officers, and their investors. America's family farmers are suffering as they struggle to survive the one-two punch of climate

change and corporate concentration. Both floods and droughts are becoming more common and more intense, making it extremely difficult to grow crops with any predictability. At the same time, farmers are increasingly at the mercy of a handful of large agribusinesses. Solidarity among trade unionists, family farmers, and farmworkers is crucial to forging an agricultural policy based on justice and prosperity.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT THIS 78th UE CONVENTION:

1. Demands Congress:
 - a. Enact a federal climate jobs program to provide good, union jobs while addressing climate change;
 - b. Provide adequate financial support to states and municipalities to meet the needs of their people, hire adequate staff, and provide their workers with decent wages and benefits;
 - c. Pass the Raise the Wage Act to raise the federal minimum wage to \$15 an hour and, recognizing that \$15 is not sufficient, go beyond this and increase the minimum wage to \$20 an hour with continued increases tied to the cost of living;
 - d. Pass Medicare for All, single-payer healthcare legislation;
 - e. Enact paid family and medical leave, including parental leave, as a nationwide policy, without requiring use of other paid time off benefits;
 - f. Enact legislation to establish free public higher education and forgive student debt;
 - g. Address the housing crisis by:
 - i. Declaring a moratorium on home foreclosures and evictions; and
 - ii. Investing in public and cooperative affordable housing;
 - h. Enact comprehensive financial regulations including eliminating offshore tax havens, taxing economic speculation, breaking up or nationalizing banks that are “too big to fail,” and reducing corporate influence in politics;
 - i. Reform the tax system by restoring higher tax rates for the wealthy and corporations;

- j. Remove the cap on Social Security taxes so that all contribute the same percentage of earnings to the trust fund, and to tax unearned income (capital gains and investment income) on the same basis as wages and salaries;
 - k. Address the country's retirement security crisis by expanding Social Security to pay retired workers 75 to 90 percent of their pre-retirement income;
 - l. Reject all efforts to privatize Social Security, reduce benefits, undermine cost of living adjustments (COLA) or raise the retirement age, and that they return the retirement age for Social Security with full benefits to age 65;
 - m. Restore and maintain funding for trade assistance programs such as TRA and TAA;
 - n. Enact legislation to establish a 32-hour workweek with no loss in pay;
2. Calls on regions and locals to:
- a. Apply political pressure on elected officials to enact the policies in this resolution;
 - b. Educate our members and communities about income and wealth inequality and policies that can address it;
 - c. Work with and join organizations promoting a just economy;
 - d. Articulate bargaining goals within a broader economic framework that calls for greater equality;
3. Reaffirms our longstanding policy of overtime pay for any hours after eight and our goal of reducing the work week. We call on the labor movement to pursue a shorter work week with no loss in pay;
4. Calls on Congress and state legislatures to improve existing overtime laws and regulations, provide for their vigorous enforcement, and oppose employer-imposed "comp time" and "flex time" schemes;
5. Supports an agricultural policy that will allow farmworkers and farm families a fair return for their efforts and a decent standard of living.

Stop the Dismantling of Public Education

Since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic and the lockdown quarantine that followed, the state of public education has been altered in severe ways. There are more than 50 million students in the United States. Public education represents a cornerstone for a democratic society, but in its current state, it is little more than a feeble system, limping from one academic year to another.

Key personnel shortages, including of teachers, custodians, bus drivers, librarians, and educational aides, have the potential to undermine the availability of educational services and learning to students, family, and schools, which can have long lasting effects. Teachers fill in for unsupervised classrooms when substitutes are not available, drive school buses, and monitor lunch lines at the expense of their lunch and planning period, thereby affecting the quality of education for students across the country. Staff shortages, school funding, learning loss, and increased discrimination are crushing schools. Further, when seeking to fill these vacancies, many candidates lack proper qualifications, and positions are filled with people with no teaching experience. Students with disabilities miss out on crucial services that are written into individual education plans, and required to be received by federal law. Staff question whether or not to work part time at fast food restaurants, in which they would get paid higher per hour than while at school. Despite collective bargaining agreements outlining responsibilities, staff agree to fill in these responsibilities for the welfare of the students, but at their own expense, leading to greater frustration, higher stress, and greater burnout, with the cycle repeating itself until there is nothing left.

As of 2021, a report published by Education Weekly Research Center indicated the U.S. received a C grade for school finance. While states are free to direct their federal dollars as they please, there is a strong need for improvements in educational funding policies across the U.S. Over the last five years, federal education spending has dropped from 11.5 billion to 9.5 billion, further tightening the resources necessary for appropriate education of students.

Perhaps one of the most alarming attacks on public education is the changes in curriculum from teaching fact to teaching agendas. Books by and about people of color and LGBTQ+ individuals are being removed from the shelves. Misinformation in curriculum might leave students further behind in their critical thinking skills, problem solving skills, and even social-emotional skills such as empathy. When curricula are altered in such alarming, oppressive ways, it is important to remember that we are not only altering learning, we are altering the future of society.

Higher education is also under a privatization attack. Corporate-backed reformers are imposing

profit-based models onto higher education. Professors are under tremendous pressure to bring funding into the university, rather than focusing on doing good academic work that will benefit the greater society. The labor protections that professors fought hard to achieve through the tenure system are under threat of being dismantled with the increased exploitation of adjunct and other non-tenure-track faculty whose labor produces value for colleges and universities far beyond what they receive in wages and benefits.

Over 43 million Americans are crippled by student loan debt. Overall student debt is now over \$1.74 trillion, with average student debt over \$37,000. The cost of college has risen eight times faster than wages over the last 40 years. It's no surprise that 7.8 percent of student loans are in delinquency or default, with a disproportionate number of those who default being low-income students or students of color who have been hoodwinked into attending private for-profit colleges and trade schools.

Those who pursue graduate education are doubly affected by the crisis in higher education. The average debt for graduate students is over \$78,000, while more and more academic workers with advanced degrees are being pushed into contingent adjunct positions where they make as little as one quarter of what a tenure-track professor makes. Workers who are paying off student loans are delaying the purchase of homes and cars, and putting off marriage and starting families, creating a further drag on the U.S. economy. Further, key positions in healthcare and education are not being filled, due to the exploitative nature of private loans, amounting debt, and low paying positions. This continues a vicious cycle which the country stumbles through, in which workers, crippled by financial burden, are not able to serve the communities that need it most.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT THIS 78th UE CONVENTION:

1. Demands Congress:
 - a. Pass laws implementing free public higher education and student loan forgiveness for all;
 - b. In the meantime, put a moratorium on all student loan defaults, introduce default forgiveness, implement measures so that loans can be repaid at no more than 10 percent of annual income, reduce student loan interest rates to the same rate available for banking entities, and ensure interest cannot accrue until after graduation;
 - c. Maintain funding for Title II intended for professional development, mentoring

programs, and class size reduction;

2. Demands the U.S. Department of Education:

- a. Bar the use of taxpayer-funded voucher programs that siphon public funds from public schools and funnel them to private and charter schools;
- b. Eliminate all high stakes testing;
- c. Work with borrowers to seek loan forgiveness if schools have deceived them or committed fraud;
- d. Ensure curriculum is accurate;
- e. Fund school personnel programs in order to maintain appropriate student-to-staff ratios;
- f. Provide vocational training and job placement services for individuals transitioning into the workforce, including those who have advanced degrees but need further direction to reach the desired level of job placement;

3. Demands that state legislatures:

- a. Fully fund public education;
- b. Preserve tenure systems;
- c. Address economic and racial segregation by disconnecting educational funding from property taxation;
- d. Advocate for the removal of police forces from schools;

4. Encourages regions and locals to actively lobby Congress and state legislatures on this program;

5. Supports all campaigns that advocate universal access to free education;

6. Demands an end to book bans, censorship, and restrictions on curricula taught in libraries, school districts, and universities.

Defend Our Civil Liberties

UE has warned for years that when the government is given powers of domestic surveillance and “counterintelligence,” it can and will use them against ordinary, innocent Americans, particularly those who speak out against government policies, and especially those who represent a credible power base, such as the labor movement. We saw this during the McCarthy period in the 1940s and ‘50s when the combined forces of the federal government, big business, and their business-union co-conspirators nearly destroyed UE and progressive trade unionism.

More than two decades into the “War on Terror,” deprivations of civil liberties originally justified as emergency measures have become deeply entrenched and made permanent. They have not only failed to make us safer, they have diminished our democratic rights. Law enforcement and intelligence officials have turned a blind eye while reactionaries have plotted attacks on democracy in plain sight, while focusing their counterterrorism authorities on the same old targets — progressive movements that challenge the economic status quo. Disturbingly, some are calling for these agencies to be granted new powers in the name of combating “domestic terrorism.”

The Justice Department continues to use the Espionage Act, which was originally used to jail labor leaders like Eugene V. Debs for their opposition to World War I, to jail whistleblowers and journalists. As information about torture, extrajudicial executions, or mass surveillance is made public, the U.S. government responds by pursuing those who made the information public, branding their actions as being on par with those of spies and saboteurs.

Bosses try to instill fear in workers during union organizing campaigns — that is the kind of fear that the government has tried to spread across society as a whole. Corporations trying to defend their profit margins have been behind a number of these civil liberties abuses. Big business has pushed for laws to criminalize those who protest them or expose their misconduct. They hire private mercenary firms, modern day successors to the Pinkertons, who work with law enforcement to stamp out protests.

The most basic civil liberty is the right to live without fear of being harassed, beaten, or killed. African Americans and other people of color are disproportionately targeted by police and are much more likely than white people to be victims of police harassment and violence. The abundant and growing audiovisual record of law enforcement officers using excessive force

against people of color when stopped for traffic or other minor civil infractions documents what these communities have been saying all along: that race remains a major factor in depriving people of their civil liberties. Movements against police brutality, mass incarceration, and racism, such as Black Lives Matter are essential. The FBI has responded by distributing a threat assessment to law enforcement across the country claiming that opposition to racism or police brutality is likely to lead to violence against police.

In response to working-class protests against police brutality and racism, many politicians are pushing anti-protest laws. These laws are similar to repressive legislation that has historically been pushed to restrict the labor movement. Many of these same politicians employ the language and spread the conspiracies of far-right extremists and white supremacists. Others, rather than openly endorsing hate, will turn a blind eye to these followers, affirming their assent through silence. Still others will deliver the same message but as dog-whistles, offhand remarks, and projection.

In September 2023, the Georgia attorney general's office announced an indictment under the Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations (RICO) statute of 61 organizers connected to the "Stop Cop City" movement. These peaceful protesters, who are seeking to stop the construction of a massive police training complex in one of the city's largest remaining green spaces, now face up to 20 years in prison. This case sets a dangerous precedent that authorities can prosecute people for activities as harmless as putting up a flyer by connecting them to a "conspiracy."

In many states, a vocal and ugly minority is seeking to deny, degrade, and, in some cases, criminalize fellow workers who merely wish to live their true lives and gender identities. Inevitably, these extremists and their agenda will not end with the trans community, but will instead carry on until their dogma is hiding in the corner of every bedroom, dictating a twisted version of morality and making criminals of all who refuse their backwards vision. The attacks on the rights of trans individuals and their fundamental right to exist is an affront to all that we hold true in UE.

The Supreme Court's reversal of the landmark *Roe v. Wade* decision has allowed the imposition of state laws that remove the fundamental right to make personal medical decisions, and strips the right to bodily autonomy from free citizens. Furthermore, there are factions that seek to

outlaw and prosecute the use of birth control of all kinds, and criminalize interstate travel for the purpose of accessing medical care. State control of workers' bodies is unacceptable and must be opposed.

An increasing portion of Americans oppose the death penalty, and a growing number of states have abolished it. When evidence such as DNA testing reveals death row prisoners are innocent, it confirms our justice system is fundamentally flawed. The question of capital punishment is historically of great concern to union members. On numerous occasions our government has framed and executed labor leaders, including the Haymarket martyrs, Industrial Workers of the World leader Joe Hill, immigrant labor activists Sacco and Vanzetti, and the coal miners known as the Molly Maguires. Tom Mooney, who spoke to an early UE convention, and the legendary Big Bill Haywood, were spared the death penalty only after massive campaigns to save them.

The chilling effect of denials of our democratic freedoms curtails political debate within the U.S., limits the ability of all citizens to make democratic choices for the future of our country, and thereby undermines our livelihoods and living standards. It is clear that the fight to protect and regain civil liberties must continue regardless of which party controls the White House.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT THIS 78th UE CONVENTION:

1. Opposes any change in the law that would further undermine our right to defend the interests of working people, specifically including changes designed to make picket-line activity subject to federal prosecution;
2. Urges all locals and members to support organizations such as Defending Rights & Dissent, the National Lawyers Guild, the American Civil Liberties Union, the Committee to Stop FBI Repression, and the National Conference of Black Lawyers;
3. Demands Congress investigate revelations of political spying and disruption by the FBI and other federal agencies and pass legislation definitively outlawing these practices;
4. Opposes any laws designed to limit the right to protest;
5. Demands the end of use of the Espionage Act to prosecute whistleblowers and journalists;

6. Calls for legislation to protect our civil liberties in the workplace, including:
 - a. Prohibiting random or blanket drug testing in the workplace;
 - b. Banning telephone and internet monitoring of employees;
 - c. Further restricting the use of lie detectors, cameras, GPS, and other surveillance technologies in employment;
 - d. Full respect of the rights of LGBTQ+ individuals;
7. Opposes preventive detention and Justice Department policies that allow for closed hearings, secret evidence, refusal to name those detained, elimination of attorney-client privilege, and long detentions without bond without any specific articulated reason;
8. Demands Congress reform the process for placing groups on terrorist lists to ensure that they have sufficient notice and a meaningful opportunity to respond to charges;
9. Supports legislation to strengthen the Freedom of Information Act, supports strong whistleblower protection legislation, and opposes efforts to intimidate or bar the press and other news media from reporting on government activities;
10. Supports repeal of McCarthy-era “speech crime” laws, including the Smith Act and the Subversive Activities Control Act, and opposes exclusion of foreigners based on political beliefs or memberships;
11. Supports the abolition of the death penalty and an end to mass incarceration;
12. Opposes legislation that would curtail the rights of LGBTQ+ individuals to participate in marriage, access medical care, be recognized in society and by the law, and any other laws that would impinge on the rights of individuals to live their lives as free and equal citizens.

For Jobs, Peace and a Pro-Worker Foreign Policy

The U.S. military budget — at over \$877 billion, larger than those of the next ten nations combined — continues to soar out of control with bipartisan support. Threats or use of military force are still a regular feature of U.S. foreign policy, under presidents of both major parties. All of this is done at the expense of the needs of working people in the U.S. and throughout the world. The U.S. could make substantial reductions to military spending without compromising national security.

More than half of the military budget goes not to the frontline servicemen and women who put their lives on the line, but to private, for-profit contractors. President Biden continues the long held practice of awarding lavish contracts to politically well-connected defense contractors. An attempted audit of the military budget couldn't be completed due to the huge sums that could not be accounted for. Congress appointed a commission to look at defense spending levels but most of the commission members had ties to the defense industry.

The U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan, initiated by the Trump Administration and completed by Biden, was carried out in order to refocus U.S. military and diplomatic resources on efforts to “contain” China and Russia. Rather than working with China, the world's most populous country and second-largest economy, on urgent global issues like climate change, Biden has continued Trump's escalation of economic and military tensions.

NATO's policy of aggressively encircling Russia helped set the stage for the current conflict in Ukraine. With U.S. backing, NATO has spent more than \$100 billion arming Ukraine since February 2022, with more than \$75 billion coming from the U.S. The Pentagon documents leaked in April 2023 by Jack Teixeira of the Massachusetts Air National Guard made it clear that the U.S. military does not consider the war in Ukraine winnable. It is now obvious that the tens of billions of dollars that our government has pumped into the conflict were never meant to secure victory for Ukraine, but merely to wear down Russia and feed the U.S. military-industrial complex, at the expense of hundreds of thousands of Ukrainian and Russian lives.

In the Middle East, the U.S. is involved in a tangled, contradictory web of alliances and wars. Biden has been slow to revive the nuclear agreement with Iran, keeping in place the severe economic sanctions imposed by Trump, that are themselves a form of warfare. He has also continued a policy of confrontation with regional militias aligned with Iran. Simultaneously, the

U.S. has maintained its close relationship with Saudi Arabia, a dictatorship with a human rights record far worse than Iran. The U.S.-Saudi alliance has prolonged the nine-year Yemeni Civil War, which has resulted in nearly 400,000 deaths, including the starvation of 85,000 children.

Meanwhile the situation of the Palestinians has steadily deteriorated. In the occupied West Bank and East Jerusalem, the right-wing Israeli government continues to confiscate homes and land to expand Israeli settlements. Since 1967 Israel has settled more than 750,000 of its citizens in the West Bank, and has been building a wall that separates neighboring towns. Farmers are being cut off from their fields and water supplies, which could soon wipe out Palestinian agriculture in the Jordan River Valley. At the same time Israel is treating Gaza as the world's largest open-air prison, with its residents trapped in abysmal economic and social conditions. All of this is illegal under international law.

Palestinian trade unions and civil society organizations have called for a worldwide campaign of boycotts to pressure Israel to end its apartheid rule over the Palestinians. The movement for Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) is modeled after the 1980s international solidarity campaign that put economic pressure on South Africa's government and helped end apartheid.

Cuba poses no economic or military threat to the United States. Our government has no justification for the economic blockade of Cuba, which makes it more difficult for Cubans to access medicine, food, and essential life-giving supplies. The blockade hurts workers in both countries. Jobs are lost, while U.S. manufacturers are denied a major market just 90 miles offshore. Instead of restoring diplomatic relationships and lifting the economic embargo, President Biden has seized on relatively small protests, sparked by the very hardships caused by the embargo, to demand "regime change" in Cuba.

Our government's involvement in wars and destabilization campaigns around the world makes us less, not more, safe. The two major U.S. wars of the past two decades, Iraq and Afghanistan, cost us billions of dollars and the lives of thousands of our young soldiers, while producing more extremism, more war, more instability, and more danger. The escalation of tensions with China and Russia raise the specter of nuclear war, which would be catastrophic for human life.

UE has long warned of the danger of nuclear weapons, a position only strengthened by our close relationship over the past three decades with the militant Japanese union federation Zenroren. As workers from the only nation that has suffered a nuclear attack, Zenroren has a deep commitment

to the abolition of nuclear weapons as absolutely necessary to winning a decent life for working people.

The biggest threats to the people of the U.S. are not military invasions from other countries, but rather:

- The failure to provide living wage jobs, affordable healthcare, education, housing, and necessary social services as human rights;
- The climate crisis, which is causing massive floods, severe droughts, heat waves, increasingly destructive storms, and health-threatening air quality, with disproportionate impacts on frontline communities and people of color;
- The threat of a possible nuclear war; and
- Systemic racism and gender discrimination.

Foreign and military policies should defend the interests of working people, not the wealthy. UE has long believed that the labor movement should promote its own foreign policy ideas based on diplomacy and labor solidarity. Our government should not destabilize democracy on behalf of billionaires. It should promote peace, jobs, and justice for all.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT THIS 78th UE CONVENTION:

1. Calls on the union at all levels to:
 - a. Inform and engage members on the need to change U.S. foreign policy to promote diplomacy, democracy, and workers rights;
 - b. Promote involvement in labor-based efforts to effectively create that change;
 - c. Support About Face, formerly known as Iraq Veterans Against the War (IVAW);
2. Demands the U.S. government invest in peace and build economic security by:
 - a. Reducing the military budget while improving wages, healthcare, and pensions of soldiers and veterans;

- b. Reappropriating defense savings into transportation, housing, healthcare, education, renewable resource development, or other peaceful infrastructure;
 - c. The creation of a fund to guarantee any worker or soldier displaced by conversion from a war economy to a peace economy up to four years' living allowance and educational expenses;
3. Further demands the U.S. government:
- a. Seek an immediate, negotiated end to the conflict in Ukraine;
 - b. End incentives for corporations to profit from exporting weapons abroad;
 - c. Cease military aid to countries with disgraceful human rights records;
 - d. Cease all funding for the National Missile Defense program and the U.S. Space Force, and support efforts at the United Nations to ban all weapons in space;
 - e. Cease using U.S. military and intelligence agencies in interventions against sovereign nations which pose no threat to the American people;
 - f. End the use of taxpayer money for further militarization of Latin America;
 - g. Cease all harassment of and economic sanctions on the democratically-elected government of Venezuela;
 - h. Cease the use of drones to attack foreign nationals or U.S. citizens;
 - i. Reinstate the agreement negotiated with Iran which prevents its development of nuclear weapons;
 - j. Deescalate tensions with China;
4. Demands the U.S. government end all military aid to Israel and pressure Israel to:
- a. End the occupation of the West Bank and East Jerusalem and the siege of Gaza;

- b. Negotiate a peace agreement on the basis of equality, democracy, and human rights for the Palestinian and Israeli people, including Palestinian self-determination and the right of return for refugees;
5. Endorses the BDS movement and urges the union at all levels to become engaged in BDS and the movement for peace, justice and equality between the Palestinians and Israelis;
6. Opposes all efforts to outlaw BDS and otherwise punish non-violent critics of Israeli policies;
7. Supports the struggle of our sister union Zenroren to halt the repeal of Article 9 of Japan's constitution, to close all U.S. military bases in Japan, and to halt all U.S. efforts to convert the Japanese Self-Defense Force to offensive purposes;
8. Welcomes the adoption of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons by the United Nations, and demands that the U.S. government take all necessary steps to achieve a world free of nuclear weapons;
9. Calls on the corporate media and the U.S. government to end its campaign of misinformation, fraud, and manipulation against the interests of our working-class sisters, brothers, and comrades abroad;
10. Supports the United Nations call for an end to the inhumane 60-year Cuban embargo, and demands that Congress and the President:
 - a. Normalize relations with the Cuban government;
 - b. End the blockade on trade and travel for Americans;
 - c. End pressure against countries that wish to trade freely with Cuba;
 - d. Cease funding and support for Cuban-exile terrorist groups;
11. Supports legislation that significantly reduces the bloated Pentagon budget without cutting pay or benefits of those serving in the US military; One such bill is H.R. 1134, the People Over the Pentagon Act, introduced by Rep. Barbara Lee and Rep. Mark Pocan, which would reduce the Pentagon budget by \$100 billion.

Report of the Policy Action Committee

The Policy Action Committee of the 78th National Convention calls on all UE Locals to mobilize their members in support of the following policy action recommendations in the period leading up to the 2024 elections:

A Green New Deal

1. Endorses the Green New Deal legislation introduced by Representative Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez and Senator Ed Markey;
2. Demands Congress implement the policy prescriptions of the Green Locomotive Project;
3. Demands that all environmental policies, including those targeting climate change, incorporate a just transition for workers and communities affected.

Fight Racism

1. Opposes assault on affirmative action;
2. Calls for elimination of racial profiling, police brutality, and “stop and frisk,” a repeal of “stand your ground” laws, and stands in opposition with the politicians that would support these policies;
3. Calls upon the union at all levels to support political candidates that vehemently oppose racism and discrimination of all kinds and at all levels of government.

The Battle for Equal Women’s Rights

1. Supports pro-labor candidates, particularly women, that openly support women’s choice and family planning;
2. Demands Congress pass the Women’s Health Protection Act (H.R. 12), which would establish federal legislative protections for women’s right to choose to terminate a pregnancy;
3. Demands Congress improve and expand the Family Medical Leave Act and ensure all workers receive full benefits for any family member.

“WE, THE ELECTRICAL, RADIO AND MACHINE WORKERS (UE), form an organization which unites all workers on an industrial basis, and rank and file control, regardless of craft, age, sex, nationality, race, creed, or political beliefs, and pursue at all times a policy of aggressive struggle to improve our conditions.”

Preamble to the UE Constitution

