



# Repower our Locals

**WHEREAS**, the UWUA is a family, ready and able to assist each of our 50,000 members, local unions and councils. Building a union movement for the future is not simply about beating back anti-worker attacks — it is about strengthening the work of each and every affiliate to collectively achieve a better life for the people we represent and serve; and

**WHEREAS**, Local unions are the front line of the UWUA and the source of our strength. All the major initiatives undertaken by the National Union share the common goal of strengthening our local unions. The struggles of local unions are the struggles of the UWUA. The exchange of ideas and information and the pooling of resources builds a powerful, cohesive bond between the National and local unions; and

**WHEREAS**, The UWUA provides our local unions and members with a strong, effective voice at the national level. The UWUA has been building our organizational capacity to have a greater impact in the political, legislative and public arenas as well as in the media. Since our last convention, the UWUA has added a Director of Governmental Affairs and a Communications Director to our national staff. The UWUA has also strengthened our national Human Rights and Young Workers committees, as well as creating our Women's Caucus, to ensure strong representation at the national level; and

**WHEREAS**, To know how to best serve our members, the UWUA has created and maintains a secure, comprehensive database, UnionAXS, a communication platform that contains local union information, bylaws, member information, employer identification, job site locations, political districts, utility sector contracts, history of wage increases, and up-to-date local officer information; and

**WHEREAS**, The UWUA provides resources, information and educational opportunities to help strengthen every local. UWUA's regional educational conferences provide local union officers and members with the training and support they need to become effective advocates for themselves and their fellow workers. Members build their skills in the areas of collective bargaining, grievance handling, internal organizing, communications, corporate campaigns, building community alliances, and financial training. The UWUA's regional conferences are an important venue for member and local leader training and information; and

**WHEREAS**, The foundation of a strong local union is an effectively run operation. The National Union has made it a priority to ensure that our local union leaders are provided with the training required to help them do their jobs well; and

**WHEREAS**, Safety is a union-wide priority that starts on the workshop floor. Every worker has a fundamental right to go to work and return home alive and in one piece. Through P4A and National and local safety committees, the UWUA is improving the working conditions and well-being of our members by helping local unions to effectively identify and enforce safe practices; and

**WHEREAS**, Negotiating good contracts and enforcing them is the foundation of our success. The National Union's job is to support the work of the locals, particularly around contract bargaining and enforcement. With rising healthcare costs becoming a challenge in contract negotiations, the UWUA established the National Health & Welfare Fund as an option for lower-cost healthcare, vision, dental, life and other insurance benefits coverage. Additionally the UWUA maintains a database, which is available to locals for use in organizing, bargaining; and

**WHEREAS**, UWUA local unions increasingly bargain with large multinational or national corporations that have grown significantly through acquisitions and mergers. Local union collaboration through regional and national bargaining is key to maintaining unity and upholding strong contracts and high industry standards. Coordinated bargaining respects the proud UWUA tradition of local union autonomy while increasing bargaining and organizing capacity of local unions through regional or national planning and action; and

**WHEREAS**, The UWUA's Special Defense and Organizing Fund assists local unions at the bargaining table, in organizing new members and in navigating corporate and industry disruptions. The fund is used to cover non-routine costs associated with contract campaigns, legal defense, assistance during strikes and other actions. It can also be used for organizing new workers as well as defending UWUA member interests in deregulation, and corporate restructuring and divestiture.

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED,** The delegates of the 31st Constitutional Convention recommit to the cooperation between the UWUA and local unions to create effective organizing, political and legislative action campaigns and contract negotiations. The UWUA and affiliates serve our members best by building a union that prioritizes worker safety, training, financial responsibility and inclusion. Delegates will continue to support the work of UWUA committees and to send members to regional and Power for America Training Trust (P4A) conferences and other UWUA trainings to the greatest extent possible; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED,** Through UWUA's educational conferences, we are reaching our goals of educating, activating and mobilizing our local leaders and membership. Each successive conference has attracted more participants, further building our union power. To generate maximum participation, the UWUA holds conferences throughout the county and on weekends, when members are most likely to attend. In addition to providing trainings and intensive workshops, the meetings also give members an opportunity to share information, build relationships, and make plans to strengthen their local unions; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED,** The National Union provides access to digital communications tools to local unions, and has made available the UnionAXS database to directly communicate with and mobilize their members. Additionally, the UnionAXS database can be used by local unions as a membership portal to track and record member information, dues payments and status. The UWUA has also developed professional, low-cost website templates that can be customized to UWUA locals of any size; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED,** More than 7,500 union members are now covered by the National Health & Welfare Fund, creating economies of scale that enable trustees to keep administrative fees low while providing high quality benefits. Local union leaders are urged to compare the costs of the Fund with existing company plans and consider bringing members into the Fund; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED,** The UWUA reaffirms our commitment to coordinated bargaining, and urges locals with common employers to establish formal and informal joint committees to facilitate building power through coordinated bargaining, including common expiration dates in collective bargaining agreements, and to consider negotiating together over common economic and non-economic issues; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED,** The UWUA takes fiscal responsibility at every level of our union seriously. Local union officers are urged to participate in UWUA financial training programs for local union officers that include recordkeeping and reporting requirements as well as proper income and expense documentation. These training programs focus on regulatory compliance and our responsibility to protect the Union's funds and assets. A strong treasury provides the leverage and resources necessary to secure fair contracts for our members and their families; and

**BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED,** A strong, well financed and responsibly managed UWUA Special Defense and Organizing Fund is central to the power of our locals. The Fund sends message to employers that we are financially ready to do whatever it takes to support our members and win strong contracts, organize, and weather unfavorable changes at the corporate and industry levels. It provides our local unions the resources needed at the grass roots level where the toughest day-to-day challenges are met. Generations of UWUA members have benefited from the Fund, both in times of crisis, such as income during strikes and lockouts, legal fees during corporate bankruptcies and regulatory proceedings, as well as in times of opportunity, such as organizing the unorganized. We are on solid footing heading into the next four years, and call for the continued emphasis on building our Special Defense and Organizing Fund and using it where it benefits our members most.