



# Our Future – Young Workers Initiative Committee

**WHEREAS,** The best way to respect the history of the labor movement is to make sure that our movement has a future; that future lies in the hands of young workers. Union membership has been falling for more than half a century due to factors including bad trade deals, outdated labor laws, political attacks, and a lack of outreach to younger members; and

**WHEREAS,** Millennials (born from 1981 to 1996) make up one-third of the American workforce and are becoming the majority of the American electorate. They make up the most diverse and technologically savvy generation in America's history. Yet young people of this generation face economic insecurity unknown to previous generations, suffering the nation's highest unemployment with the fewest job opportunities in today's economy. They are also more likely to be burdened with crushing student debt; and

**WHEREAS,** The Utility Workers Young Workers Initiative Committee (YWIC) was formed in 2010 with the objective of inspiring young members to become more engaged and active in our union. From its inception, YWIC membership has remained diverse in its composition and reflects the make-up of the UWUA's nationwide membership body. The YWIC seeks to keep the UWUA progressive, united and strong; and

**WHEREAS,** Since the previous UWUA Constitutional Convention, the Young Workers Committee has continued to expand, with veteran YWIC members going on to play greater leadership roles within their local unions. Across the country, UWUA locals are forming their own Young Worker Committees. Both nationally and locally, UWUA Young Workers seek to maintain existing community partnerships and seek to create new ones whenever possible; and

**WHEREAS,** The YWIC has become a force in the social media world, leading the way to positively promote our union, and to generate legislative and social change, spark both online and off-line activism and community service. YWIC maintains an active Facebook page to get the union message out to millennials and to improve the perception of and increase exposure to the labor movement; and

**WHEREAS,** The YWIC helps young and new members to begin a lifetime of activism by helping them have a voice in bargaining, participate in our local unions, and be involved in other activist parts of our union and communities, as well as to learn about our Union's deep and proud history. Through training and workshops, the YWIC is developing a deeper bench of younger labor leaders with the skills and experience to serve in a variety of local and national leadership roles; and

**WHEREAS,** During the 2018 mid-term election campaign, Committee members volunteered on labor walks, phone banks and educated members on where each candidate stood on key issues. The team also helped to "get out the vote" by stressing the importance of each and every vote. Each member took someone who usually would not vote with them to the ballot box; and

**WHEREAS,** UWUA young workers have mobilized to oppose right-to-work and voter suppression. In 2018 the members of the YWIC and Human Rights advisors were honored to represent the UWUA at the AFL-CIO's Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Civil and Human Rights Conference and also participated in the 50th anniversary of the "I AM" march in Memphis, Tennessee.

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED,** The UWUA supports increased legislative, political, community and union activism at the local and national levels for UWUA members of all ages; and endorses the continued focus on developing our newest activists to take on increasingly greater roles in our union, their governments and their communities. UWUA delegates encourage all local unions to participate in the YWIC and to create their own local Young Worker chapters; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED,** To raise awareness of the benefits of union jobs with high school students, the YWIC will attend career days at schools in their communities. They will use this platform to show that a union career is a very good alternative to the university route that can provide sound economic well-being for students entering the workforce. Committee members will also promote P4A and UMAP apprentice and training programs; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED,** The Committee is also developing a financial educational tool kit to help young workers plan a secure and economically sound financial future. It will include credit building tips, investment ideas, such as real estate ownership, and a guide for good financial habits. This resource will also explain the importance of having a 401K and investing the right amount into it to ensure financial retirement security; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED,** In addition to supporting pro-worker political candidates, the committee seeks to help more union members run for public office. By grooming new candidates from within the house of labor, the AFL-CIO Labor Candidates program is an effective way to ensure that our interests are defended. The YWIC will be working closely with the AFL-CIO to help ensure the program's success in producing strong political candidates; and

**BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED,** the YWIC will ramp up its information sharing by expanding its social media presence and creating a YWIC newsletter.