



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 Union membership has been falling for more than half a century due to factors including bad trade deals, outdated labor laws, political attacks, and a lack of outreach to younger members; and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) and Generation Z (born from 1997 to 2012) make nearly forty percent of the American workforce and are becoming the majority of the American electorate. Together, they make up the most diverse and technologically savvy generations in America's history. Yet young people of these generations 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 grow, 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 increasingly engaged in efforts to grow union density within the UWUA and the labor movement as a whole, by promoting union benefits to high school students across the country, and becoming competent and effective ambassadors in the UWUA's organizing campaigns; 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 2022 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, To raise awareness of the benefits of union jobs with high school students, the Committee members have attended career days at schools in their communities. They have also used 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 also promote P4A and UMAP apprentice and training programs; and

WHEREAS, The Committee developed a financial educational tool kit to help young workers plan a secure and economically sound financial future. The tool kit included credit building tips, investment ideas, such as real estate ownership, and a guide for good financial habits. This resource explains the importance of having a 401K and investing the right amount into it to ensure financial retirement security.

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, The Committee will receive training through the UWUA's Organizing Department and will assist in organizing campaigns as needed: and

BE IT FINALLY 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.