



Empowering UWUA Women

WHEREAS, The National Women’s Caucus was created in 2015 at the 30th Constitutional Convention with the goal of strengthening the engagement of women across all UWUA locals and to build a stronger pipeline of female leaders. The UWUA strives to be an inclusive union and encourages participation and leadership of all our sisters through expanding the Women’s Caucus; and

WHEREAS, Currently, women compose 22 percent of the utility workforce, but make up about a third of U.S. wind and solar energy jobs — the fastest growing sector of the utility industry. The Women’s Caucus is working to make our union one that attracts new female members and cultivates current members. With 70 percent of utility workers retiring in the coming years, the next generation of Utility Workers will be more female and more diverse, reflecting the changing demographics of the workforce; and

WHEREAS, A woman’s place is in her union. While union membership in the U.S. is declining overall, women are joining unions at a faster rate. Women, as a share of overall union membership, increased from 1984 to 2021 from 35.3% to 47.1% and women are projected to be the majority of American union members by 2025; and

WHEREAS, In 2020 women working full-time were paid only 82 cents for every dollar paid to men, and the gap is even more pronounced for women of color. The pay gap is notably greater for non-union members. Women who are members of unions, or covered by union contracts, have gender pay gaps that are about half the size — 88 cents — than non-unionized workers. On average, union workers’ wages are 24 percent higher than their non-union counterparts. When benefits are taken into account, union women earn 30 percent more than non-union women workers; and

WHEREAS, The Women’s Caucus has created a vehicle for UWUA women to meet and connect with each other and to partner with other unions to help execute its vision and mission. Members of the Women’s Caucus have attended and partnered with other unions, locals and women’s groups to “Take Action” by making a difference in their union, community, and the political arena; and

WHEREAS, The UWUA’s Women’s Caucus provides educational, informational and social activities, with multiple opportunities for sharing and generating ideas to promote growing the power of activism amongst women. Caucus workshops have focused on the unique role of women working in non-traditional jobs and on women’s labor history. Panelists share their personal stories, telling about their own educational, social and cultural barriers encountered, experiences with recruitment, and strategies used to gain institutional support and sisterhood. The Caucus provides a venue for union sisters to learn from each other, build solidarity to increase support for their local unions, other women, and workers around the U.S. and world; and

WHEREAS, The Women’s Caucus has quickly joined the Human Rights, Young Workers, Veterans and Health and Safety committees in carrying out the essential work of our union, including new organizing and political action. In addition, launching the historic first “Women in Our Industry: Women in Power” calendar initiative, our continued partnership and building alliances with affiliates: CLUW (Coalition of Labor Union Women) on the national and state levels, NJ AFL-CIO WILD (Women in Leadership Development), UALE (United Association of Labor Education) Summer School for Women, Massachusetts WILD (Women Institute of Leadership Development), TWBN (Trade Women Build Nations), and the UMASS Labor Extension Program. The Women’s Caucus initiative is working towards creating more in-house women’s leadership development workshops such as the “Welcome to the Union” workshop facilitated at the virtual P4A Conference, that are attended and lead by women from our various locals; and

WHEREAS, Along with creating a Women’s Caucus Facebook Page, the Caucus has compiled a data bank of email addresses of the women attending Regional Educational Conferences, and developed a model Basic Guide for establishing a Women’s Committee in UWUA locals.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, The Women’s Caucus will continue to create greater platforms of influence where training, education and policies are developed, breaking barriers and blazing trails. And it remains committed to their mission and vision to strengthen and empower women both inside and outside of its UWUA family; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, The UWUA will continue to identify, support and mentor activists in our workplaces, our union, and our communities. Our union supports the work of the Women’s Caucus, and urges each UWUA local union to support Caucus meetings, conferences and activities and encourages local unions to create Local Women’s Caucus chapters; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, The UWUA urges passage of the bipartisan Paycheck Fairness Act, which would update the Equal Pay Act of 1963 to close loopholes and break harmful patterns of pay discrimination, require employers to report pay data to the EEOC and prohibit them from retaliating against women who discuss their pay with co-workers; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, More women in union leadership roles will help unions push even further in tackling the inequality that still remains. While the gender pay gap is narrower for women in unions, it has not yet disappeared. Greater participation of UWUA women at all levels of our union, including in leadership positions, bargaining committees, and organizing new members will strengthen our entire union.