



# MA AFL-CIO Constitutional Convention

## September 25-27, 2019

### Resolution on the MA Young Workers Movement

WHEREAS the labor movement has a responsibility to its young members to find ways of educating, engaging, and activating them in the struggles which determine the quality of their lives;

WHEREAS there is a rising prevalence and severity of 2 tier contracts, which disproportionately effect the working, living, and retiring conditions for young workers;

WHEREAS a generation of skilled union members, activists, and leaders is retiring, creating a need for younger members who are ready with the work skills, organizing know-how, and institutional knowledge to keep our workplaces and unions strong;

WHEREAS the economy young people are coming into is changing, automation is replacing huge numbers of good union jobs at an alarming rate, and gig economy jobs are on the rise. Jobs created in this economy increasingly offer few hours, no benefits, limited protections, and legal impediments to organizing;

WHEREAS part time work, with extremely low union density, makes up nearly a quarter of jobs in the United States and is worked primarily by young people, women, and people of color;

WHEREAS the UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change has determined humanity has less than eleven years to accomplish massive reductions in carbon emissions to avert widespread drought, famine, and extreme weather events and unless immediate action is taken young people will have to live in that world;

WHEREAS union density has been dropping for 30 years, but the approval rating of unions among young people is at a record high;

WHEREAS the recent public success of workplace actions and strikes has led a generation of protestors and activists to see the labor movement and their union as a way of taking action;

WHEREAS right now we have a huge opportunity to involve young people in our movement. Higher rates of membership participation from young members and increased public support from young people will increase each of our unions' ability to win substantial victories for workers through workplace actions, strikes, legislation, and political power;

WHEREAS young workers are disproportionately effected by the economic crises of our time including limited access to affordable housing, crushing student loan debt, an unlivably low minimum wage, increasingly sparse protection to organize under the National Labor Relations Act, decreased OSHA protections, rising healthcare costs with decreasing access, austerity and reductions to the social safety net, and increasing retirement insecurity. Therefore be it

RESOLVED the MA AFL-CIO deems it of the utmost importance to come up with effective ways of engaging union and non-union young workers in the organizing, bargaining, and general functioning of our unions and will endeavor to provide programming and training as a resource for affiliates; and be it further

RESOLVED the MA AFL-CIO encourages each of its affiliates to form a Futures or Young Workers committee reflective of its membership with the MA AFL-CIO Young Workers Movement serving as a resource; and be it further

RESOLVED the MA AFL-CIO and its affiliates will seek the direct input and participation of young workers on issues of bargaining, strategy, and organizing new workplaces and sectors through the creation of a young worker seat on the Executive Board of each local union, CLC, and ALF where they do not currently exist; and be it further

RESOLVED the MA AFL-CIO will continue to have a strong young worker voice as one of its many constituency seats on its E-board from the statewide Young Workers Movement; and be it further

RESOLVED the MA AFL-CIO acknowledges the value of having young workers occupy other leadership roles and will encourage affiliates to find as many strategies as possible to build young leaders from their membership and strengthen the future of the labor movement; and be it further

RESOLVED the MA AFL-CIO considers workers' ability to join a union with ease a young workers issue and therefore supports Federal efforts to make the process of joining a union easier and make more people eligible for legal union membership, such as the Workplace Democracy Act; and be it further

RESOLVED the MA AFL-CIO and affiliates will engage young members as activists and volunteer organizers in proactive efforts to recruit new young members, lobby for NLRA changes that will include new sectors of potential members, and tackle the issues threatening our future security, especially those of the current economic crisis and impending climate chaos.

Respectfully submitted, Al Vega, VP MA AFL-CIO, USW Local 9358 & the MA AFL-CIO Young Workers Movement