

## Resolution 18

### **AFL-CIO WOMEN'S INITIATIVE: SHARED VALUES, SHARED LEADERSHIP, SHARED PROSPERITY**

"WOMEN HOLD UP HALF THE SKY." Women are half the workforce and two-thirds of the caregivers in our families. Women believe we are stronger if we stick together than go it alone. Most women see that corporate CEOs have too much influence. Women have moved into roles in civic and economic life that were out of reach not long ago.

But despite more than a century of struggle and tremendous gains, women still don't have equality. As workers—along with men—women continue to fight for good jobs, a just economy and family values at work. And as union members, too few women are recognized as leaders.

We stand with women and insist on: Equality in pay and opportunity for all; the right of women to control their own bodies and be free from violence; and the right of every woman to meet her fullest potential and the opportunity to serve—and lead—her community. Nothing less.

Women's equality is a shared struggle. More women belong to the labor movement than any other membership organization. We recognize women's issues as shared values. We work toward shared leadership to represent the makeup of our membership. And we will demand, over and over again, shared prosperity for all. Nothing less.

Over the next four years, a core set of values will drive the labor movement's agenda and define our strategy for women's equality:

#### **Equal Pay for Equal Work**

From the beginning of our movement, we fought for fair pay, building a middle class through collective bargaining and the fight for a minimum wage. But

women still only make 77 cents of every dollar paid to men; despite educational gains, two-thirds of all minimum wage workers are women, especially women of color; and women are the majority of workers in the lowest-paying occupations. Those are problems for all of us—in the decades leading up to the financial crisis, worker productivity increased substantially, but wages for men and women have remained stagnant.

*Therefore, be it resolved:* Each one of us should get fair pay for a day's work. The AFL-CIO will continue its fight to raise the minimum wage and close the wage gap between men and women. We commit to expanded job training and educational opportunities, including opportunities for women in non-traditional sectors. And we support policies and programs to make wage and benefit standards across industries more transparent, so we all know what's fair.

#### **Respect for Work, Family and Community**

Americans are working harder and longer than ever before. Women joined the workforce in large numbers over the past 30 years—serving as primary caregivers and increasingly as primary breadwinners. Families are stretched thin through a combination of low pay, high student loans, limited health care and retirement benefits, unfair work schedules and limited access to paid sick days and paid family and medical leave. Every day men and women are forced to choose between their families, their health and their responsibilities at work.

*Therefore, be it resolved:* We should all be able to meet our responsibilities on the job, at home and in the community. In addition to the labor movement's longstanding support for Social Security, health care and a strong social safety net, we will increase our

support for paid sick days campaigns at the local, state and federal levels; be a leader in the fight for paid family and medical leave; support families by making quality child care affordable and relieving student debt; continue our stand for contraceptive equity and respect for women's choices; and ensure fair schedules alongside a fair wage.

### **Joining Allies on a Shared Agenda**

These problems can seem overwhelming—working women and families are struggling to make it all work and too often bear the burden of these challenges alone. But together—as unions, as communities, as a nation—we can come together and make change. Cities and states across the country are responding to the needs of working families through increased access to paid leave and fair scheduling; men and women are coming together to stop violence in the workplace and at home; domestic workers are asserting the value of care work in the home and in the global economy, building new kinds of power and global alliances; and the majority of the nation supports a path to citizenship to keep families together and end exploitation on the job.

*Therefore, be it resolved:* We are not alone. Partnerships between community allies and the labor movement are essential to achieving social and economic justice for women. The labor movement must continue to invest in inclusive, enduring alliances locally and on the international stage, tackling structural, cultural and policy barriers that stand in the way of equality.

### **Building a Movement**

When we come together, we have the potential to transform an economy that has favored corporate interests over people, built wealth for the very, very few and lowered expectations for what's possible in America. Through action—on the job, in the economy,

in social movements and in government—we can transform fear and hardship into shared hope, collective action and shared prosperity. And through shared leadership—with women fully represented at all levels of our movement—we can build shared power and transform our movement.

*Therefore, be it finally resolved,* as the AFL-CIO develops its strategy for shared prosperity, women's equality and leadership as articulated in this resolution and the mission statement of the Executive Council Committee on Women Workers will be front and center in our effort to grow the labor movement, revitalize democracy, respond to the global economic crisis and build durable community partnerships.

- At the national, state and local levels, our labor federations will integrate women's issues in every key strategy to grow the movement, develop leadership, build community partnerships and improve the lives of working people.
- Women should be engaged at all levels of the federation in the strategy, outreach and implementation of political, organizing and issue campaigns, especially those that have a particular impact or relevance to women and women workers.
- Public policy and legislative efforts will prioritize issues such as equal pay, paid family and medical leave, workforce development or other key priorities identified above.
- Political campaigns and mobilization will include women's issues such as paid sick days as a measure of commitment to labor's priorities.

Women's issues are our issues. Women leaders are our leaders. The women's movement is the labor movement.