

Resolution 26

RESOLUTION TO DEVELOP A SOUTHERN ORGANIZING STRATEGY

WHEREAS, the US labor movement has never successfully developed a concerted and coordinated effort to organize workers in the 11 Southern states making up the Southern Region, allowing the most conservative political forces in the South to operate without effectively being challenged by organized workers; and

WHEREAS, Corporations in the South have not only exploited Southern workers but have also been responsible for the negative environmental impacts on many working class communities, especially the African American, Latino, Native American, Asian and poor white communities; and

WHEREAS, Billions of dollars in tax breaks and incentives are being given to corporations at the expense of these struggling communities; and

WHEREAS, The main strategy of the corporations in the South has been to divide the working class and the oppressed peoples in every way possible; and

WHEREAS, The South has reemerged as a major player in the new global economy, and has become a haven for US manufacturing, foreign investments and finance capital, and because of this reemergence is now playing an integral role in shaping US labor and social policies; and

WHEREAS, Anti-immigration bills are being introduced and are rapidly moving through Southern legislatures for the sole purpose of creating another source of worker exploitation that is based on race, ethnicity and fear; and

WHEREAS, acknowledging the shortcomings of the US labor movement to organize the South is in no way meant to suggest that workers in the South have not been organizing and resisting these attacks for decades; and

WHEREAS, organizing and campaigning in the South have been localized and not connected to a Southern or national movement, thus discouraging sustained efforts to organize unions in the South; and

WHEREAS, a successful Southern organizing strategy must include Southern people familiar with local culture and customs; and

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED: That the Twenty-Seventh (27th) Convention of the AFL-CIO adopts as one of its top priorities a Southern Strategy that will include a long-term commitment to organize the South; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED: That the AFL-CIO strongly impress upon every one of its affiliates to adopt the same long-term commitment necessary to sustain a strong and viable workers' movement in the Southern Region of the United States.