

RESOLUTION 16

INCLUSION AND EQUITY: ENSURING EQUITY AND INCLUSION INTERNALLY AND EXTERNALLY

The concept of “United We Stand, Divided We Beg” served as the fundamental principle and catalyst behind the formation of the AFL-CIO Labor Commission on Racial and Economic Justice. In 2014, in the aftermath of the shooting in Ferguson, Missouri, in which “our brother killed our sister’s son,” we watched a community explode in pain, anger and division. What happened in Ferguson sparked a heightened national conversation about race, policing and civil rights. Similar racially charged events before and after in cities like Charlottesville, Virginia; Sanford, Florida; Charlotte, North Carolina; Baltimore; St. Paul, Minnesota; and countless others, coupled with the election of Donald Trump, has further inflamed race relations in our country.

Many of our African American, Latino, Asian Pacific Islander, LGBTQ and female members, along with the rest of the nation, are witnessing policies and decisions driven by racial and gender exclusion, coupled with policies and decisions that undermine economic health for all working people.

We are a nation divided, and our labor movement is divided, too. Yet we know that more unites us than divides us—even if it may not feel like it right now. We all want the opportunity to build a better life for our children and ourselves. This is what it means to be an American.

Politicians and corporations have used race and ethnicity, cultural differences and geography to divide us for decades. It is simple: If we are fighting each other, then we are not fighting together for better jobs, better schools, more affordable health care, good housing, strong communities and a more secure retirement for all. Eradicating bigotry is not just the moral thing to do—it is the only way we will win these things for all working families and leave a better future for our children.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the AFL-CIO shall:

- Build solidarity and understanding among union leaders and members on how race has been used to weaken labor unity, limit the growth of the labor movement and damage our efforts to advance economic reforms that benefit all working people;
- Build a more “diverse and inclusive labor movement.” We must integrate the issues and concerns of members and workers of color into labor’s political and policy work at every level, drawing upon insights framed in Resolution 20 adopted at the 2013 Constitutional Convention; and
- Work to ensure labor’s leadership and decision-making structures reflect the diversity of our members, and all working people.

Our members want action. Our country needs us to look to the future, not the past. We must be brave enough to share our challenges and generous enough to share our successes. We need a culture of experimentation and boldness as we create a labor movement for the 21st century.