

RESOLUTION 48

EXPLORING NEW DIRECTIONS FOR LABOR IN ELECTORAL POLITICS

WHEREAS, for decades, labor unions have followed a strategy of supporting candidates for electoral office it best determines will serve its interests when elected; and

WHEREAS, labor manifests that support with contributions of multiple millions of dollars in both cash and boots on the ground for the candidates of its choice; and

WHEREAS, whether labor supports a candidate who promises to be pro-labor or supports a candidate labor determines to be the “lesser of evils” or whether labor’s candidate wins or loses the election, the results for labor and the 99% remain fundamentally unchanged; and

WHEREAS, in the results of national elections, whether the candidates elected are from the Republican or Democratic Party, the interests of Wall Street have been protected and advanced, while the interests of labor and working people have generally been set back; and

WHEREAS, the candidates and parties that labor supports take us for granted, and are not accountable to us in between elections; and

WHEREAS, continuing to follow the same model, expecting different results, is not an effective strategy for labor; and

WHEREAS, the interests of labor can generally be defined as wanting good jobs, health care, safe working conditions, secure and dignified retirements, protecting and enhancing collective bargaining and the rights of workers to organize, protecting the right to vote, access to affordable education and housing, good public education and public services, an end to trade deals that cost millions of jobs, and investments in infrastructure and the environment leading to the creation of millions of jobs; and

WHEREAS, there have been numerous examples of issued-based electoral successes at the state and local levels, such as raising the minimum wage, creating paid sick leave, ensuring voting rights and getting corporate money out of politics;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, in addition to the traditional supporting for electoral candidates who are friends and allies of workers, the AFL-CIO also pursues a strategy of advancing our core issues through referenda and ballot initiatives and propositions at the statewide and local level; studies the viability of independent and third-party politics; and explores other reasonable means of advancing the interests of labor in electoral politics.