

Occupational Safety and Health Resolution

Submitted by United Food and Commercial Workers International Union

WHEREAS, on average, 15 workers lose their lives and more than 12,000 workers are injured or made ill on the job every day; and

WHEREAS, immigrant workers, the most vulnerable workers who work in the most dangerous industries, are being killed and injured at far greater numbers than non-immigrant workers; and

WHEREAS, fatality rates for all workers have declined since 1992, yet fatality rates for Hispanic workers have increased; and

WHEREAS, the labor movement has a responsibility to address safety and health concerns of workers; and

WHEREAS, according to a 2001 Peter Hart and Associates poll, the labor movement is still seen as the voice of workers on safety and health issues; and

WHEREAS, the labor movement is a social movement whose work in occupational safety and health extends beyond members of labor unions to affect all workers in the United States; and

WHEREAS, the labor movement has played a primary role in the passage of national and state safety and health and workers' compensation laws; and

WHEREAS, the labor movement led and coordinated efforts to win passage of the Occupational Safety and Health Act (OSH Act) of 1970, as well as other key safety and health laws and protections; and

WHEREAS, the labor movement played a pivotal role in the issuance of an OSHA ergonomics standard after 10 years, despite overwhelming congressional and business opposition; and

WHEREAS, the labor movement secured and maintained, over the past five years, roughly \$4 million annually in training grants for 30 international and regional unions; and

WHEREAS, in the past five years, there has been an assault on safety and health protections for American workers, through efforts to gut the OSH Act and increase funding for voluntary programs rather than enforcement; and

WHEREAS, workers' lives and on-the-job safety and health are threatened by such actions; and

WHEREAS, workplaces with union representation and collectively bargained safety and health committees are more than twice as safe as those workplaces with no union or committee; and

WHEREAS, unionization provides workers the voice, skills and collective strength necessary to secure safer workplaces; and

WHEREAS, workers have a right to a safe and healthy workplace and don't go to work to die;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the labor movement and the AFL-CIO must continue to protect workers' lives and health through a strong commitment to occupational safety and health.