

# The American Labor Studies Center

Submitted by New York State AFL-CIO

**W**HEREAS, recent research conducted by Hart Associates indicates that, of all adults, 46 percent said they knew a fair amount or a great amount about unions as opposed to 54 percent who said they knew just a little or did not know much about unions; and

WHEREAS, that same research found a great deal of misunderstanding and misinformation about unions and what they do; and

WHEREAS, Americans said their chief sources of knowledge about unions were personal experience (37 percent), people in unions (26 percent) and the media (25 percent) while schools were not mentioned at all; and

WHEREAS, while there are a number of well-documented reasons for the relative decline of American labor, it can be argued that the lack of knowledge or incorrect knowledge about unions contributed to this decline; and

WHEREAS, it is important for all Americans, especially elementary, secondary and post secondary students, to have an understanding of the rich contributions workers and their unions have made to our nation's economic, political, cultural and social life; and

WHEREAS, it is important that students have the opportunity to understand the role that unions and collective bargaining play in providing a voice for workers on the job; and

WHEREAS, if the fortunes of the American labor movement are to improve, its story must be told and told more effectively; and

WHEREAS, a number of excellent programs and curriculum about the history and activities of workers and their unions do exist but that few find their way into American classrooms; and

WHEREAS, the American Federation of Teachers has been a leader in supporting Labor in the Schools and a principal supporter of the American Labor Studies Center (ALSC);

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the AFL-CIO strongly support the American Labor Studies Center whose mission is to collect, analyze, evaluate, create and disseminate labor history and labor studies curriculum and related materials, aligned to academic standards in place, to K-12 and post-secondary teachers nationwide through its website ([www.labor-studies.org](http://www.labor-studies.org)) and through conferences, seminars, courses and other appropriate venues; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the AFL-CIO support the renovation and restoration of the Kate Mullany House, a National Historic Site, in Troy, New York, named for Kate Mullany who led the Troy Laundry Collars Union in the mid-18th century, the nation's first bona fide all women's union and the first woman to serve as an officer of a national union and which houses the ALSC; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the AFL-CIO support the development of Kate Mullany Park, which is adjacent to the Mullany House and will honor trade union women pioneers; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the AFL-CIO urge international unions, local unions, constituency

groups, state federations, area labor federations, central labor councils, foundations and other allies of the labor movement to support the Kate Mullany House and Park and the American Labor Studies Center by promoting its work among their members, contributing curriculum materials and providing financial support.