

Calling for Labor Solidarity in Political Action Programs

Submitted by American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees, Communication Workers of America and United Steelworkers

WHEREAS, the rights of union members and working families are under attack by radical, right-wing extremists in the White House, the U.S. Congress and state and local governments across our country; and

WHEREAS, Big Business interests and wealthy individuals continue to outspend working family interests by a 12–1 margin in the political arena; and

WHEREAS, this imbalance in political spending has helped to promote a policy agenda that is injurious to union members and working families; and

WHEREAS, union members have the power to address this imbalance by putting well-trained activists in the streets to drive our members and their families to participate in critical elections and to lobby elected officials in favor of pro-worker initiatives; and

WHEREAS, for pro-working family candidates to win elections and begin to take back the reins of power in Washington, D.C., and in state capitols and city halls across the country, the labor movement and its constituent unions must work together to turn out union members and their families in record numbers; and

WHEREAS, our experience over the past 10 years has demonstrated beyond a shadow of a doubt that union political programs work best when we

combine our efforts across unions to educate and mobilize our members; and

WHEREAS, the labor movement saves millions of dollars in every election cycle by conducting joint efforts to train our members in political action techniques; sharing and augmenting membership lists through the AFL-CIO's COPE department; dividing the cost of polling, research and voter targeting efforts; developing cooperative grassroots lobbying campaigns; and allocating our resources to reach our membership, using direct mail, phone banks, home visits and worksite activities, in the most efficient manner possible; and

WHEREAS, our joint political action campaigns, waged under the banner of the AFL-CIO under the leadership of President John Sweeney, have increased union member participation in elections from 19 percent of the electorate in 1992 to 26 percent of the electorate in 2000 and nearly the same percentage in 2004; and

WHEREAS, these joint political action campaigns are permissible under federal elections law only by virtue of affiliate unions' membership in the AFL-CIO;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the delegates to this Convention strongly urge all unions to take immediate action to preserve our labor-wide political action programs; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that all unions shall participate fully in the AFL-CIO voter education and mobilization program and Target 5000, a program to elect more union members to public office; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that all unions shall provide their membership lists to the AFL-CIO COPE department for use in our joint membership

mobilization efforts, with the understanding that these lists will only be used with the full knowledge and approval of the affiliates for the above purposes; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that all unions strive to maintain solidarity in our political program in order to further our common goal of electing pro-working family candidates and union members to office.