



Resolution No. 4

Our Union's Next Generation of Leaders

WHEREAS, an enduring strength of our Union throughout its long, proud history has been the dedication and foresight of our leaders to groom the next generation of activists and leaders to ensure a sustainable future by promoting a lifetime of unionism; and

WHEREAS, the rights of all workers of every age are under attack in both the United States and Canada, from anti-union, anti-worker and anti-family legislation at every level; and

WHEREAS, profits-at-any-cost corporations continue to drive down wages, erode benefits, try to break unions and push inequity with two-tier and other divide-and-conquer strategies at the bargaining table; and

WHEREAS, the economic crisis has hit younger workers and their families particularly hard, with the unemployment rate for 16 to 24-year-olds averaging 18.4 percent in 2010, compared with 9.6 percent overall; and

WHEREAS, now more than ever, as well-funded corporate and political attacks threaten the very future of our movement, the USW needs all of its members to be active and engaged politically, in their communities, and in the movement for social, economic and labor justice around the world; and

WHEREAS, we are in the fight of our lives to protect the opportunity for the next generation to have and keep good family and community sustaining union jobs in manufacturing and other fields and to maintain a strong middle class in the United State and Canada; and

WHEREAS, we understand that a strong, sustainable labor movement is key to the success of the next generation because union members earn on average \$226 more per week than non-union workers – a difference of \$980 per month, almost \$12,000 a year, and \$350,000 in higher earnings over a lifetime career; and

WHEREAS, the USW has shown leadership and courage by investing in its next generation of leaders by creating the Next Generation Advisory Council which is composed of members from the United States and Canada and by promoting career and leadership development of emerging leaders through the Institute for Career Development, National Labor College, AFL-CIO Next Up, USW Leadership Scholarship and other programs; and

WHEREAS, the USW Next Generation Advisory Council has identified and prioritized issues for the next generation, including a desire to have a voice in bargaining, a commitment to consistent and meaningful local union participation and other important work of our Union, including a lifetime of activism to help us combat corporate greed, fight for political and social justice, win an economy that works for all workers and achieve equal opportunity for all members, regardless of race, gender, creed, religion or age; and

WHEREAS, the USW Next Generation Advisory Council has also identified as priorities: the need to address work-life balance challenges; to use new technology and media in conjunction with the Union's traditional, well-tested tools; the desire to make union activities more family friendly; and the importance of efforts to capture and honor the Union's rich history while promoting the benefits and positive image of our Union to our children, our families, our friends, our neighbors, our communities and others who have been fed lies, half-truths and negativity about unions by corporate-controlled media; and

WHEREAS, the USW Next Generation Advisory Council has proposed ideas to contribute to solutions that address the identified priorities that aim to improve our Union and the whole labor movement so that we remain strong and relevant for current, retired and future members and their families.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that:

(1) The USW supports increased legislative, political, community and union activism at the local level, at the district level and at the international level for all USW members, including the next generation; and endorses the development of an effective and fair system of training and development to enable younger Steelworkers Activists to take on increasingly greater roles in our Union, their governments and their communities.

(2) We will continue to support the AFL-CIO's "Next Up" Young Workers Movement, including the appointment of an emerging USW leader to the AFL-CIO Young Workers Advisory Council to represent our Union in the federation's big picture efforts to grow the labor movement.

(3) Our Union supports the promotion of the "lifetime of activism and unionism" ideal that creates a supportive, respectful atmosphere for USW members of all ages at every level with the understanding that we truly need each other in order to have the best union we can have for current and future generations.

(4) We support the integration of our Union's younger members into current programs in the U.S. and Canada, including Education and Membership Development, Rapid Response, Women of Steel, Political Action, Health, Safety and Environment, Civil and Human Rights and all other integral parts of our Union.

(5) We advocate for efforts to include the next generation of leaders in conversations about the important work of our Union, including bargaining, so that our Union does not fall into the two-tier trap that corporations push to try to divide and conquer our movement.

(6) The USW will continue to develop its USW Next Generation Advisory Council, consisting of members appointed by district directors in the United States and Canada. The Council will make recommendations to the USW International Executive Board on a regular basis, including proposals directly addressing the priority issues identified by the Council.

(7) We encourage the development of a permanent, internal structure to continue growing, educating and communicating with the network of our Union's younger members and emerging leaders.

(8) We support efforts by the International Union and the districts and local unions to identify emerging leaders for participation in the Leadership Scholarship and other educational programs.

(9) We support the creation of a mentoring program to reiterate the importance of the "lifetime of activism and unionism" ideal and to better connect all generations of Steelworkers so they can work together, productively, for the future of our great Union.