

# 2015 Biennial Convention

# RESOLUTIONS

Resolution # 8

## LABOR COMMISSION ON RACIAL AND ECONOMIC JUSTICE

**WHEREAS:** The Executive Council of the National AFL-CIO voted on February 25, 2015 to establish a Labor Commission on Racial and Economic Justice with members from the Executive Council, charged with facilitating a broad conversation with local labor leaders around racial and economic disparities and institutional biases and to identify ways to become more inclusive as the labor force diversifies; and

**WHEREAS:** To that end, the Council believes it is time for a frank and thoughtful discussion on racial inequality in the house of labor and its' economic impact, beginning within the house of labor; and

**WHEREAS:** Over the next year, the Labor Commission will engage in six to eight labor discussions around the country, addressing racial and economic issues impacting the labor movement and offering recommendations for change, including the participation of local labor leaders, constituency groups, and young workers and assisted by an advisory council made up of experts; and

**WHEREAS:** America's legacy of racism and racial injustice has been and continues to be a fundamental obstacle to workers' efforts to act together to build better lives for all of us; and

**WHEREAS:** Racism has always been a key tactic of employers seeking to divide us, but we also have an ugly history of racism in our own movement; and

**WHEREAS:** At the same time, the labor movement has a proud history of standing for racial and economic justice, emerging stronger in every sense when we have embraced our better selves but ending up weaker whenever we have succumbed to the temptation to see some working people as better than others; and

**WHEREAS:** Today, in the face of dramatically increasing economic inequality, decreasing union density, and growing instability for the majority of Americans, the need for all workers to strengthen common interests in achieving economic justice is clear, while at the same time our different experiences organized around race, gender identity, ethnicity, disability, and sexual orientation often challenge and complicate this shared experience; and

Adopted 9/27/15 Amended:  
Rejected \_\_\_\_\_  
Withdrawn \_\_\_\_\_



**WHEREAS:** If we are to succeed as a movement, the full range of working peoples' voices must be heard in the internal processes of our movement, and to be able to stand together, we have to understand where all of us are coming from; and

**WHEREAS:** To understand how important this is, consider the issue of jobs, in which we fight for full employment, where white unemployment is 4.4%, which is not good enough, but black unemployment is 9.5%, higher than it ever was for whites in the entire economic crisis, underscoring that to stand together on jobs, we have to hear from each other about the different experiences we live; and

**WHEREAS:** The demand for racial justice cannot be divorced from the fight for economic justice, and the fight for economic justice cannot be pursued without considering educational equity; and

**WHEREAS:** It is no secret that communities of color continue to face higher unemployment rates, lower wages, job discrimination and more economic insecurity - one consequence of which is more encounters with the criminal justice system, negative counters with which have long-lasting impacts on families and their surrounding communities, harming our efforts to create shared prosperity for all;

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that this Convention endorse the work of the Labor Commission on Racial and Economic Justice, calling on the Florida State AFL-CIO, Central Labor Councils, and Affiliates to join in the discussion; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that this Convention recognizes the tremendous courage in tackling these issues and that the Florida labor movement will stand with partners, allies and fellow community members because their fight must become our fight.

Respectfully Submitted:  
Andy Madtes, President South Florida AFL-CIO  
Thomas Bott, Secretary-Treasurer South Florida AFL-CIO  
South Florida AFL-CIO Executive Board  
A. Philip Randolph Institute Miami-Dade Chapter  
South Florida Labor Council for Latin American Advancement (SF- LCLLA)