

AFT WASHINGTON RESOLUTION 2024-06

1 **Resolution in Support of Continuing the Fight for Healthcare Justice and Supporting the Work of The** 2 **Labor Campaign for Single Payer Healthcare**

3 **WHEREAS:** Healthcare in the United States remains a national disgrace with the highest
4 costs in the world, ranking 28th in infant mortality and 24th in life expectancy
5 with nearly 30 million Americans having no coverage at all and millions more
6 having such meager coverage that a single major medical event will push
7 them into bankruptcy; and

8 **WHEREAS:** The COVID pandemic has demonstrated the inefficiency, inequality, racial
9 disparity, and inequity at the core of our for-profit healthcare system; and

10 **WHEREAS:** These high costs have helped to sustain a climate of concessionary bargaining,
11 pushing down wages, causing bitter strikes and lockouts, triggering attacks on
12 public sector workers and retirees, and shifting more and more of the costs
13 onto the backs of workers; and

14 **WHEREAS:** All other industrialized countries provide comprehensive coverage to all
15 citizens as a fundamental human right, putting U.S. manufacturing employers
16 and workers at a global competitive disadvantage; and

17 **WHEREAS:** The Affordable Care Act (ACA) has been supported as a preliminary step
18 because it has improved access to healthcare for millions of Americans and
19 these advances, together with Medicare, Medicaid and other public health
20 programs, must be defended against those who seek to undermine and
21 dismantle the entire social safety net that working class families rely on to
22 provide a modicum of security; and

23 **WHEREAS:** Nonetheless, under the ACA millions remain uninsured and underinsured,
24 profit continues to drive healthcare policy and the ACA poses significant
25 challenges to our unions' ability to negotiate decent coverage for their
26 members and families by increasing "race to the bottom" pressures through
27 tiered benefits and the undermining of union sponsored health and welfare
28 funds; and

29 **WHEREAS:** A single-payer, Medicare for All healthcare program would be a powerful
30 alternative to the austerity policies being foisted on America's workers
31 because economists have determined that the entire federal budget deficit
32 could be nearly eliminated if the U.S. spent per capita on healthcare what any
33 other industrialized nation that treats healthcare as a human right spends; and

34 **WHEREAS:** The AFL-CIO, at its 2009 Convention and again in 2022 ([AFL-CIO 2022 Resolution 10](#)), called for a Social
35 Insurance Model for Health Care Reform that treats healthcare as a fundamental human right and stated
36 that the most cost effective and equitable way to provide quality healthcare is through a single payer
37 system; and,

38 **WHEREAS:** WSLC delegates have shown support for a Medicare for All model of healthcare administration every year
39 since 2017 with Resolutions [2024.29](#), [2023.01](#), [2022.27](#), [21.09](#), [21.01](#), [20.2](#) and others and,

Adopted

Adopted as amended:

By Committee

By Convention

By Executive Board

Defeated

Tabled

- 40 **WHEREAS:** Retirees are at constant risk of changing healthcare administration. WSLC Resolutions [2024.32](#) Resolution
41 to Make Retiree Medical Coverage for State Employees a Mandatory Subject of Bargaining and [2022.27](#)
42 Sustain the UMP Classic Medicare Plan and Explore Expanding a Self-Insured Medicare Benefit Plan for
43 Medicare Eligible Public Service Retirees in Washington show the ongoing fight we are engaged in to
44 support our union siblings at every stage of their lives
- 45 **WHEREAS:** [HR 3421](#), the “Medicare for All Act of 2023” which is sponsored by 113 members of Congress plus 16
46 national and international unions, will take health care off the bargaining table but will also allow
47 multiemployer plans to continue to provide supplemental benefits not duplicative of Medicare for All,
48 including expansion of union-negotiated programs such as disability, supplemental unemployment
49 benefits, tuition and training, child- and elder-care, with the potential to allow us to free up funds for our
50 beleaguered pension plans; and
- 51 **WHEREAS:** In recognition that states may have to lead the way before we can achieve a universal national health plan,
52 a number of states are working to establish universal public healthcare plans and Washington State has
53 created a [Universal Health Care Commission](#) to help design a universal health plan for all Washingtonians,
54 and
- 55 **WHEREAS:** A universal state healthcare plan, to succeed, must be developed with Labor at the table and must win
56 broad Labor support, and
- 57 **WHEREAS:** The State Based Universal Health Care Act ([HR 6270](#), [S.4817](#)) would make it easier for states to create and
58 fund universal healthcare plans by allowing a waiver of some federal rules, and
- 59 **WHEREAS:** [The Labor Campaign for Single Payer](#), launched in 2009 to advocate within the labor movement for
60 comprehensive, single-payer national healthcare reform, is calling for the labor movement to lead the
61 fight for healthcare justice and is supported by 18 national unions and 8 state labor federations; now
- 62 **RESOLVED:** That AFT Washington, AFL-CIO joins with our sisters and brothers around the country in the Labor
63 Campaign for Single Payer to advocate, educate and organize for healthcare justice and for a single-payer
64 system that will make healthcare a birthright for everyone in America, through a publicly financed
65 healthcare system that provides comprehensive benefits and a single standard of care in a system where
66 healthcare decisions are made by patients and their caregivers not by corporate and government
67 bureaucrats and where scarce healthcare resources are not squandered by profiteers, marketing and
68 excessive administrative costs; and
- 69 **RESOLVED:** That AFT Washington, AFL-CIO joins the Labor Campaign for Single Payer and encourages all of its affiliates
70 as well as other labor unions to also join and that AFT Washington, AFL-CIO will embark on a systematic
71 program to educate its members about the nature of the healthcare crisis, the importance of the single-
72 payer solution, it’s role in relieving the liability for retiree healthcare costs and in reducing the cost of
73 coverage for all workers and their families; and
- 74 **RESOLVED:** That AFT Washington, AFL-CIO will connect with our sibling organizations in California and Oregon to
75 discuss the creation of a regional movement to universal single payer healthcare; and
- 76 **RESOLVED:** That AFT Washington, AFL-CIO supports and urges our federal and state legislators to enact legislation
77 that embodies the principles of a universal single payer healthcare system and that we will urge our union
78 and community allies to make such legislation a priority in all state and federal electoral efforts.

Adopted in open meeting by the Executive Board on October 5, 2024.
