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Resolution to Support an Immigration Policy Based on Labor and Human Rights

WHEREAS, Thousands of U.S. union members have been fired as a result of the enforcement of employer sanctions against workers in the workplace, including 1200 janitors in Minneapolis, 300 janitors in Seattle, 475 janitors in San Francisco, as well as workers who have stood up to lead organizing drives into our unions, including 2000 sewing machine operators at American Apparel in Los Angeles; and

WHEREAS, Immigration reform bills in Washington, including the Schumer-Graham proposal, the REPAIR proposal by Senator Schumer and several other senators, and the CIR-ASAP proposal by Congressman Luis Gutierrez, all strengthen employer sanctions, which will cause more of our members to be fired through programs like E-Verify, the national ID card and employment verification, and will make it more difficult for unions to organize non-union workplaces by making immigrant workers even more vulnerable to firings, deportations and the denial of their rights through workplace enforcement; and

WHEREAS, AFL-CIO President Richard Trumka has said that that "we need to make sure every worker in America—documented or undocumented—is protected by our labor laws" and that we need immigration reform that "allows immigrants to be securely part of our country from day one-able to assert their legal rights, including the right to organize, without fear of retaliation;" and

WHEREAS, The North American Free Trade Agreement, the Central America Free Trade Agreement, and other similar agreements, and structural adjustment policies and other so-called economic reforms continue to boost corporate profits while creating massive poverty in countries like Mexico, El Salvador and others, and that as a result, millions of workers and farmers are displaced and have no alternative but to migrate in search of work, and therefore will continue to come to the United States to work, join our unions and participate in our organizing drives; and

WHEREAS, President Trumka has said that "the failures of our relationship with Mexico ... cannot be solved with guns and soldiers and fences. They must be addressed through an economic strategy for shared prosperity based on rising wages in both countries;" and

WHEREAS, The Mexican government fired 44,000 electrical workers and has tried to smash their union, the Mexican Electrical Workers (SME), and brought thousands of heavily armed police into Cananea to try to smash the 3-year strike of the Mineros, in both cases to create better conditions for giant corporations by breaking unions, privatizing workplaces and throwing workers out of their jobs, and that as a result many of those workers will be forced to come to the United States in order to find work and help their families survive; and

WHEREAS, The largest corporations and employer groups in the United States, including WalMart, Marriott, Smithfield, the Associated Building Contractors and others have sought to expand guest worker programs, forcing people to come to the United States only through those schemes that treat them as low wage workers with no rights, in conditions described as "Close to Slavery" by the Southern Poverty Law Center; and

WHEREAS, Our labor movement has called for basic reform of our immigration laws, and adopted a position at the AFL-CIO convention in Los Angeles in 1999 that demands the repeal of employer sanctions, immediate amnesty for all undocumented workers, protection of the right to organize for all workers, the strengthening of family reunification as the basis of immigration policy, and opposition to guest worker programs; and

WHEREAS, Our labor movement believes that solidarity with workers fighting for their rights in Mexico and around the world is an important part of immigration reform,

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the San Francisco Labor Council reiterates its support for the immigration position adopted by the AFL-CIO Convention in 1999, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the San Francisco Labor Council rejects all the proposals in Congress that promote the firing of undocumented workers, open the doors to new guest worker programs, and do not contain a program for the quick and inclusive legalization of undocumented workers, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the San Francisco Labor Council supports only those proposals for immigration reform that would force the renegotiation of NAFTA, CAFTA and all other trade agreements, in order to stop the enforced poverty that displaces communities abroad and to protect jobs in the United States, and will oppose any new trade agreements that cause such displacement and do not protect jobs, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the San Francisco Labor Council, supports the proposal for an alternative immigration reform bill made by the Dignity Campaign, because it is based on protecting the labor and human rights for all people, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the San Francisco Labor Council supports the SME and the Mineros, and calls on union members and working people to defend their rights by picketing the Mexican consulate and taking other supportive actions, and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED that the San Francisco Labor Council forwards this resolution for adoption to the California Labor Federation, the AFL-CIO, and to other local unions and central labor bodies.

Submitted by Alan Benjamin, OPEIU 3; David Bacon, SF/LCLAA; Cesar Garibay, ILWU6; Tom Edminster, UESF/AFT 61; Allan Fisher, AFT2121; Maria Guillen, SEIU 1021; Karl Kramer, SF Living Wage Coalition; Gloria LaRiva, Media Workers Guild; Alice Y. Lindstrom, APWU; Bobbi Lopez, SEIU 1021; Frank Martin del Campo, SF/LCLAA; Denis Mosgofian, GCC-IBT 4N/388M; Olga Miranda, SEIU87; Fred Pecker, ILWU6; Francesca Rosa, SEIU 1021; Renee Saucedo, SF/LCLAA, Rodger Scott, AFT Local 2121; Eric Cisneros, OPEIU Local 29; Ramses Teon-Nickels, SEIU 1021; Jean Taylor, APWU; David Welsh, NALC 214 and David Williams, SEIU 1021 and adopted by the San Francisco Labor Council on July 12, 2010.

Respectfully,



Tim Paulson
Executive Director