

RESOLUTION #1

DEFENDING OUR RIGHT TO COLLECTIVE BARGAINING

WHEREAS:

Public employees were excluded from the National Labor Relations Act, the federal law granting basic collective rights to private sector employees , nearly eight decades ago; and

WHEREAS:

Tens of millions of private sector workers won union representation and gained entrance into the middle class as a result of the victories they won through their collective bargaining agreements; and

WHEREAS:

Beginning in the 1960's AFSCME began a successful effort in states throughout the country to establish bargaining rights for millions of public employees who had historically been denied the right to bargain and thus the benefit of union contracts; and

WHEREAS:

Through the victories AFSCME and other unions won in first establishing bargaining rights and then negotiating good contracts, millions of public sector workers were able to win fair wages, affordable health care, retirement security, and a strong voice on the job; and

WHEREAS:

The National Labor Relations Act covering private sector workers has proven inadequate , allowing corporations to prevent their employees from gaining union representation; and

WHEREAS:

The dramatic reduction in union density from more than one-third of the private sector workforce to less than ten percent has resulted in the reduction of compensation levels for workers in the private sector; and

WHEREAS:

Big business and its political allies viewed the confluence of a sagging economy and the diminution of pay and benefits in the private sector as an opportunity to drive down public sector compensation and erode bargaining rights; and

WHEREAS:

Led by governors Scott Walker and John Kasich, laws were passed in Wisconsin and Ohio which eviscerated the bargaining rights of employees in those states; and

WHEREAS:

Governors and legislators in other states from coast to coast jumped on the bandwagon to erode bargaining rights and to attempt to strip public sector unions of their ability both to negotiate contracts and advance the political and legislative interests of their members; and

WHEREAS:

Here in Illinois Governor Quinn is attempting to seize the moment and walk away from a legally binding collective bargaining agreement and to pass legislation to deny collective bargaining rights to thousands of state employees; and

WHEREAS:

If Governor Quinn were to have his position upheld by the courts or the legislature, collective bargaining as we know it here in Illinois would be hopelessly compromised

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED:

That AFSCME Council 31 will continue to provide assistance to our brothers and sisters in Ohio, Wisconsin and other states in their efforts to overturn the anti-collective bargaining laws in their states and to expose the right-wing corporate interests which are behind these attacks; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

That Council 31 alert all of its locals and the entire labor movement to the implications of Governor Quinn's actions which would undermine the integrity of every Illinois public sector contract and call into question the very efficacy of Illinois public sector bargaining; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

That Council 31 will work with local unions to ensure that all AFSCME members fully understand the implications of the Governor's actions and are conducting the kind of grassroots mobilization that is essential to block his efforts; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED:

That Council 31 will continue to pursue every available legal and legislative avenue to ensure that the integrity of our state contract is upheld, that collective bargaining agreements for all public sector workers in Illinois are protected, and that employees represented by AFSCME and other unions retain their representation rights.

Submitted by:

Trudy Williams
AFSCME Local 3433

RESOLUTION #2

DEFENDING PUBLIC PENSIONS

WHEREAS:

Retirement security is one of the most important issues facing working people in our country with employer provided retiree healthcare benefits under attack and worker pension benefits threatened in both the public and private sectors, and the basic concept of defined benefit pension plans under direct assault; and

WHEREAS:

Illinois' public pensions represent a key element of employee compensation for hundreds of thousands of workers in the public service, our state's commitment to the fundamental principle that those who have worked hard and played by the rules should be able to retire and live out their remaining years with dignity and security; and

WHEREAS:

AFSCME Council 31 has played a critical role in winning significant improvement in the pension and other retirement benefits for Illinois state, university and local government employees; and

WHEREAS:

For far too many years the State of Illinois, the City of Chicago, and Cook County have failed to adequately fund their pension systems, a practice that has continued unabated for over 30 years, leaving the state with an unfunded pension liability estimated at \$80 billion and the City of Chicago with an unfunded liability estimated at \$14 billion; and

WHEREAS:

Other public pension systems, including those of teachers, police and firefighters, also face significant funding problems; and

WHEREAS:

Illinois' public pension systems suffered major losses in the economic downturn; and

WHEREAS:

The massive unfunded liability has required increasingly large payments to fund these pension systems, including the debt service on these Pension Obligation Bonds; and

WHEREAS:

Pension benefits received by Illinois' public retirees are in line with national trends, costing less than the average cost to private-sector employers; and

WHEREAS:

The Illinois Municipal Retirement Fund (IMRF), with benefits essentially similar to the State Employees' Retirement System (SERS) of Illinois, does NOT have a funding problem, proving that the State of Illinois has a pension funding problem, NOT a problem of excessively generous pension benefits; and

WHEREAS:

Article XIII of the Illinois Constitution contains a "non-diminishment" clause that protects the pension benefits of current employees from being reduced by the General Assembly; and

WHEREAS:

In an effort to try and cut pension costs for all Illinois state and local governments, the Illinois General Assembly enacted and the Governor signed legislation creating a substandard "Tier II" pension benefit for ALL Illinois public pension systems that applied ONLY to newly-hired Illinois public employees (consistent with the Illinois Constitution, effective 1/1/2011), which will require most of these newly hired public employees to work until age 67 to receive an unreduced pension and saddle these future retirees with a totally inadequate cost-of-living adjustment in retirement; and

WHEREAS:

Despite the Constitutional protection afforded to the pension benefits of current employees, the Illinois business community, led by the Civic Committee of the Commercial Club of Chicago and backed by other business organizations and most of the news media, have launched a well-funded propaganda campaign and commissioned a legal opinion arguing that the Constitution permits the diminishment of future pension benefits not yet earned by current employees; and

WHEREAS:

The Civic Committee has developed legislation that would reduce retirement benefits for most current Illinois state and local government employees (SB 512) by forcing them to pay significantly more to keep their current pension benefit, accept the substandard "Tier II" benefit; or agree to participate in a risky Defined Contribution retirement plan; and

WHEREAS:

While SB 512 is very likely unconstitutional, assuming that our current pension benefits will be protected by the courts is a risky strategy and should be our last resort; and

WHEREAS:

AFSCME and our allied public sector unions, including both teachers' unions, police, fire, and the service employees, have organized and financed We Are One Illinois to oppose this attack on our members retirement' security through grass roots mobilization and paid media, to educate the public on the need to maintain public defined benefit pension plans and retiree health benefits; and

WHEREAS:

AFSCME and our allies in the We Are One Illinois coalition stunned the Illinois political world by beating back SB 512 and preventing it from even being called for a vote in the spring legislative session, despite the fact that this measure had the backing of both legislative leaders in the House of Representatives; and

WHEREAS:

Despite the strong base of opposition that the union coalition has built to any measure cutting the pensions of current employees, the corporate honchos and key legislative leaders have vowed to continue their efforts to enact SB 512.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED:

That AFSCME Council 31 continue to strongly oppose Senate Bill 512 or any similar measure and opposes any and all efforts to diminish the pension benefits of Illinois public employees or to establish defined contribution plans for such employees; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

That Council 31 will continue to inform union members about the serious threat to their pension benefits and mobilize members to engage in the kind of concerted, intensive political activism that will be essential to defeat this threat; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

That Council 31 commit itself to a long-term strategy to ensure that those public employees who were hired on or after January 1, 2011, have a pension plan that allows them to retire at a reasonable age with benefits which allow them to live out their retirement years with adequate income; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

That Council 31 recognizes that Illinois public pension systems do, in fact, face a significant funding shortfall and will continue to work with our allies in We Are One Illinois to advance sound, long term solutions to this problem, recognizing that such reforms must be supported by an adequate revenue system for Illinois state and local governments; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED:

That since budget and benefit cuts are clearly not the answer to the pension funding crisis, AFSCME supports new revenue measures—including making Illinois' temporary income tax increase permanent, amending our state constitution to permit the wealthiest Illinoisans to be taxed at a higher rate than average citizens, and enacting additional revenues as necessary specifically dedicated to pay off the unfunded pension liabilities of Illinois state and local governments.

Submitted by:

Russell Stunkel
AFSCME Local 993

RESOLUTION #3

PROTECTING PUBLIC HEALTH CARE SERVICES

WHEREAS:

High unemployment combined with unaffordable COBRA payments have left many Illinois families without any insurance coverage; and

WHEREAS:

The high cost of health insurance has caused many employers to drop or reduce health benefits, leaving even more working families in Illinois without adequate coverage and many without any coverage at all; and

WHEREAS:

The rising number of uninsured and inadequately insured Illinoisans has increased the reliance on public hospitals, health clinics and public health departments in Illinois, many of which are staffed by AFSCME members and provide quality health services to hundreds of thousands of citizens otherwise without access to decent health care; and

WHEREAS:

Several Illinois counties operate AFSCME-represented nursing homes that serve a high proportion of needy disabled citizens and senior citizens who are not capable of caring for themselves; and

WHEREAS:

The current fiscal crisis in Illinois state and local government has led to increasing calls for city and county public health systems to move away from service delivery; and

WHEREAS:

Many of those calling for this retreat from the caregiving mission are private providers of medical services who wish to expand their services at the expense of the public safety net; and

WHEREAS:

In 2009 AFSCME Local 505 successfully fought the efforts of the City of Chicago to close four City-operated mental health clinics by working with clients of the clinics and mental health advocates, and by engaging aldermen in the fight; and

WHEREAS:

AFSCME Local 505 is now taking on the new Mayor of Chicago as he lays the groundwork to privatize all of the City's primary care clinics; and

WHEREAS:

Earlier this year AFSCME Local 1276 successfully fought a plan to privatize the WIC program operated by the Cook County Department of Public Health by recruiting service recipients to speak to the program's accomplishments; and

WHEREAS:

Despite intensive efforts, AFSCME was not able to prevent the closure of Cook County's Oak Forest Hospital, but was able to secure a pledge to convert the facility to a regional outpatient center; and

WHEREAS:

AFSCME members in Kane County waged a vigorous fight but did not prevail in their efforts to prevent the dismantling of their community health outreach programs; and

WHEREAS:

AFSCME members in the Cook County health system, the Lake County nursing home, and other public health venues across the state continue to face threats of privatization and program closures.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED:

That AFSCME Council 31 support and aid local unions as they build campaigns to defend the important work of public health care services; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

That AFSCME Council 31 continue to work with local union members and concerned stakeholders to halt efforts to cut or privatize these important services; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

That AFSCME Council 31 continue to support the entire public network of health care entities statewide that provide a vital safety net for all those who have difficulty accessing quality health care, and continue to oppose the privatization of any of these services; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED:

That AFSCME Council 31, in conjunction with AFSCME International, continue to strongly oppose cutbacks in public health and Medicaid funding at the federal level and work for increased federal support for safety-net health care providers operated by state and local governments.

Submitted by:

Laverne Walker
AFSCME Local 505

RESOLUTION # 4

**FIGHTING CUTBACKS AND DANGEROUS CONDITIONS IN THE
ILLINOIS DEPARTMENTS OF CORRECTIONS AND JUVENILE JUSTICE**

WHEREAS:

It is of vital importance to the personal safety of employees and to the safety of the general public to provide secure environments and appropriate rehabilitative programs in Department of Corrections state prisons and Department of Juvenile Justice youth centers; and

WHEREAS:

Overcrowding and understaffing within IDOC facilities is undermining security and jeopardizing the safety of staff and inmates; and

WHEREAS:

Policy changes and mismanagement within DJJ have led to a growing number of violent incidents and a breakdown of internal security in the state's youth centers; and

WHEREAS:

A continued lack of programming in both departments, including reductions in basic and vocational education, for inmates and youths makes facilities less secure, makes communities more dangerous when offenders are released, and makes it more likely those offenders will return to the system; and

WHEREAS:

AFSCME has been successful in achieving landmark agreements with both DOC and DJJ that bar mandatory overtime and the harm it has caused to so many employees lives; and

WHEREAS:

The ban on mandatory overtime compelled the departments to begin hiring new staff after hiring had been frozen for more than four years; and

WHEREAS:

As a result of that hiring, a measure of stability was introduced into IDOC until Gov. Quinn ended all "good time" programs, effectively ramping up the prison

population, and the General Assembly drastically cut the department's budget for the current fiscal year; and

WHEREAS:

The Quinn Administration's failure to fill the vacancies created by resignations and retirements has resulted in staffing levels beginning to deteriorate again; and

WHEREAS:

Pressures on DJJ have continued to come from various outside groups who do not believe that any youth should be incarcerated no matter how serious the crimes are that they commit; and

WHEREAS:

In response to these fiscal and political pressures, Governor Quinn is seeking to close Logan Correctional Center and IYC Murphysboro, despite the damage such closures will cause to both the adult and juvenile correctional systems in Illinois, as well as to the local communities where these facilities are located;

WHEREAS:

AFSCME led and won the fight to prevent the closure of Pontiac CC three years ago and within the past two years halted the closure of IYC Pere Marquette, while blocking the downsizing of Decatur CC, East Moline CC, Lincoln CC, Vandalia, Vienna and Logan CC; and

WHEREAS:

AFSCME has a long history of successfully addressing problems in our state correctional facilities including: eliminating cell coverings, limiting inmate property, reducing the influence of gangs, increasing penalties for attacks on staff; enacting the nation's first private prison moratorium law and beating back privatization in the courts and the legislature.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED:

That AFSCME will continue to lead the fight for safe adult and juvenile correctional facilities in our state; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

That AFSCME will continue to strongly oppose all efforts to downsize or close any correctional facility or youth center so long as current laws continue to produce high levels of incarceration of dangerous individuals; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

That Council 31 will continue its advocacy for the renewal of the educational and vocational programs that have been so severely cut back over the past decade and that are so essential to the rehabilitation of prison inmates and juvenile offenders; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

That AFSCME will continue to press for adequate numbers of parole officers who are an essential component of the criminal justice system; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

That Council 31 will continue to oppose any policies that might open the door to an attempt to privatize IDOC or IDJJ programs; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED:

That Council 31, in conjunction with all Corrections local unions, will continue to press DOC and DJJ management to hire sufficient staff, honor the union contract, respect employees, and foster safe conditions.

Submitted by:

Randy Hellman
Patricia Rensing
AFSCME Local 943

RESOLUTION #5

FIGHTING PRIVATIZATION IN STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENTS

WHEREAS:

Our unprecedented national economic downturn and the state's longstanding budget problems continue to have a negative impact at every level of government in Illinois; and

WHEREAS:

The revenue systems of most Illinois cities, counties, and other local governmental units are afflicted with a structural imbalance, including an over-reliance on property taxes, and a sales tax with a very narrow base; and

WHEREAS:

Politicians and government managers all too often turn to privatization as a purported solution to a fiscal crisis; and

WHEREAS:

In reality privatization undermines the quality of public services and the local economy by rewarding private contractors who perform the cheapest, not the best quality, work while driving down wages and benefits of employees; and

WHEREAS:

AFSCME Council 31 has been successful in some instances in negotiating provisions that restrict contracting out; and

WHEREAS:

AFSCME Council 31 was successful in passing state legislation banning privatization of state prisons and limiting support service privatization in local school districts; and

WHEREAS:

AFSCME's vigilance over the years has blocked or limited a number of efforts by employers to privatize functions currently performed by AFSCME members; and

WHEREAS:

A key part of these efforts has been AFSCME local unions working together with Council 31 to reach out to stakeholders in the local communities to support quality public services; and

WHEREAS:

In the City of Chicago, Evanston and around the state, AFSCME locals are fighting privatization efforts by reaching out to area residents and service recipients, offering efficiency alternatives to privatization, and pushing local elected officials to pass ordinances limiting privatization; and

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED:

That AFSCME Council 31 will continue to play a leading role in fighting attempts to privatize vital public services; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

That Council 31 will continue to work to strengthen provisions in all union contracts to make it more difficult for employers to privatize public services that AFSCME members provide; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

That Council 31 and all local unions will seek to make sure that language in our union contracts limiting subcontracting is strictly enforced; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

That Council 31 and all local unions will work to strengthen ties with service recipients, to strive to improve service quality, and to build support in our communities in order to deter attempts at privatization; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED:

That Council 31 will continue to work with local unions to vigorously oppose efforts to privatize governmental services at any level of government through legislative action and member mobilization.

Submitted by:

Garry Cacciapaglia
AFSCME Local 1058

RESOLUTION #6

SAVING STATE DEVELOPMENTAL AND MENTAL HEALTH CENTERS

WHEREAS:

Council 31 has always supported an array of settings and services for individuals with physical and intellectual disabilities, mental illness and the frail elderly; and

WHEREAS:

AFSCME believes this continuum of care should take into account the individual's needs as well as the personal preferences of the individual and his or her family; and

WHEREAS:

AFSCME Council 31 has long represented employees who work in state-operated facilities for the mentally ill and the developmentally disabled, county nursing homes and veterans homes, and increasingly represents caregivers who work for publicly funded private agencies; and

WHEREAS:

Through the years AFSCME has fought to assure adequate staffing and quality services in all those service settings, as well as a decent standard of living for its members who work in those facilities; and

WHEREAS:

Our state's structural deficit has made it difficult to identify sufficient resources to fund an adequate system of care, so that Illinois' ranking in almost all aspects of care – from home services to congregate care to state facilities - is consistently ranked among the poorest in the nation; and

WHEREAS:

In recent years our union has fought intense battles over the closure and downsizing of several state operated mental health and developmental centers; and

WHEREAS:

Instead of addressing the need for more state revenue to fund a quality system of care as AFSCME Council 31 has done, too many groups who claim to be advocates for disabled individuals work to remove one group's needed supports in order to fund

another group's needs and deliberately mislead the public regarding the quality and cost of care in state-operated centers; and

WHEREAS:

The FY 12 state budget contained deep cuts to all areas of state service, but particularly state developmental centers and mental health centers, which will drive anti-facility zealots to push for more facility closures; and

WHEREAS:

DHS is setting goals to push more and more individuals out of state developmental centers, and is making it more difficult to access state mental health hospitals, which will reduce the ability of some individuals to make the choice they want and to access the care that they need; and

WHEREAS:

Governor Quinn is seeking to address the state's budget shortfall by closing five state mental health and developmental centers, in clear violation of the union contract; and

WHEREAS:

By halting the previously planned closures of the Kiley Developmental Center, the Alton Mental Health Center civil unit, and by forestalling the planned closure of the Tinley Park Mental Health Center, AFSCME has demonstrated that when employees, family members, advocates, elected officials and the community unite to preserve the continuum of care they can win.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED:

That AFSCME Council 31 will continue to support a continuum of care by uniting all disability workers around a shared agenda of improved funding to support quality care in whatever setting an individual with disabilities chooses to receive services; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

That Council 31 will work with family and advocacy groups and supportive legislators to continue to oppose the closure of the Chester, Tinley Park and Singer Mental Health Centers, the Jacksonville and Mabley Developmental Centers and the closure or downsizing of any other state facilities; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

That Council 31 will work to build support for a continuum of care and fight ideologically motivated attacks on congregate care settings in the state legislature; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

That local unions will renew their efforts to engage family members and advocates in these fights, which cannot be won without their support; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED:

That Council 31 will work to secure a supplemental appropriation for the FY 12 budget as a critical element in assuring a full continuum of quality care.

Submitted by:

Gary Ciaccio
AFSCME Local 29

RESOLUTION #7

FIGHTING LAY-OFFS IN A TIME OF FISCAL CRISIS

WHEREAS:

Elected officials across Illinois in counties, municipalities, and school districts have responded to the on-going fiscal crisis by demanding furloughs, contract givebacks, privatization of public services, job reductions and the laying off of public service workers, demands that have been echoed by political leaders from both parties at the state level, and

WHEREAS:

Eliminating public sector jobs increases unemployment and economic instability, undermines public services and the quality of life for all citizens, and threatens the working standards and jobs rights of both public and private sector workers, and

WHEREAS:

Illinois saw a net loss of more than 10,500 public sector jobs during the past fiscal year, primarily at the local government level (even as private sector employment grew modestly), most of these jobs with decent pay and benefits while private employers generally added low-paying jobs with a few or no benefits, and

WHEREAS:

Even as the public sector workforce is being reduced, the economic distress and high unemployment are increasing the demand for public services, from direct aid like unemployment benefits, food stamps, and Medicaid to such services as mass transit, libraries, returning education and job (re)training, as well as higher demands for mental health services and increased public safety needs; and

WHEREAS:

Eliminating jobs and laying off public sector workers threatens the pay and benefits standards of all workers in the public and private sectors, undermining their collective bargaining strength and job rights;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED:

That AFSCME Council 31 will continue to vigorously oppose the reduction in public services and the layoffs of public service workers as a response to the fiscal challenges facing state and local government, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

That AFSCME Council 31 supports generating new tax and other revenues for public services at all levels including local governmental bodies, statewide tax reform and greater federal assistance to state and local government, as well as efficiencies in service delivery that don't reduce services or reduce working standards for employees delivering those services, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

That AFSCME Council 31 will help all local unions to mobilize the grassroots campaigns and public outreach needed to stop layoffs in state government, universities, counties, municipalities, school districts and other public service entities; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

That Council 31 will coordinate closely with local unions to devise bargaining strategies to avert layoffs at a time when members facing layoff face the prospect of a very long period of unemployment and an economy with a dearth of well-paying jobs; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED:

That AFSCME Council 31 will reach out to and work with its partners in labor, the broader community, and elected officials to build the broadest possible coalition in the battles against public service reductions and layoffs.

Submitted by:

Kenneth Kleinlein
AFSCME Local 3567

RESOLUTION #8

FOR FEDERAL ACTION TO SUSTAIN AND CREATE JOBS

WHEREAS:

The persistence of a high rate of unemployment is the greatest threat to the long-term security of the vast majority of Americans and our nation's economic future, and

WHEREAS:

Despite some modest job gains in the last year, the unemployment rate for Illinois as well as the U.S. as a whole remains close to 9%, nearly 14 million people, almost half of whom have been unemployed more than six months. Another 11 million have either quit looking for jobs or work involuntarily at part-time employment.

WHEREAS:

An on-going lack of employment disrupts the lives and undermines the futures of American families, who must contend with the loss of savings, health care, and housing as well as personal bankruptcy.

WHEREAS:

Not since the Great Depression of the 1930s have we suffered from such prolonged rates of high unemployment, and we cannot sustain our economic and political vitality when one out of every six Americans seeking work is forced to remain idle, and

WHEREAS:

The immediate cause for high unemployment was the economic meltdown on Wall Street caused by years of mismanagement, unbridled greed and lack of federal oversight. In addition, long range job destruction was caused by global outsourcing and unfair trade policies driven by corporate interests. However, the root cause of high unemployment is a growing imbalance of wealth that has produced massive cash balances for corporations and leaves the upper 20% of Americans holding 84% of the nation's wealth. That vast imbalance leaves most working Americans with shrinking spending power, reducing the consumer demand that constitutes 70% of the nation's economy, while those with wealth see fewer opportunities for growth in the U.S. and invest elsewhere, further undermining American competitiveness and job growth, and

WHEREAS:

The Occupy Wall Street movement that has emerged in recent months has captured the imagination of countless Americans and galvanized protests against the

growing concentration of wealth in our nation in which the top 1% of wealth-owning households own 34.6% of all net worth; and

WHEREAS:

The Occupy Wall Street movement is sending a strong message that Priority #1 should be creating jobs and strengthening the middle class, not fueling the greed of corporate CEOs and their marionette politicians. The 1% should not be taken care of at the expense of the 99%; and

WHEREAS:

Despite the lack of jobs, there is plenty of work to do to meet the needs of Americans and sustain our nation's vitality. Improving our schools and rebuilding our neighborhoods, expanding access to higher education and providing health care, long-term care and care for those with disabilities, improving public safety, remaking the transportation system and investing in energy-efficiency are all crucial to our country's prosperity in an increasingly global 21st Century economy, and

WHEREAS:

The public sector as a whole and the federal government in particular has a critical role in such job creation. Only the public sector will prioritize rebuilding and growing our communities, rather than just short-term profits. Only the public sector can assure that a public dollar spent for job creation goes directly to employment rather than to pad corporate profits or overseas investments. Only a public sector program at the federal level can be massive enough to have real impact on unemployment. Every dollar spent for public services such as education, health care, human services and public safety generates \$1.36 worth of economic activity. Public infrastructure spending creates even more.

WHEREAS:

Increasingly, job loss is concentrated in the public sector—especially at the state and local levels--so that even as the private sector experiences modest job growth, unemployment rates are kept high by massive layoffs in the public sector; and

WHEREAS:

Federal government spending is critical not only to stimulating jobs in the private sector but to preventing layoffs and fostering job growth in the public sector; and

WHEREAS:

Contrary to media myths, previous federal stimulus programs played a critical role in preventing the layoff of tens of thousands of state and local government

employees—layoffs that are drastically increasing now that there are no longer stimulus funds coming into the states; and

WHEREAS:

Funding for federal programs, such as Head Start and public housing authorities where AFSCME members work, is also being significantly cut back or is at risk of being cut; and

WHEREAS:

The risk of federal funding cuts is now even greater because of Republican insistence on massive spending cuts in return for support of raising the nation's debt ceiling and because of the new subcommittee that is charged with making even further cuts; and

WHEREAS:

In an effort to address the nation's unemployment crisis, President Obama has proposed a major jobs creation program that will immediately ramp up federal spending for infrastructure repairs and provide an infusion of funds for state and local governments; and

WHEREAS:

Republicans in Congress have already made clear their intent to block the President's plan, without having any alternative proposal for how to put Americans back to work or prevent massive layoffs of state and local government employees; and

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED:

That AFSCME Council 31 supports President Obama's American Jobs Act and will work to help ensure its passage as swiftly as possible; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

That AFSCME Council 31 supports the President's call to fund such a program—and any debt reduction—by tax reforms that increase incomes taxes for millionaires and billionaires; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

That Council 31 calls for further reforms in federal tax policy that would eliminate subsidies for oil companies, end tax loopholes for corporations that ship American jobs overseas and tax financial transactions; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

That AFSCME Council 31 calls on all Illinois elected officials, including Members of Congress, state and local leaders to support such legislation; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

That Council 31 will work in conjunction with the International Union to halt cuts to vital federal programs, such as Medicaid, Head Start, and public housing authorities, as well as any federal cuts that would negatively impact state and local governments; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

That AFSCME Council 31 joins the International Union and the AFL-CIO in standing in solidarity with the Occupy Wall Street movement's efforts to challenge the maldistribution of wealth in our society and the corporate greed that has wrecked so many lives, obliterated jobs, and left millions of Americans homeless and hopeless; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED:

That AFSCME Council 31 continues to support other long-term solutions to job creation, including the tax reforms at the state and federal levels, renegotiating unfair trade treaties, and rebuilding the strength of the labor movement through the Employee Free Choice Act and the defense of collective bargaining.

Submitted by:

Barney Franklin
AFSCME Local 2946

RESOLUTION #9

PROGRESSIVE TAX REFORM IN ILLINOIS

WHEREAS:

Illinois state government has an antiquated revenue system that, year after year, is incapable of meeting its obligations to maintain essential services, let alone fund desperately-needed improvements in education, human services, public safety, and other programs, and

WHEREAS:

Though passage of Public Act 96-1496 (SB2505) in January 2011 was a historic victory for public services and financial stability that helped repair Illinois's fiscal position, create both public sector and private sector jobs, save vital public services and shore up state pension funds, the measure did not enact the comprehensive, permanent reforms necessary to address the inadequacy and unfairness of the state tax structure, and

WHEREAS:

P.A. 96-1496 failed to distribute the tax burden based on the ability to pay, failed to raise additional funding for local governments, and failed to modernize the tax code by extending the sales tax to services or closing unproductive business tax loopholes, and most fundamentally, the measure extends only through 2015, and

WHEREAS:

The Illinois state and local tax system is among the most regressive in the United States with a tax burden on lower income taxpayers more than double the burden on those with incomes in the top 1%, and

WHEREAS:

Failure to raise additional state funding for cities, counties, school districts and other units of local government has resulted in higher property taxes, reductions in services, and the reduction in pay and benefits, as well as layoffs of public sector employees providing those services, and

WHEREAS:

Modernizing the tax code will require broadening the sales tax base to capture service sector economic growth as well as eliminating unwarranted corporate tax breaks including the "single sales factor" tax break and the "retailer's discount" that decrease tax revenue from some of our largest and most profitable corporations; and

WHEREAS:

Allowing the rate increases in P.A. 96-1496 to expire in 2015 without additional tax reform that is adequate, efficient and fair will precipitate a massive fiscal crisis leaving the state unable to fund operations or meet its obligation to pay off its liabilities, and

WHEREAS:

Illinois has been prevented from achieving a tax system that is stable and fair by a state constitutional bar on progressive taxation; and

WHEREAS:

The only means to achieve meaningful tax reform is by waging the costly, lengthy and fierce battle that will be required to amend the state constitution to allow for enactment of a progressive tax structure.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED:

That AFSCME Council 31 renews its historic commitment to progressive tax reform in Illinois and will fight for such reforms which include graduated rates for the state income tax, deductions and credits to make the tax burden more fair for working families, extending the sales taxes to services, eliminating corporate tax loopholes, ensuring that big business pays its fair share of taxes, and generating a permanent level of revenue adequate to meet state and local government obligations; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

That AFSCME Council 31 will continue to play a leadership role in building public and political support for such progressive tax reforms, including amending the Illinois constitution, working with our allies in the labor movement, the broader progressive community such as the Center for Tax and Budget Accountability and the Responsible Budget Coalition, and elected officials at all level of government; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED:

That AFSCME Council 31 calls on Governor Quinn and the legislative leaders of the Illinois General Assembly to help craft, support and enact such reforms.

Submitted by:

Kulmeet Galhotra
AFSCME Local 3315

RESOLUTION #10

BUILDING UNION POWER IN THE LEGISLATIVE AND POLITICAL ARENAS

WHEREAS:

The Labor Movement is currently engaged in a fight for its very survival, and politics is a crucial arena for that fight; and

WHEREAS:

The right to collective bargaining for public employees has been effectively abolished by legislatures in Wisconsin and other states, and is threatened in many more; and

WHEREAS:

Acting on behalf of their corporate sponsors, Republican members of Congress have tried to hold parts of the federal budget hostage in order to push through language that would make it even harder to organize in the private sector; and

WHEREAS:

The increasing concentration of wealth, combined with the *Citizens United* decision by the US Supreme Court, have enabled the wealthy and corporate interests to achieve unprecedented influence in both political parties; and

WHEREAS:

Those corporate interests have explicitly stated that their goal is to roll back the gains made by union members in the areas of economic and retirement security; and

WHEREAS:

These same interests seek to undermine the public programs and benefits, such as Medicare and Social Security, that are essential to the well being of all working families; and

WHEREAS:

Union members will be able to protect their interests only by increasing and intensifying their political involvement, in terms of both money and time; and

WHEREAS:

Political action has enabled working families to win critical battles, from challenging the implementation of Ohio's abolition of collective bargaining, to recalling Wisconsin state senators, to stopping cuts to pension benefits for current workers in Illinois; and

WHEREAS:

Union members, by a 6-1 margin, want their unions to be able to speak out about legislation and politics, but big business and its allies already outspend unions at least 14 to 1 in the political process; and

WHEREAS:

With five Congressional seats up for grabs, Illinois is a key battleground in determining control of the U.S. House of Representatives after 2012; and

WHEREAS:

Volunteers from Illinois can play an important role in 2012 Presidential battleground states such as Wisconsin and Iowa; and

WHEREAS:

To meet these challenges, AFSCME International has set a national goal of revamping and enhancing its political capacity, aiming to recruit 40,000 union political volunteers, reach a 90% rate of member voter registration and voter turnout, and enroll 25% of its members in the PEOPLE M.V.P. program,

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED:

That local unions and retiree chapters will work to recruit at least 2% of their members as active volunteers in political campaigns for union-endorsed candidates per the 21st Century goals; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

That AFSCME Council 31 and all affiliated locals continue their combined efforts to sign up new members to the PEOPLE M.V.P. program in order to raise vitally needed funds for legislative and political activity while encouraging existing PEOPLE members to increase their support by becoming M.V.P. members so that Council 31 can be the first state to surpass the national goal of 25% participation; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

That AFSCME Council 31 encourage recently retired members to continue their support for legislative and political justice by joining AFSCME Retirees Chapter 31 and participating in its PEOPLE M.V. P. program; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

That each local union work within AFSCME Council 31 to establish an ongoing campaign to inform the membership about the key issues that face the labor movement and working families and to mobilize them to communicate with their legislators on these issues; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED:

That AFSCME Council 31, in coalition with other unions where possible, work to recruit and support candidates who have demonstrated their viability and have committed themselves to be champions for working families, whether they be Republicans, Democrats, or from a third party.

Submitted by:

Richard Depratt
AFSCME Local 2052

RESOLUTION #11

REFORM FEDERAL LABOR LAW TO LET WORKERS FORM UNIONS

WHEREAS:

Public Service workers deserve the strength that comes with AFSCME representation so that they are treated and compensated fairly and have a strong voice to address their concerns on the job; and

WHEREAS:

Organizing to bring new members into the ranks of AFSCME Council 31 has a direct impact on our union's ability to fight and win for our current members; and

WHEREAS:

Council 31 is committed to building a strong public service union through aggressive efforts to organize new members; and

WHEREAS:

Council 31 has a strong organizing program that reaches out to public service workers throughout Illinois—those who work directly for government and those who work for agencies which are funded by government--to help them form unions in their workplaces; and

WHEREAS:

Council 31 continues to seek to organize all employees of contractors performing work that is closely related to the work that AFSCME members are already performing in order to aid these workers and to provide a disincentive for any further privatization of bargaining unit work; and

WHEREAS:

Less than 7% of all private sector workers are represented by unions and the resulting decrease in the standard of living threatens all workers—public and private--alike; and

WHEREAS:

The National Labor Relations Act fails to protect private sector workers who frequently face threats, intimidation and termination by their employers when they attempt to form a union; and

WHEREAS:

In far too many instances, organizing campaigns are costly and time-consuming because employers flagrantly violate labor laws and spend large sums on union-busting consultants; and

WHEREAS:

Successful organizing also requires building a strong network of support in religious and community organizations, as well as aggressive tactics that can persuade the employer that it is in its interest not to oppose its workers' right to organize; and

WHEREAS:

Reforming our nation's labor laws is essential to enabling private sector employees to exercise their right to form a union; and

WHEREAS:

The erosion of union density in the private sector has resulted in falling wages, the virtual disappearance of defined pension benefits, and steeply increased health costs that employees in the private sector are forced to pay; and

WHEREAS:

Corporate interests, politicians, the press, and other anti-union critics point to the diminished compensation in the private sector to justify their call for reducing the salaries and benefits of public sector workers.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED:

That Council 31 and all its affiliates continue to stress that we are a union for all those who work in service to the public, whether in public or private employment, in settings ranging from offices to prisons to hospitals; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

That Council 31 continue its efforts to organize all unrepresented public employees, as well as employees of nonprofit agencies, state or local government contractors, and hospitals and other health care facilities—all of which are funded with public dollars; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

That Council 31 work in concert with AFSCME International, other unions and concerned community and religious organizations to do everything possible to advance legislative and policy labor law reforms to allow employees the right to organize; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED:

That Council 31 continue to develop its organizing program by allocating resources to strengthen organizing efforts, giving organizing a high priority in all publications, and integrating education regarding organizing into Council trainings, conferences and other events.

Submitted by:

Carlene Erno
AFSCME Local 2615

RESOLUTION #12

FAIRNESS FOR COMMUNITY DISABILITY WORKERS

WHEREAS:

In the last two decades the state's system of care for individuals with disabilities has largely been privatized, with a wide array of forces converging to shift funding away from state-operated residential programs to community-based agencies, primarily operated by non-profit entities; and

WHEREAS:

This trend has been motivated in large part by the drive to reduce costs by moving the care of individuals with disabilities to a workforce with historically low levels of compensation thereby eliminating jobs in state centers which provide affordable health care, decent pensions, and fair wages; and

WHEREAS:

More than 15 years ago AFSCME Council 31 resolved to bring to these private sector community disability workers the rights and protections that are only guaranteed through union representation; and

WHEREAS:

Since then, AFSCME Council 31 has become the most effective advocate for additional funding for community workers' wages and benefits, which are necessary to develop the stable workforce so critical to high quality continuum of care for the disabled; and

WHEREAS:

AFSCME Council 31 now represents nearly 20% of workers in private sector agencies serving the developmentally disabled, and has also brought into the union family workers counseling the mentally ill and those recovering from substance abuse; and

WHEREAS:

All of these nonprofit entities serving individuals with disabilities and others in need are virtually entirely dependent on state funding; and

WHEREAS:

Our state's structural deficit has made it extremely difficult to ensure that adequate resources are available to fund a quality system of community care resulting in Illinois' consistent ranking among the poorest in the nation in almost all aspects of care; and

WHEREAS:

AFSCME Council 31 has acted to address the need for more state revenue to fund a quality system of care, and having achieved a historic increase in the state income tax is now working on passing additional revenue measures; and

WHEREAS:

AFSCME members in community agencies come together to engage in ongoing intensive lobbying and public education in order to win the additional funding needed to allow for wage increases for community disability workers in private agencies.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED:

That AFSCME Council 31 will continue to support a continuum of care by uniting all disability workers around a shared agenda of improved funding to support quality care in whatever setting an individual with disabilities chooses to receive services; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

AFSCME Council 31 will continue to reach out to community disability workers who are seeking to gain union representation in order to help them gain the respect, dignity and voice on the job that only a union can bring; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

That Council 31 will continue its fight to win additional state funding to allow for fair wage increases and adequate benefits for workers serving people with disabilities in community settings, which are necessary to ensure high quality services; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

That local unions will renew their efforts to engage the individuals, their family members, disability advocates and state legislators in these fights, which will require this kind of unified, grassroots effort; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED:

That Council 31 will continue its efforts to foster a stable, well-trained, unionized workforce in private community agencies as a critical element in assuring a full continuum of quality care.

Submitted by:

Yolanda Sims
AFSCME Local 2481

RESOLUTION #13

PROTECT SOCIAL SECURITY AND MEDICARE

WHEREAS:

Social Security and Medicare are government-sponsored insurance programs that provide dignity and security to senior citizens and people with disabilities, keeping millions out of poverty for generations; and

WHEREAS:

Social Security and Medicare benefits are *earned* on the job – tied directly to the payroll contributions made by nearly every American worker; and

WHEREAS:

Two-thirds of all seniors depend on Social Security benefits for more than half their income and a third depend on it for more than 90% of their income, while Medicare protects beneficiaries and their families from the potentially bankrupting cost of a serious illness; and

WHEREAS:

Social Security and Medicare are highly cost-efficient programs with extremely low administrative costs because, unlike private insurance, they need no expensive marketing, make no profit, and are able to pool the resources of nearly all Americans; and

WHEREAS:

Social Security and Medicare hospital insurance are self-supporting with payroll contributions, do not contribute a penny to the federal deficit and, according to their Trustees, will be able to pay full benefits for many years to come; and

WHEREAS:

These vital programs are more threatened today than at any time in their history, with many in Congress seeking to make draconian cuts and a leading Republican presidential candidate seeking to dismantle Social Security entirely; and

WHEREAS:

Proposals for benefit cuts include raising the ages of eligibility for Social Security and Medicare benefits; changing the formula for the Social Security COLA in order to

reduce annual increases; means-testing benefits; privatizing Social Security and turning Medicare over to private insurance companies; and changing the formula for basic Social Security benefits in an effort to cut payments to future retirees; and

WHEREAS:

The recently enacted Budget Control Act of 2011 established a 12-member congressional "Super Committee," made up of 6 Representatives and 6 Senators – half Democrats and half Republicans – who are charged with making recommendations to Congress by the end of November that will cut the federal budget by \$1.5 trillion over ten years; and

WHEREAS:

The Republican members of the Super Committee have already pledged to reject any tax increases – even for the wealthiest Americans – leaving critical benefit programs such as Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid as the focus for budget cuts; and

WHEREAS:

Polls show that a majority of Americans want to reduce the deficit by raising taxes on the wealthy and making corporations pay their fair share, rather than cutting lifeline programs like Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED:

That AFSCME Council 31 rejects all efforts to balance the federal budget on the backs of seniors and people with disabilities by cutting benefits in Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid for either current or future beneficiaries; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

That Council 31 will work closely with Retirees Chapter 31 which is leading the fight in Illinois to protect and defend these vital programs; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED:

That Council 31 will work in coalition with all other concerned organizations to build the strongest possible bulwark against all those who seek to shred the retirement safety net that Social Security and Medicare provide for our nation's senior citizens of today and tomorrow.

Submitted by:

Bonnie Brimm
AFSCME Local 3280

RESOLUTION #14

SUPPORT FAIR TRADE AND GLOBAL LABOR RIGHTS

WHEREAS:

Over the past two decades, the United States Congress has entered into a series of multinational and bilateral “free trade” agreements that have aided multinational corporations in exporting jobs from the United States to underdeveloped countries; and

WHEREAS:

Such so-called "free trade" has already had a devastating impact on working families by fostering the wholesale loss of jobs—as well as having a negative impact on underdeveloped countries by exploiting their workforces and distorting their economic development strategies; and

WHEREAS:

Job losses have increasingly spread from the manufacturing to the “outsourcing” of services, threatening not only private sector jobs but public employment as well; and

WHEREAS:

The loss of these jobs has come largely from sectors of the economy that pay good wages and benefits and has been a major contributing factor to the decline in income of working Americans; and

WHEREAS:

Despite these negative outcomes, pressures continue unabated for further treaties to foster greater globalization of production, including the Columbia, Peru and Korean trade agreements currently pending before Congress; and

WHEREAS:

Over the past several years the American labor movement has joined with other unions around the world, as well as with a broad array of groups in this country, all of whom are opposed to the unfettered movement of capital around the globe without regard for human consequences; and

WHEREAS:

The abuse of workers in underdeveloped countries at the hands of multinational corporations has sparked a growing awareness in this country of the dangers posed by free trade; and

WHEREAS:

The labor movement and its allies are fighting vigorously to ensure that trade agreements mandate enforceable human rights and workers' rights standards in developing countries; and

WHEREAS:

The imposition of hefty tariffs by the Obama Administration on Chinese tires which threaten to destroy the rubber industry in the United States represents the kind of trade law enforcement needed to preserve the American manufacturing sector.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED:

That AFSCME Council 31 pledge its continuing support to the AFL-CIO's campaign to reshape the global economy to ensure that workers' rights are protected in this country and around the world; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

That AFSCME Council 31 seek to educate its members about the importance of fair trade that seeks to preserve good jobs in this country while at the same time fostering economic development efforts in poor nations that can raise the standard of living around the world; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

That AFSCME Council 31 will continue to work against so-called "free trade" agreements unless they include strong labor and human rights standards; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED:

That AFSCME Council 31 will work in coalition with other labor unions, as well as religious, student and environmental groups to build a strong movement for global justice.

Submitted by:

Barb Reardon
AFSCME Local 1048