

# Reclaiming Worker Power Energizing Our Movement

WASHINGTON STATE LABOR COUNCIL, AFL-CIO

## RESOLUTION REGARDING THE IMPORTANT INFRASTRUCTURE OF CARE WORK RESOLUTION #2024.11

WHEREAS, care work lays the foundation for a thriving society, yet is fundamentally invisible, radically undervalued, and taken as a given by governments and businesses; and

WHEREAS, this undermines the health and well-being of careworkers, primarily women and girls, and limits their economic prosperity by fueling gender gaps in employment and wages, while also leaving them time-poor, unable to meet their basic needs or to participate in social and political activities; and

WHEREAS, working parents need a safe, engaging place for their children to learn, and children need stable, long-term relationships with caregivers, and individual attention with a caregiver helps develop foundational learning and social-emotional skills for lifetime success; and

WHEREAS, historic undervaluing of care work and the lack of foundational public investment means this critical workforce earns poverty wages with few benefits, leading to high turnover and overall instability in the care economy; and

WHEREAS, 63% of Washington residents live in a “child care desert” meaning there is low or no availability for child care, with the state is facing the 6th most severe child care shortage in the country; and

WHEREAS, finding affordable quality care for elders and children is challenging for working people, and even more challenging for those who work long hours, outside of traditional working hours, or who may routinely travel to different worksites; and

WHEREAS, the affiliates of the Washington State Labor Council, AFL-CIO have a shared acknowledgement that the current system of caregiving in this country is rooted in systemic racism and upholds practices that continue to harm BIPOC communities. Today’s system remains stigmatizing, insufficient, narrow, and pays unsustainably low-wages to providers. Therefore, any steps we take together must be in service of realizing our vision, rather than upholding a fundamentally flawed system. We will not get stuck in only what seems “possible” today; now therefore, be it

RESOLVED, The Washington State Labor Council, AFL-CIO will work hand-in-hand with care workers and their unions to reform and improve these systems to meet the needs of providers and consumers; and be it further

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## **RESOLUTION REGARDING THE IMPORTANT INFRASTRUCTURE OF CARE WORK (cont.)** RESOLUTION #2024.11

RESOLVED, that the Washington State Labor Council, AFL-CIO will advocate for robust public, progressive funding to expand access to licensed quality care and help make these good, union jobs for providers. This includes but not limited to advocating for the transition of child care subsidy to the Cost of Quality Care Model to work toward living wages for providers as well as expansion of Working Connection Child Care eligibility to 75% of the State Median Income to support more families with access to subsidized care; and be it further

RESOLVED, The Washington State Labor Council, AFL-CIO will work with affiliates to convene a table to share resources, provide best practices for opening child care facilities that are responsive to our members, provide model language, and create a toolkit for effective bargaining around care; and; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Washington State Labor Council, AFL-CIO will promote the need for care work throughout the lifespan to be a part of the vital infrastructure in the state of Washington to our next Governor, the Washington State Legislature and Congressional Delegation, statewide elected officials, and relevant federal, state and local government agencies; and be it finally

RESOLVED, that the Washington State Labor Council, AFL-CIO forward this resolution to the AFL-CIO and the Washington state congressional delegation before the August congressional recess.