

Labor for Single Payer Resolution: Continuing the Fight for Healthcare Justice and Supporting the Work of the Labor Campaign for Single Payer Healthcare

Resolution #2025.14

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

WHEREAS, WSLC delegates have shown support for a Medicare for All model of healthcare administration repeatedly since 2017 with Resolutions [2023.01](#), [2022.27](#), [2022.02](#), [2021.01](#), [2020.2](#), [2019.24](#), [2017.26](#); and,

WHEREAS, retirees are at constant risk of changing healthcare administration. WSLC Resolutions [2024.32](#) Resolution to Make Retiree Medical Coverage for State Employees a Mandatory Subject of Bargaining and [2022.27](#) Sustain the UMP Classic Medicare Plan and Explore Expanding a Self-Insured Medicare Benefit Plan for Medicare Eligible Public Service Retirees in Washington show the ongoing fight we are engaged in to support our union siblings at every stage of their lives; and,

WHEREAS, in recognition that states may have to lead the way before we can achieve a universal national health plan, a number of states are working to establish universal public healthcare plans and Washington State has created a [Universal Health Care Commission](#) to help design a universal health plan for all Washingtonians; and,

WHEREAS, in 2025 the Washington State Legislature passed [Senate Joint Memorial 8004](#), asking the federal government (1) to create a universal healthcare program to ensure all residents of our state and country have access to timely and affordable healthcare services, OR (2) to partner with our state to implement a universal health system by passing legislation similar to the State Based Universal Health Care Act, OR (3) to grant our state the waivers to remove restrictions on the state's ability to create a universal health care system; and,

WHEREAS, a universal state healthcare plan, to succeed, must be developed with Labor at the table and must win broad Labor support; and,

WHEREAS, the [Labor Campaign for Single Payer](#) launched in 2009 to advocate within the labor movement for comprehensive, single-payer national healthcare reform, is calling for the labor movement to lead the fight for healthcare justice and is supported by 15 national and international unions, 8 AFL-CIO state federations, 5 Central Labor Councils, and 8 state and local unions; and,

WHEREAS, while we must mobilize and act to defend Medicaid, Medicare, the Affordable Care Act, Veterans Administration, Indian Health Service and other federal healthcare programs against the immediate threats from the current administration and Congress, we must also continue to work toward the goal of fundamental change to the health care system; now therefore, be it,

RESOLVED, that the Washington State Labor Council Executive Board consider joining with our sisters, brothers and siblings around the country in the Labor Campaign for Single Payer to advocate, educate and organize for healthcare justice and for a single-payer system that will make healthcare a birthright for everyone in America, through a publicly financed healthcare system that provides comprehensive benefits and a single standard of care in a system where healthcare decisions are made by patients and their caregivers not by corporate and government bureaucrats and where scarce healthcare resources are not squandered by profiteers, marketing and excessive administrative costs; and be it further,

RESOLVED, that the Washington State Labor Council Executive Board will consider joining the Labor Campaign for Single Payer and consider encouraging all of its affiliates as well as other Central Labor Councils and state labor federations to also join, and that the Washington State Labor Council will embark on a systematic program to educate its members about the nature of the healthcare crisis, the importance of the single-payer solution, its role in relieving the liability for retiree healthcare costs and in reducing the cost of coverage for all workers and their families; and be it finally,

RESOLVED, that the Washington State Labor Council urges our federal and state legislators to enact legislation that embodies the principles of a universal single payer healthcare system and that we call on our union and community allies to make such legislation a priority in all state and federal electoral efforts.