

VII. JOBS & WORKER'S RIGHTS (Resolutions relating to employment, wage and workplace issues, including workplace discrimination.)

A. Full Employment

WHEREAS, U.S. labor markets are subject to major swings of employment/unemployment that are outside the control of workers; and

WHEREAS, industry solutions to competitive demands in the U.S. and abroad often involve downsizing and outsourcing instead of protecting workers' rights; and

WHEREAS, too many Americans are without jobs, and some communities are particularly hard hit with long term unemployment; and

WHEREAS, age discrimination complaints reported to the EEOC have remained significant since 1997 (from 14,493 in FY 2005 to 17,734 in FY 2007); and

WHEREAS, unemployment fosters racism and bigotry.

BE IT RESOLVED, that Gray Panthers supports legislation guaranteeing full employment, including job creation bills providing for public service and other jobs.

BE IT RESOLVED, that Gray Panthers urge Congress to create a Federal Tax Credit for hiring persons over age 50 to help reduce the cost of hiring older adults and to abolish the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) Disincentives – Urge the Federal Government Secretary of Labor, to assess the impact of WIA performance measures on older workers and adjust them to eliminate disincentives to enrolling older workers in programs funded by the WIA.

B. Right to Organize

WHEREAS, the union movement has steadily lost membership and bargaining power for years due to growing trade pressures, employer militancy, technological changes and changes in labor law; and

WHEREAS, the fight for collective bargaining rights and union protections has been one of the greatest for purposes of collective bargaining and workers rights, and that the Gray Panthers ally itself even more closely to this movement and to unions around the country.

BE IT RESOLVED, that Gray Panthers support legislation to assist all workers in their right to organize for purposes of collective bargaining and worker's rights, and that the Gray Panthers ally itself even more closely to this movement and to unions across the country.

C. Living Wage

WHEREAS, every working person should receive a salary large enough to provide an adequate standard of living; and

WHEREAS, such a standard of living is a benefit to the individual and society as a whole by improving life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness, and also by reducing the need for public assistance; and

WHEREAS, public entities such as cities and counties employ people, fulfill contractual obligations, and rent out properties and facilities; and

WHEREAS, over 300 locales across the country have passed living wage laws tying wage and/or benefit requirements to government contract eligibility or other government assistance; and

WHEREAS, efforts to rescind local living wage laws are underway.

BE IT RESOLVED, that all public bodies include a living wage requirement in their employment and contracting and leasing arrangements; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that a living wage be related to the cost of living of the area.

D. Child Labor and Sweatshop Abuse

WHEREAS, American companies such as Disney, Nike, Ralph Loren, and Wal-Mart operate, or contract to operate, facilities in under-developed countries, and these countries maintain sweatshops that exploit children, teenagers and adults to work under the harshest conditions for a few pennies an hour; and

WHEREAS, the National Labor Council (NLC), the United Students Against Sweatshops (USAS), and other groups are actively pursuing global efforts to end child labor and sweatshop abuse.

BE IT RESOLVED, that Gray Panthers supports and actively joins with the NCL, the USAS, and other groups in pursuit of these joint efforts.

E. Global Trade

WHEREAS, economic globalization and transnational corporations are a threat to democracy and national sovereignty, and are part of an effort by international lenders to impose regressive social policies around the world; and

WHEREAS, these policies are aimed at taking advantage of cheap labor and have the effect of accelerating dire economic conditions for people around the world—including the

United States—and result in, among other things, the spread of preventable diseases and malnutrition; and

WHEREAS, these policies are accompanied by a downgrading or elimination of various economic bodies in the United Nations to favor the more wealthy countries and undemocratic transnational corporations.

BE IT RESOLVED, that Gray Panthers opposes NAFTA and all other so-called “free trade agreements” which do not include provisions for the rights of labor, for protection of the environment, and for the protection of national sovereignty and democracy; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that Gray Panthers supports coalitions, such as 50 Years is Enough!, which oppose destructive policies of the World Bank, IMF and WTO; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that Gray Panthers supports programs that encourage community development, local sustainability, economic empowerment of the poor; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that Gray Panthers opposes WTO/IMF (and other) programs that result in the globalization of the food supply, especially where such globalization threatens local health and economic well-being; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that Gray Panthers campaigns for the United Nations, for adherence to the United Nations Charter, for the restoration of the economic bodies of the United Nations and for the democratic reform of the World Bank, IMF and WTO to assure that all people have fair and un-oppressive economic opportunity; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that Gray Panthers conducts a campaign of education to support, foster, and disseminate these positions.