

# Resolutions

## RESOLUTION #1

### Reaffirmation of Our Commitment to Fight for Racial Justice

*Submitted by Illinois AFL-CIO Executive Board*

**WHEREAS**, the Preamble of the Illinois AFL-CIO Constitution, adopted on October 7, 1958, states that “the Illinois AFL-CIO is an expression of the hopes and aspirations of the working people of Illinois” and that “We resolve to fulfill the yearning of the human spirit for liberty, justice and community; to advance individual and associational freedom; to vanquish oppression, privation and cruelty in all their forms and to join with all persons, of whatever nationality or faith, who cherish the cause of democracy and the call of solidarity, to grace the planet with these achievements”; and

**WHEREAS**, our calling for social and economic justice and equality extends not only to the workplace, but also across all segments of our state and its institutions including schools and state and local government; and

**WHEREAS**, systemic racism is ingrained in our culture, and it is deplorable that so many still face fear and oppression every day in their workplace and in broader society due to racism; and

**WHEREAS**, the mission of the Illinois AFL-CIO has been to unite people of different backgrounds into a single movement dedicated to justice, opportunity and equality for all; and

**WHEREAS**, Dr. Martin Luther King, speaking to delegates of the 8th Illinois AFL-CIO Convention in 1965, said that “It is not a coincidence that the Labor Movement and the Civil Rights Movement have the same essential origins. Each is a movement that grew out of burning needs of an oppressed poor for security and equality. Each was denied justice by the dominant forces of society and had to win a place in the sun by its own intense struggle and indescribable self-sacrifice”; and

**WHEREAS**, in the recent pandemic shutdown, many black and brown low-income workers cared for our sick and elderly, kept mass transit operating, stocked grocery stores, cleaned public places, staffed health care facilities and processed food. While performing these essential jobs, many suffered the effects of the COVID 19 virus at a rate disproportionately greater than the broader population; and

**WHEREAS**, the killing of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery, and countless other people of color has brought to the United States a new and urgent awareness of the pervasiveness and persistence of racism, igniting unprecedented and widespread protests, including in cities large and small throughout Illinois; and

**WHEREAS**, countless AFL-CIO members and their families are participating in these protests signaling their own clarion call for an end to structural racism and its devastating impact on people of color and on the very foundation of our society; and

**WHEREAS**, as the largest organization for social justice in the State of Illinois, the Illinois AFL-CIO has a duty and a mission to speak out in support of oppressed people wherever intolerance, inequality and injustice exists; and

**WHEREAS**, we know from our experiences that lasting justice is a goal that requires our constant attention and dedication; therefore be it

**RESOLVED**, that the Illinois AFL-CIO reaffirms our commitment to fight against racial inequality wherever it exists; and be it further

**RESOLVED**, that the Illinois AFL-CIO will work to assist all affiliates in dismantling all forms of bias in our unions, building solidarity, and raising awareness of how racism and other forms of bigotry have been used to weaken unity, limit power and damage efforts to advance an agenda that helps all working people and their families; and be it further

**RESOLVED**, we will continually strive for the ideals found in our governing documents and in Dr. Martin Luther King’s speech to the Illinois AFL-CIO in 1965 to build a better state and nation where we can truly live as one people.