

POLITICAL ACTION/LEGISLATION COMMITTEE

Committee Chair: Andrew Spar, Florida Education Association

Committee Secretary: Norm Tankiewicz, AFT New Jersey Retirees

**31. WE COMMIT OURSELVES TO THE DEFENSE OF
DEMOCRACY IN AMERICA**

Committee recommends concurrence.

1 For more than a century, the American Federation of Teachers has
2 been faithful to our founding watchwords, “Democracy in Education,
3 Education for Democracy.” Democracy is our North Star. The phrase
4 inspires the work we do with our students, our patients and our
5 constituents. It is the source of our dedication to public service, our
6 involvement in community and our engagement with the political
7 process. It guides us when we organize and struggle together for our
8 common cause. For our union, there is no principle or value more
9 important, more essential, or more vital than democracy; and

10 Today, we in the AFT are deeply troubled by the state of our
11 nation’s democracy. The heart of that democracy is government “of, by
12 and for the people.” For it to survive and thrive, the American people
13 must choose our government through free and fair elections, and the
14 power of government must be peacefully transferred to our choice.
15 Over the last decade, the AFT has expressed our growing
16 apprehension that free and fair elections in the U.S. were being
17 undermined by measures designed to thwart the will of the people—
18 voter suppression, the influence of “dark” and unlimited money in
19 elections, and extreme partisan gerrymandering. After the 2020
20 election, those efforts metamorphosed into a frontal assault on this
21 electoral foundation of democracy, with the promotion of the “big lie”
22 that Donald Trump had won the election, the Jan. 6 insurrection that
23 attempted to violently overturn the election of Joe Biden, and with the
24 passage of legislation in a number of states that enables the
25 overturning of future democratic elections; and

26 A democratic government cannot stand on its own: It can only be
27 sustained when it sinks deep roots into democratic society. It is of grave
28 concern to the AFT that the assault on democratic government in the
29 U.S. has been accompanied by attempts to eviscerate the democratic
30 society it needs to survive. We have seen: efforts to destroy civic trust
31 in our communities by promoting fear, prejudice and hate against the
32 “other” (African Americans, Latinos and Asian Americans; LGBTQIA+
33 people; Jews, Muslims and other minority religions; and immigrants);
34 the calculated dissemination of lies, disinformation and conspiracy
35 theories to tear at the fabric of our collective knowledge and shared
36 understanding of the world; the stoking of extreme polarization and
37 division to impede efforts at civic dialogue and communication; the
38 banning of books in schools and libraries and the loss of freedom and

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39 rights; and the attacks on institutions that promote the common good,
40 such as public education, healthcare and unions; and

41 We in the AFT know these attacks on democratic society all too
42 well. We have borne the brunt of a number of them: AFT healthcare
43 professionals put their health and safety at risk to care for patients in
44 the pandemic, only to be attacked for following medical science and
45 promoting the public health; AFT educators sacrificed to provide an
46 education for our students in the pandemic that upended normal modes
47 of instruction, only to be attacked for teaching students how to
48 distinguish truth from falsehood and propaganda, for providing a full
49 and honest history of our nation's past, and for building mutual respect
50 and understanding among them; and AFT unionists have committed
51 ourselves to public service in the most difficult and trying time of the
52 pandemic, only to be blamed for its disruption of our lives and to find
53 our work vilified; and

54 We are now at a critical point in our nation's history, as some people
55 in one of the two major political parties in the U.S. are so craven for
56 power that they are willing to attack the very foundations of democracy
57 in order to obtain it. Too many elected officials and candidates for
58 office—led by former President Trump—repeat the “big lie” about the
59 2020 election, excuse the Jan. 6 insurrection (including actual
60 participants in that day's events), promote legislation that would strike
61 at free and fair elections and the peaceful transfer of power.
62 Unfortunately, in the service of power, these same people have
63 promoted fear and hate, disinformation and conspiracy theories,
64 stoking of polarization and division, including the banning of books and
65 in attacks on public education, healthcare and unions; and

66 The 2022 and 2024 elections are critical for the survival of
67 democracy. The extremists' goal is to win control over all levers of
68 government, from school boards to state houses to the White House
69 and Capitol Hill. If they are successful electorally, they will act to
70 replace democratic government with a self-perpetuating autocracy of
71 permanent minority rule. Pro-democracy candidates, pro-public
72 education and pro-healthcare candidates, and pro-working family
73 candidates must win in these elections; and

74 Working families are hurting and tired, but they are also a resilient
75 people who can meet any challenge. They just want to be given a fair
76 shot—something that is increasingly difficult in these times of
77 disinformation and distrust. Americans are understandably frustrated
78 and skeptical of how to meet their needs. It is the job of the AFT and
79 the labor movement to help people connect the dots between
80 addressing their everyday concerns and worries with real-life solutions;
81 and this can best be achieved by doing so on the very local level—
82 focusing on people's concerns and priorities, and fighting for
83 candidates who will fight for a better life; and

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84 Political commentators are fond of the adage “elections have
85 consequences.” Those consequences are not just over who holds the
86 reins of power in our government. When elections put into power those
87 who embrace what was once a fringe racist and antisemitic theory that
88 whites are being “replaced” by people of color and immigrants as part
89 of a conspiracy masterminded by Jews, when these candidates take
90 the message of the neo-Nazis at Charlottesville and make it into
91 mainstream discourse by repeating it on media outlets such as Fox
92 News and Newsmax and on social media, the consequences for
93 democracy and those most in need can be grave; and

94 Now is the time for an election that defends democracy in America
95 and, in so doing, brings liberty and justice for all Americans:

96 **RESOLVED, that the American Federation of Teachers**
97 **reaffirms our unwavering commitment to democracy in America,**
98 **both in our government and in our society, and commits itself to**
99 **the vigorous defense of that democracy; and**

100 **RESOLVED, that to this end, the AFT will place the highest**
101 **priority of the election of candidates who share our commitment**
102 **to democracy in the 2022 and 2024 elections; and**

103 **RESOLVED, that together with our state and local affiliates, the**
104 **AFT will work to ensure that all of our members and their families**
105 **are registered to vote, and will dedicate resources for voter**
106 **registration work at the local level; and**

107 **RESOLVED, that together with our state and local affiliates, the**
108 **AFT will work with our community partners to ensure that all**
109 **Americans are able to freely exercise their right to vote so that**
110 **voter suppression efforts, which target disproportionately**
111 **communities of color, are unsuccessful; and**

112 **RESOLVED, that together with our state and local affiliates, the**
113 **AFT will mount member-to-member voter engagement and GOTV**
114 **(get-out-the-vote) campaigns, so our members and their families**
115 **are informed on the candidates’ positions on the issues and cast**
116 **their ballots in the election; and**

117 **RESOLVED, that together with our state and local affiliates, the**
118 **AFT will work with the AFL-CIO’s Labor 2022 political program,**
119 **focusing on local electoral activism through central labor**
120 **councils and AFL-CIO state federations; and**

121 **RESOLVED, that together with our state and local affiliates, the**
122 **AFT commits to working tirelessly in the 2022 and 2024 elections**
123 **to support candidates and issues that advocate for democracy,**
124 **strengthen public education, ensure high-quality healthcare, and**
125 **fight for all working families and, in so doing, make it possible for**
126 **all Americans to thrive.**

Adopted Adopted as Amended Defeated Tabled
 Precluded by _____ Referred to _____

34. DIVEST FROM FOSSIL FUELS AND REINVEST IN WORKERS AND COMMUNITIES

Committee recommends concurrence as amended below:

- 1 WHEREAS, climate change represents an urgent and accelerating
2 crisis, as extreme weather, forest and wildfires, infectious disease
3 outbreaks, rising sea levels, and pollution wreak havoc on the
4 ecosystems and societies in the U.S. (where the cost of climate
5 disasters doubled in 2020) and across the globe; and
6 WHEREAS, the climate crisis exacerbates already existing
7 systemic injustices along racial, regional, social and economic lines,
8 concentrating harm in frontline communities (including Indigenous
9 communities, communities of color, migrant communities,
10 deindustrialized communities, the poor, low-income workers, women,
11 the elderly, the unhoused, people with disabilities and youth); and
12 WHEREAS, teachers, nurses, academic staff, public workers and
13 higher education faculty have taken leadership in educating students
14 on the climate emergency, in forging alliances with climate movements,
15 and in promoting action to reduce carbon emissions, notably:
16 • In 2017, the American Federation of Teachers executive council
17 resolved to “urge its locals, state federations and members’
18 retirement systems to ... review strategies to mitigate the risk of
19 climate change in their investment portfolios, including, ...
20 possible divestiture from other types of fossil fuel companies that
21 contribute substantially to climate change. ...”
22 • In 2017, the AFT executive council passed the “Resolution on a
23 Just Transition to a Peaceful and Sustainable Society” (referred
24 from the 2016 AFT national convention) and committed therein,
25 “to a rapid transition from fossil fuels to renewable energy ...
26 [such that] most fossil fuels must be left in the ground.”
27 • In 2020, the AFT national convention resolved “that the American
28 Federation of Teachers will fully participate in shaping the
29 definition of ‘a just transition to a peaceful and sustainable
30 economy,’ ... in accord with the latest climate science regarding
31 the need for very rapid reductions in greenhouse gas emissions;”
32 and
33 WHEREAS, shareholder resolutions and even director votes at
34 fossil fuel companies—as alternatives to divestment—have never
35 resulted in significant change at coal, oil or gas companies nor led to a
36 reduction in greenhouse gas emissions from those companies’
37 products; and
38 WHEREAS, the fiduciary duty of retirement funds obligates them to
39 consider divestment from declining assets or at high risk of being
40 stranded, a category that Blackrock, Makeda and the World Bank now
41 believe includes fossil fuels; and

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42 WHEREAS, there are now more than 1,500 institutions with assets
43 over \$39 trillion that have committed to some form of fossil fuel
44 divestment, including the following funds (many explicitly in order to
45 reinvest in environmentally and socially responsible industries):

- 46 • Teachers' Retirement System of the City of New York;
- 47 • New York State Common Retirement Fund and the Maine Public
48 Employees' Retirement System;
- 49 • City of Boston's and the City of Baltimore's investment funds;
- 50 • London Pensions Fund Authority;
- 51 • La Banque Postale of France;
- 52 • Caisse de Dépôt et Placement du Québec;
- 53 • Norway Sovereign Wealth Fund and the Vatican;
- 54 • The endowments of Harvard, Oxford, Rutgers and the University
55 of California, among other institutions of higher education; and

56 WHEREAS, according to the Political Economy Research Institute
57 at the University of Massachusetts, each \$1 million reinvested from
58 fossil fuels to green energy results in a net increase of five jobs—often
59 unionized jobs in solar and wind farms or in other sectors suitable for
60 organizing; and

61 WHEREAS, Illinois' Climate and Equitable Jobs Act of 2021 and the
62 federal Build Back Better bill provide models for reinvestment in local,
63 green jobs; and

64 WHEREAS, AFT members participate in public and private pension
65 plans totaling roughly \$5.8 trillion (of which an estimated \$255 billion is
66 invested in fossil fuel corporations) and, therefore, possess significant
67 financial means to address the climate crisis and promote a just
68 transition for workers and communities:

69 **RESOLVED, that the American Federation of Teachers will**
70 **urge boards managing the retirement funds of its members to**
71 **divest their assets—in consultation with preK-12 members and**
72 **their local unions—from all corporations or other entities that**
73 **extract, transport, trade or otherwise contribute to the production**
74 **of coal, oil and gas—and to reinvest those funds in projects that**
75 **benefit displaced workers and frontline communities in the state**
76 **or region of the given AFT members; and**

77 **RESOLVED, that the AFT will urge the board of TIAA to divest**
78 **the retirement funds of higher education members—in**
79 **consultation with their local unions—from all corporations or**
80 **other entities that extract, transport, trade or otherwise contribute**
81 **to the production of coal, oil and gas—and to reinvest those funds**
82 **in socially responsible, climate-positive projects that benefit**
83 **displaced workers and frontline communities; and**

84 **RESOLVED, that AFT's Climate Justice Task Force members**
85 **and chair(s) shall convene quarterly or more frequently**
86 **(beginning with the third quarter of 2022) to (1) assist in the**

87 implementation of this resolution, (2) identify means by which
88 AFT may divest its own assets from fossil fuel corporations and
89 reinvest them in workers and communities, and (3) promote all of
90 AFT’s other work toward climate justice.

91 ~~RESOLVED, that before Oct. 1, 2022, the AFT’s Climate Justice~~
92 ~~Task Force will convene as a body and initiate communication~~
93 ~~with local and member-trustees toward the goal of divesting from~~
94 ~~fossil fuels and reinvesting in workers and communities; and~~

95 ~~RESOLVED, that by July 1, 2025, or earlier if possible, the AFT~~
96 ~~will divest its own assets from all corporations or other entities~~
97 ~~that extract, transport, trade or otherwise contribute to the~~
98 ~~production of coal, oil and gas—and will reinvest those funds in~~
99 ~~projects that benefit displaced workers and frontline~~
100 ~~communities.~~

- Adopted Adopted as Amended Defeated Tabled
 Precluded by _____ Referred to _____

36. CONDEMN STATE BILLS AND LAWS BANNING TRANSGENDER YOUTH FROM PARTICIPATING IN SPORTS, AND DECLARE: ‘LET TRANS KIDS PLAY!’

Committee recommends concurrence.

1 WHEREAS, in 2022, there have been over 300 anti-LGBTQIA+ bills
2 introduced in state legislatures, and 137 of them have been specifically
3 anti-transgender bills;¹ and
4 WHEREAS, in 2021, 31 states² introduced bills that would ban
5 transgender children and adolescents from participating in sports
6 consistent with their gender identity and 17 states³ now have laws
7 banning transgender youth participating in sports; and
8 WHEREAS, suicide is the second-leading cause of death among
9 adolescents and young adults ages 10 to 34 years in the United
10 States,⁴ and transgender and nonbinary adolescents report

¹ *ICYMI: As Lawmakers Escalate Attacks on Transgender Youth across the ...*
<https://www.hrc.org/press-releases/icymi-as-lawmakers-escalate-attacks-on-transgender-youth-across-the-country-some-gop-leaders-stand-up-for-transgender-youth>.
² “2021 Set a Record for Anti-Transgender Bills.” PBS, Public Broadcasting Service, Dec. 30, 2021, <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/show/2021-set-a-record-for-anti-transgender-bills-heres-how-you-can-support-the-community>.
³ “Bans on Transgender Youth Participation in Sports.” *Movement Advancement Project*, https://www.lgbtmap.org/equality-maps/sports_participation_bans.
⁴ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. National suicide statistics. 2016.

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11 significantly higher rates of suicide attempts, up to five times greater,
12 compared to their cisgender peers;⁵ and

13 WHEREAS, the laws banning transgender youth from participating
14 in sports (many suspiciously named the “Fairness in Women’s Sports
15 Act”) deny the existence of nonbinary and intersex persons; define sex
16 “based solely on an individual’s reproductive organs, biology or
17 genetics at birth”; disregard the association of gene expression and
18 endocrinology with sex, solely for the purpose of excluding transgender
19 and nonbinary youth from interscholastic, intercollegiate, intramural, or
20 club athletic teams that are sponsored by a public primary or high
21 school or a public institution of higher learning; and

22 WHEREAS, 261 major U.S. companies have joined in opposing
23 anti-LGBTQIA+ state legislation,⁶ including the current torrent of bills
24 targeting transgender youth, and the “NCAA Board of Governors firmly
25 and unequivocally supports the opportunity for transgender student-
26 athletes to compete in college sports”⁷; and

27 WHEREAS, the development, education and healthy maturation of
28 all children are better supported by a system of inclusion rather than
29 exclusion:

30 **RESOLVED, that the American Federation of Teachers will**
31 **condemn the rash of these harmful and mean-spirited attacks on**
32 **transgender and nonbinary youth, condemn the legislators and**
33 **governors who use children as a wedge issue, and condemn**
34 **those who wrote and/or signed on to these bills; and**

35 **RESOLVED, that the AFT will encourage the legislators who**
36 **genuinely care about all women and girls to find ways to address**
37 **gender-based disparities in recognition and support for**
38 **interscholastic and intercollegiate sports, and the enormous**
39 **divide between the compensation for women and for men in**
40 **professional sports; and**

41 **RESOLVED, that the AFT will support nondiscrimination**
42 **policies for transgender and gender-expansive students, and**
43 **declare: “Let them play!”**

Adopted Adopted as Amended Defeated Tabled
 Precluded by _____ Referred to _____

⁵ Toomey, Russell B., Syvertsen, Amy K., and Shramko, Maura. *Pediatrics* October 2018, 142 (4) e20174218; DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1542/peds.2017-4218>

⁶ “Business Statement on Anti-LGBTQ State Legislation.” *Freedom for All Americans*, May 24, 2022, <https://freedomforallamericans.org/business-statement-on-anti-lgbtq-state-legislation/>.

⁷ <https://www.ncaa.org/about/resources/media-center/news/ncaa-board-governors-statement-transgender-participation> accessed, April 21, 2021.

33. CALLING FOR THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES TO PARDON MARCUS GARVEY

Committee recommends concurrence.

1 WHEREAS, Marcus Garvey was a Jamaican-born black nationalist,
2 who founded the Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA) in
3 1914, attracting thousands of supporters as he spoke across America
4 urging African Americans to be proud of their race and return to Africa;
5 and

6 WHEREAS, the UNIA exponentially grew, with more than 700
7 branches across the U.S., attracting the attention of the FBI and
8 causing it to hire its first Black agents to infiltrate the association and
9 spy on Garvey; and

10 WHEREAS, the FBI acknowledged that it began investigating
11 Garvey to find reasons to deport him as an undesirable alien, then
12 initiated a mail-fraud case with an overwhelming amount of errors and
13 questionable evidence, resulting in a commuted five-year sentence
14 and deportation for Garvey and an acquittal for three other defendants;
15 and

16 WHEREAS, for more than 82 years, Garvey's family, followers
17 (Garveyites), and several U.S. representatives have advocated for a
18 presidential pardon from Presidents Calvin Coolidge to Barack Obama:

19 **RESOLVED, that the American Federation of Teachers will**
20 **acknowledge Marcus Garvey as an influential figure for civil rights**
21 **activists that followed him; and**

22 **RESOLVED, that the AFT, in collaboration with its members**
23 **and other community organizations, will produce and distribute**
24 **appropriate teaching resources about the life and legacy of**
25 **Marcus Garvey; and**

26 **RESOLVED, that the AFT will declare that the mail-fraud**
27 **charge against Marcus Garvey was politically motivated, and that**
28 **the U.S. government played a leading role in his false conviction;**
29 **and**

30 **RESOLVED, that the AFT will join the growing clamor for the**
31 **posthumous pardon of Marcus Garvey by encouraging its local,**
32 **state and national affiliate organizations to work with our elected**
33 **federal officials to stand in solidarity to convince President Joe**
34 **Biden to grant clemency to Marcus Garvey.**

- Adopted Adopted as Amended Defeated Tabled
 Precluded by _____ Referred to _____

**37. SUPPORT THE IMPLEMENTATION OF CARBON
FEE AND REBATE SYSTEM TO REDUCE
GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS**

Committee recommends concurrence.

1 WHEREAS, increased levels of greenhouse gases (GHG) such as
2 carbon dioxide and methane are the primary causes of climate change;
3 and
4 WHEREAS, climate change is an existential threat to life on earth;
5 and
6 WHEREAS, the Obama administration estimated the economic
7 damages imposed by climate change to be \$51 per ton of carbon
8 dioxide emissions; and
9 WHEREAS, these costs of climate change present a significant
10 financial risk to the California State Teachers' Retirement System
11 (CalSTRS) and California Public Employees' Retirement System
12 (CalPERS) portfolios and the current and future retirement income
13 security of California educators; and
14 WHEREAS, some retirement systems in the United States and
15 Europe, including CalSTRS have made the commitment to move their
16 investment portfolios toward net-zero by 2050; and
17 WHEREAS, the California Federation of Teachers has supported
18 efforts to change the behavior of fossil fuel companies by putting
19 pressure on them through financial markets; and
20 WHEREAS, the CFT has supported efforts to change the behavior
21 of fossil fuel companies through direct regulations, as in trying to block
22 the use of fracking to extract oil in California; and
23 WHEREAS, it is essential for the transition to a low-carbon
24 economy to happen as quickly as possible, which will require
25 multifaceted interventions beyond just financial markets; and
26 WHEREAS, in a market-based economy, people respond to prices
27 and if the price of something goes up, people will try to find substitutes
28 for it; and
29 WHEREAS, if the price of something is zero, too much of it will be
30 used; and
31 WHEREAS, currently the market price for carbon pollution is zero
32 and as a result, too much carbon is being pumped into the atmosphere;
33 and
34 WHEREAS, it is essential to reduce the amount of carbon dioxide
35 and other GHG being pumped into the atmosphere; and
36 WHEREAS, a use fee on all forms of carbon will increase the cost
37 of using carbon in many different sectors of the economy; and
38 WHEREAS, this increased cost will encourage all members of
39 society to find ways to reduce their use of hydrocarbons, whether in the

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40 form of heating, transportation, plastics or the purchase of items that
41 must be transported over long distances; and

42 WHEREAS, the more people searching for alternatives to the use
43 of fossil fuels to provide energy, the more demand there will be for
44 alternatives; and

45 WHEREAS, the increased demand for alternatives will lead to more
46 experimentation to develop those alternatives; and

47 WHEREAS, paying for the full cost to society created by the use of
48 fossil fuels will increase the cost of many (most) items sold in the
49 economy, and this will impose a burden on low- and middle-income
50 households, which have the least resources available to adjust their
51 spending habits; and

52 WHEREAS, the revenue raised from a carbon use fee could be
53 used to offset this increased burden on low- and middle-income
54 households by rebating some of the revenue back to these households;
55 and

56 WHEREAS, some of the revenue raised from a carbon use fee
57 could be used to subsidize the transition to low or zero carbon solutions
58 in many industries, especially transportation and retrofitting residential
59 buildings; and

60 WHEREAS, some of the revenue raised by a carbon use fee could
61 be used to assist and retrain workers whose jobs will be eliminated in
62 the transition to a low or zero carbon economy; and

63 WHEREAS, several European Union countries, South Africa and
64 Canada have seen reductions in greenhouse gas emissions following
65 the implementation of a carbon use fee; and

66 WHEREAS, multiple carbon fee and rebate bills have been
67 introduced in Congress between 2019 and 2021; and

68 WHEREAS, carbon fee and rebate bills have also been introduced
69 in state legislatures, including Oregon; and

70 WHEREAS, achieving a low-carbon economy will require a
71 multifaceted approach, including direct regulation of the use of fossil
72 fuels; putting a price on carbon is an essential part of this multifaceted
73 approach:

74 **RESOLVED, the American Federation of Teachers supports**
75 **legislative efforts at the national or state level to implement a use**
76 **fee on all forms of carbon used in the economy, as long as that**
77 **legislation includes a method to rebate some of the revenue from**
78 **the use fee to ensure low- and middle-income households will not**
79 **see a reduction in their standard of living; and**

80 **RESOLVED, the AFT supports the allocation of some of the**
81 **revenue raised by a carbon use fee to support, assist and retrain**
82 **workers whose jobs are eliminated in the transition to a low or**
83 **zero carbon economy; and**

84 **RESOLVED, the AFT supports the allocation of some of the**
85 **revenue raised by a carbon use fee to subsidizing the transition**
86 **to a low or zero carbon economy, especially in the areas of**
87 **transportation, residential retrofitting and energy production.**

Adopted Adopted as Amended Defeated Tabled
 Precluded by _____ Referred to _____

38. LOWERING THE VOICE OF MONEY IN POLITICS

Committee recommends referral to Executive Council.

1 WHEREAS, politics has become the playground of money far
2 beyond the vision of grassroots citizen support for election of
3 candidates, initiative and referenda, and campaigns; and

4 WHEREAS, elected leaders regularly describe the amount of time
5 needed for fundraising as exceeding 50 percent of their time, detracting
6 from time better used in service to constituents and legislating to meet
7 the needs of the country; and

8 WHEREAS, campaign spending unleashed by *Citizens United v.*
9 *Federal Election Commission, 558 U.S. 310 (2010)* removing barriers
10 to corporate spending has exploded political action committee growth
11 and the preference for nondisclosure pathways for spending; and

12 WHEREAS, according to Public Citizen, based on Federal Election
13 Commission reports, the first 10 years under *Citizens United*, corporate
14 spending of more than one-half billion dollars to influence elections
15 included:

- 16 • At least \$313 million from more than 2,200 corporations donating
17 to more than 500 super PACs;
- 18 • Some \$226 million flowed from at least 30 corporate trade groups,
19 which are not required to disclose their donors;
- 20 • Some \$230 million—about 74 percent—of the total disclosed
21 corporate donations went to a few super PACs dedicated to
22 electing Republican candidates;
- 23 • Among those corporate trade groups not required to disclose, the
24 U.S. Chamber of Commerce alone accounts for \$143 million;
- 25 • More than one-third—\$118 million—came from the top 20
26 corporate donors through contributions to super PACs that back
27 Republicans, while only four of these corporations (three energy
28 and one tobacco) are publicly traded enterprises; and of the 16
29 private companies, nearly half are run by billionaires;
- 30 • Top figures of these corporate donors gave more than \$127
31 million, primarily to Republicans; and

32 WHEREAS, wealth itself has become the principle instrument,
33 including from out-of-jurisdiction contributors, to finance candidate
34 campaigns often eclipsing support within their own constituency; and

35 WHEREAS, examples abound where outsized, out-of-jurisdiction
36 contributions made to state and local candidacies drive up the specific
37 and general costs of campaigns and office aspirations by many
38 qualified local and state candidates. Examples include Oregon's 4th
39 Congressional District where 2020 contributions to a Republican
40 challenger drew 69.6 percent of reported financing from out-of-state
41 compared with 41.9 percent for the Democrat incumbent, a trend
42 continuing in a 2022 open seat, with the same Republican drawing 58.6
43 percent of contributions from out-of-state compared with 21.7 percent
44 for the Democrat for an open seat; and

45 WHEREAS, according to the Federal Election Commission, total
46 spending by presidential candidates in 2020 reached more than \$4
47 billion; for Senate candidates more than \$2 billion—with only one-third
48 of the seats up for elections; and for House candidates \$1.8 billion; and

49 WHEREAS, the sum for presidential candidates exceeds the gross
50 domestic product of each of at least 16 countries; and

51 WHEREAS, the greatest threat to campaign financing and electoral
52 reform is the rise of "dark money," though hard and soft money are
53 influenced as well by *Citizens United*; and

54 WHEREAS, spending from Jan. 1, 2021, through April 30, 2022,
55 well before the conclusion of primary season, totaled nearly \$3.2 billion
56 by candidates, PACs and party committees:

57 **RESOLVED, that the American Federation of Teachers will**
58 **advance the following proposed amendment to the U.S.**
59 **Constitution as:**

60 **28th Amendment**

- 61 **1. Money is not political speech. Limitations in the use of**
62 **monies in political speech are not an infringement or an**
63 **abridgement of speech in the First Amendment of the**
64 **Constitution.**
65 **2. The Congress and the several states shall have the power to**
66 **enforce this article by appropriate legislation concerning**
67 **elections over which each has authority. No law or regulation**
68 **shall obscure the identification or use of such monies; and**

69 **RESOLVED, that the AFT will lobby for the introduction and**
70 **passage of this amendment for referral to the states for**
71 **ratification; and**

72 **RESOLVED, that the AFT will urge political action activity**
73 **among its affiliates to advance and support this effort among their**
74 **own states and their congressional delegations; and**

75 **RESOLVED, that while this may be viewed as an impossibility,**
76 **attempting nothing will only perpetuate and expand the current**
77 **campaign financing climate; and**

78 **RESOLVED, that no impossibility was ever overcome without**
79 **starting the quest.**

- Adopted Adopted as Amended Defeated Tabled
 Precluded by _____ Referred to _____

39. IN OPPOSITION TO THE PRIVATIZATION OF MEDICARE

Committee recommends non-concurrence.

1 WHEREAS, the American Federation of Teachers, has previously
2 declared that “access to high-quality healthcare is a basic human
3 right”¹ and healthcare should be treated as a “public good”;² and
4 WHEREAS, Medicare has been a highly successful program of
5 government-funded health insurance for seniors since 1965, spending
6 under 2 percent on administration so that 98 percent of money in
7 traditional Medicare goes directly to healthcare;³ and
8 WHEREAS, AFT retirees rely on Medicare for healthcare in their
9 retirement, and active members need to be able to rely on Medicare
10 when they retire, so the continuing viability of Medicare is of vital
11 concern to all members; and
12 WHEREAS, since the start of Medicare, there have been continuing
13 efforts to privatize Medicare, most significantly in 2003 with the
14 introduction of Medicare Advantage plans, which profit by limiting
15 member access to providers, tests, and procedures and have
16 consistently cost the federal government more than traditional
17 Medicare; and
18 WHEREAS, employers (including public employers) are
19 increasingly enrolling retirees in for-profit Medicare Advantage plans;
20 and
21 WHEREAS, in 2019, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services
22 Innovation Center (CMMI) developed a program to turn the
23 administration of Medicare funds over to direct contracting entities—
24 for-profit intermediaries, including insurance companies and hedge
25 funds, as well as provider practices; and
26 WHEREAS, after public outcry, CMMI has rebranded direct
27 contracting entities into “ACO (Accountable Care Organizations)

¹ AFT Resolution: REIMAGINING OUR SOCIETY AND REWRITING THE RULES TO ENABLE OPPORTUNITY AND JUSTICE FOR ALL. (2020). <https://www.aft.org/resolution/reimagining-our-society-and-rewriting-rules-enable-opportunity-and-justice-all>

² AFT Resolution: A HEALTHCARE SYSTEM THAT WORKS FOR ALL BY 2025. (2020). <https://www.aft.org/resolution/healthcare-system-works-all-2025>

³ Kaiser Family Foundation. “The Facts on Medicare Spending and Financing.” (2019). <https://www.kff.org/medicare/issue-brief/the-facts-on-medicare-spending-and-financing/>

28 REACH,” but has not changed the basic structure of the program, with
29 the goal of incorporating such entities into all of traditional Medicare by
30 2030:⁴

31 **RESOLVED, that the American Federation of Teachers will**
32 **oppose the continuing movement to force retired union members**
33 **into private Medicare Advantage plans; and**

34 **RESOLVED, that the AFT will oppose any other attempt to**
35 **privatize Medicare, including through direct contracting entities,**
36 **ACO REACH or any similar programs; and**

37 **RESOLVED, that the AFT will support efforts by organizations**
38 **working against the privatization of Medicare; and**

39 **RESOLVED, that the AFT will work to encourage other unions**
40 **to oppose all privatization of Medicare and will act to reverse**
41 **these private programs that drain resources away from actual**
42 **health services.**

Adopted Adopted as Amended Defeated Tabled
 Precluded by _____ Referred to _____

35. DIVEST FROM FOSSIL FUELS AND REINVEST IN WORKERS AND COMMUNITIES

Precluded by recommendation of concurrence with Resolution #34

1 WHEREAS, climate change represents an urgent and accelerating
2 crisis, as extreme weather, forest and wildfires, infectious disease
3 outbreaks, rising sea levels, and pollution wreak havoc on the
4 ecosystems and societies in the U.S. (where the cost of climate
5 disasters doubled in 2020) and across the globe; and

6 WHEREAS, the sixth and most recent Intergovernmental Panel on
7 Climate Change report notes that our “incremental” efforts to reverse
8 the climate crisis are failing and that without “transformational”
9 changes, the world is on pace for what United Nations Secretary-
10 General Antonio Guterres has called a “frog march to destruction” due
11 to an “abdication of leadership” he characterizes as “criminal”; and

12 WHEREAS, the climate crisis exacerbates already existing
13 systemic injustices along racial, regional, social and economic lines,
14 concentrating harm in frontline communities (including Indigenous
15 communities, communities of color, migrant communities,

⁴ Joyce Frieden. “Medicare Direct Contracting Demo Garners Critics and Defenders.” *Medpage Today*. Feb. 4, 2022.
<https://www.medpagetoday.com/practicemanagement/reimbursement/96497>

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16 deindustrialized communities, the poor, low-income workers, women,
17 the elderly, the unhoused, people with disabilities and youth); and

18 WHEREAS, teachers, nurses, academic staff, public workers and
19 higher education faculty have taken leadership in educating students
20 on the climate emergency, in forging alliances with climate movements,
21 and in promoting action to reduce carbon emissions, notably:

- 22 • On March 13, 2016, delegates at the California Federation of
23 Teachers convention passed Resolution 29, “Committing CFT to
24 a Climate Justice Agenda,” which resolved that CFT will “work
25 towards ending all of our retirement systems’ investments in fossil
26 fuels and other commercial enterprises that are contributing to
27 catastrophic climate change”;
- 28 • In 2017, the American Federation of Teachers executive council
29 resolved to “urge its locals, state federations and members’
30 retirement systems to ... review strategies to mitigate the risk of
31 climate change in their investment portfolios, including, ...
32 possible divestiture from other types of fossil fuel companies that
33 contribute substantially to climate change. ...”
- 34 • In 2017, the AFT executive council passed the “Resolution on a
35 Just Transition to a Peaceful and Sustainable Society” (referred
36 from the 2016 AFT national convention) and committed therein,
37 “to a rapid transition from fossil fuels to renewable energy ...
38 [such that] most fossil fuels must be left in the ground.”
- 39 • In 2020, the AFT national convention resolved “that the American
40 Federation of Teachers will fully participate in shaping the
41 definition of ‘a just transition to a peaceful and sustainable
42 economy,’ ... in accord with the latest climate science regarding
43 the need for very rapid reductions in greenhouse gas emissions.”
- 44 • In 2022, San Diego and Grossmont-Cuyamaca Community
45 College Districts AFT Guild, Local 1931; San Jose/Evergreen
46 Federation of Teachers, AFT Local 6157; the Boston Teachers
47 Union, AFT Local 66; Rutgers AAUP-AFT, Local 6323 have
48 already passed a “Resolution to Divest from Fossil Fuels and
49 Reinvest in Workers and Communities,” and other AFT locals
50 across the United States are in the process of doing so; and

51 WHEREAS, shareholder resolutions and even director votes at
52 fossil fuel companies—as alternatives to divestment—have never
53 resulted in significant change at coal, oil or gas companies nor led to a
54 reduction in greenhouse gas emissions from those companies’
55 products; and

56 WHEREAS, the fiduciary duty of retirement funds obligates them to
57 consider divestment from declining assets or at high risk of being
58 stranded, a category that Blackrock, Makeda and the World Bank now
59 believe includes fossil fuels; and

60 WHEREAS, there are now more than 1,500 institutions with assets
61 over \$39 trillion that have committed to some form of fossil fuel

62 divestment, including the following funds (many explicitly in order to
63 reinvest in environmentally and socially responsible industries):

- 64 • Teachers' Retirement System of the City of New York;
- 65 • New York State Common Retirement Fund and the Maine Public
66 Employees' Retirement System;
- 67 • City of Boston's and the City of Baltimore's investment funds;
- 68 • London Pensions Fund Authority;
- 69 • La Banque Postale of France;
- 70 • Caisse de Dépôt et Placement du Québec;
- 71 • Norway Sovereign Wealth Fund and the Vatican;
- 72 • The endowments of Harvard, Oxford, Rutgers and the University
73 of California, among other institutions of higher education; and

74 WHEREAS, according to the Political Economy Research Institute
75 at the University of Massachusetts, each \$1 million reinvested from
76 fossil fuels to green energy results in a net increase of five jobs—often
77 unionized jobs in solar and wind farms or in other sectors suitable for
78 organizing; and

79 WHEREAS, Illinois' Climate and Equitable Jobs Act of 2021 and the
80 federal Build Back Better bill provide models for reinvestment in local,
81 green jobs; and

82 WHEREAS, AFT members participate in public and private pension
83 plans totaling roughly \$5.8 trillion (of which an estimated \$255 billion is
84 invested in fossil fuel corporations) and, therefore, possess significant
85 financial means to address the climate crisis and promote a just
86 transition for workers and communities:

87 **RESOLVED, that the American Federation of Teachers will**
88 **urge boards managing the retirement funds of its members to**
89 **divest their assets—in consultation with preK-12 members and**
90 **their local unions—from all corporations or other entities that**
91 **extract, transport, trade or otherwise contribute to the production**
92 **of coal, oil and gas—and to reinvest those funds in projects that**
93 **benefit displaced workers and frontline communities in the state**
94 **or region of the given AFT members; and**

95 **RESOLVED, that the AFT will urge the board of TIAA to divest**
96 **the retirement funds of higher education members—in**
97 **consultation with their local unions—from all corporations or**
98 **other entities that extract, transport, trade or otherwise contribute**
99 **to the production of coal, oil and gas—and to reinvest those funds**
100 **in socially responsible, climate-positive projects that benefit**
101 **displaced workers and frontline communities; and**

102 **RESOLVED, that before Oct. 1, 2022, the AFT's Climate Justice**
103 **Task Force will convene as a body and initiate communication**
104 **with local and member-trustees toward the goal of divesting from**
105 **fossil fuels and reinvesting in workers and communities; and**

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106 **RESOLVED, that by July 1, 2025, or earlier if possible, the AFT**
107 **will divest its own assets from all corporations or other entities**
108 **that extract, transport, trade or otherwise contribute to the**
109 **production of coal, oil and gas—and will reinvest those funds in**
110 **projects that benefit displaced workers and frontline**
111 **communities.**

- Adopted Adopted as Amended Defeated Tabled
 Precluded by _____ Referred to _____