

**RESOLUTION TO PROTECT FREEDOM OF SPEECH AND ASSEMBLY,
AND PROMOTE FAIR AND FINANCIALLY RESPONSIBLE LAW ENFORCEMENT**

WHEREAS, our nation was founded on democratic principles including freedom of speech, the right to assemble, and equal protection under the law, and

WHEREAS, citizens elect leaders at the local, county, state and national level to create and apply laws for the collective good of all citizens and not for the personal gain of those entrusted with elected office; and

WHEREAS, taxpaying citizens are entitled to full transparency and accountability from their elected officials to ensure that taxpayer funds and public resources are being used efficiently and responsibly; and

WHEREAS, members and supporters of the International Longshore and Warehouse Union, when exercising their rights to free speech and assembly in the course of collective bargaining negotiations, took care to exercise such rights out of the public right-of-way so as to send a message to a private, for-profit enterprise without disrupting their fellow citizens; and

WHEREAS, longshore workers and their supporters have been systematically denied equal protection under the law by law enforcement and a county prosecutor who have admitted in written documents to treating ILWU-related arrests differently from standard procedures; and

WHEREAS, this unequal protection under the law results in unnecessary and wasteful expenditures of public resources, an example being law enforcement sending multiple squad cars to pursue and arrest individual union members in public and on weekends when a simple mail summons is the standard and financially responsible practice; and

WHEREAS, the multiple jury acquittals in nearly all of the public trials against longshore workers and their supporters shows that prosecutors are bringing innocent people to trial, resulting in enormous costs to innocent workers, their families and local taxpayers; and

WHEREAS, the prosecutor's office has demanded that dozens of workers be arrested without cause or sufficient evidence and forced them to prepare a legal defense, only to drop charges on the eve of scheduled trials, again resulting in enormous and unjust expenses to innocent citizens, their families and local taxpayers; and

WHEREAS, allowing elected officials to continue their uneven application of the law toward one group of citizens sets a dangerous precedent that undermines equal protection under the law for all citizens;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Cowlitz-Wahkiakum Central Labor Council demands that our elected representatives at all levels of government respect that a healthy democracy includes the right to freedom of speech and assembly without fear of being singled out for aggressive prosecution; and

BE IT RESOLVED that the Cowlitz-Wahkiakum Central Labor Council calls on local, county and state elected officials to show leadership and help the community heal by putting an immediate end to prosecutions of workers and their supporters who exercised their free speech and assembly rights in the course of a labor dispute that has ended without any personal injuries or disruption to any public right-of-way; and

BE IT RESOLVED that the Cowlitz-Wahkiakum Central Labor Council hereby invites its members to be a part of the solution by passing resolutions and speaking publicly about the rights of free speech, assembly and equal protection under the law for all citizens.

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