**Fully Functioning Local Policy**

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 Per the CWA resolution below, IUE-CWA Locals are expected to be "fully-functioning" in how they represent members, train stewards, participate in IUE-CWA and CWA meetings and programs, communicate with and mobilize the membership of the local, organize, and participate in political action.

 **CWA Resolution: 74A-13-3**

In 2006, the 68th annual CWA Convention unanimously agreed on the Ready for the Future plan. In that plan, Step Five - titled "Locals: Fully functioning and effective locals strengthen bargaining power" - affirmed that "...representation [of members] must be effective, and that requires trained stewards, full participation in constitutionally mandated meetings and programs, and resources for membership communication and mobilization, as well as organizing and political action. Our members deserve no less." The need for fully functioning locals that effectively represent educated and mobilized members, united in fighting for our union's goals of justice and equity for all workers, is even more critical today in a period in which collective bargaining coverage in the private sector has declined to less than seven percent of the workforce. As a result of that decline, fewer and fewer workers have an organized voice through which to bargain for a fair share of the wealth that we produce. As a result, average U.S. workers' wages, adjusted for inflation, have declined by 6.3 percent since the 1970s even as productivity increased by 57 percent. The economy grows and workers create wealth, which gets siphoned off by those at the top where financial and corporate power is concentrated. CWA's history has followed the same path as the rest of the labor movement. Our members in different industries have been buffeted by the winds of technological, regulatory, and financial change. Despite success in organizing new members, our ability to win representation elections and achieve first contracts is severely limited by labor laws that favor anti-union companies. Our ability to achieve gains at the bargaining table is directly linked to our ability to organize workers in our industries. Where we have collective bargaining, our power is limited because each year we represent fewer of the workers in those industries. Turning these conditions around will be tough. The challenges are made more difficult by the blocks to democracy brought on by an increasingly dysfunctional political culture dominated by moneyed and corporate interests and their political allies who use anti-democratic Senate rules to block the will of the majority. The Senate filibuster prevented even one minute of debate on the Employee Free Choice Act. Even when those we support are successful at the ballot box, despite corporate and secret money and voter suppression, the road to progressive change is obstructed by unwillingness of our Democratic allies to move forward. After decisive victories in 2012, the Senate leadership blocked efforts to fix the Senate's broken rules, accepting a weak compromise which has done nothing to eliminate the gridlock of the last several years. Progressives win elections and then choose not to govern. CWA's strength comes directly from our capacity to fight to achieve our union's vision at the local, state and national levels - both politically and at the bargaining table. The national union and CWA locals must work together to communicate with members and move them to action.

Members must understand that while our losses have weakened our Union, we can grow stronger if we are united and moving in the same direction. Our members' union connection is linked to their other roles in the community. Building coalitions with other unions and progressive organizations in a movement for change will benefit everyone.

Article 13, Section 9 of the CWA Constitution sets clear duties and obligations for Local Unions. In addition to the representation of workers in their jurisdiction and many important administrative responsibilities, these duties include the active promotion of union programs, organizing, legislative and political activity, member education, women's and equity committees, among others.

These critical activities will help CWA build a movement for democracy and equity. In reviewing the now withdrawn proposal establishing a minimum size for local unions, the Constitution Committee noted that Article 13, Section 5 of the CWA Constitution provides for the Executive Board to revoke or suspend the charter of a local union that fails to carry out its obligations as listed in the CWA Constitution. There may be very effective and fully functioning local unions that represent relatively small numbers of members in all the ways described by the CWA Constitution. There may be large local unions that are not effectively representing their members, as defined by the Constitution. A local with a large number of members cannot guarantee its effectiveness by its size, nor is a small local necessarily incapable of meeting all the requirements of a local union. The only way to rebuild worker power is to build a movement of tens of millions to pressure every level of our government, our economy, and our society. Union members must unite with immigrant workers, environmentalists, civil rights activists, and other progressive forces that support justice. CWA's local unions are the foundation of our union where we can have the greatest impact in building a strong and lasting movement for democracy and economic justice.

Resolved: All local unions are expected to meet their responsibilities and obligations to be fully

functional organizations, as defined by the CWA Constitution. The size of a local does not guarantee its effectiveness.

Resolved: It is no longer enough for local unions to focus only on the representation of our members. To rebuild worker power in this country, we have no other choice as a labor organization in the United States in 2013 but to work together- at all levels of our organization - with other unions and with other progressive organizations to build the movement for democracy and economic justice.

 Resolved: CWA local unions must make it a priority to educate and mobilize members to give them a real opportunity to participate in building the movement for democracy and economic justice.

Read more at: <http://www.cwa-union.org/pages/fully_functioning_local_unions>