

Association of Flight Attendants – CWA, AFL-CIO
Conference Call
June 5, 2020

RESOLUTION

SUBJECT: Black Lives Matter

PROPOSED RESOLUTION:

WHEREAS, the murder of George Floyd is just one in a long line of incidents of law enforcement officers killing Black people; and,

WHEREAS, Black, brown and indigenous people face police violence, prosecution and incarceration in disproportionate numbers; and,

WHEREAS, systemic racism is present in all functions of our society; and,

WHEREAS, systemic racism and the legacy of slavery and the genocide of indigenous peoples have not been sufficiently addressed in our society and continue to do harm to millions of our siblings across this country; and,

WHEREAS, racism, misogyny and other forms of bigotry are used by the owner class to divide working people and exploit our labor and pillage our resources; and,

WHEREAS, AFA leaders and members have joined the protests demanding action to end police violence and address systemic racism throughout our society; and,

WHEREAS, elected leaders at every level and of every party but most especially the President of the United States have inflamed tensions through rhetoric and actions that increase the use of force against protestors; and,

WHEREAS, the President of the United States has mobilized our military, National Guard and federal law enforcement to intimidate protestors and has used our brave siblings in uniform to assault our first amendment rights for his own political purposes; and,

WHEREAS, our federal government has stoked escalation of police violence by supplying police departments with military equipment and driving a culture of conflict and confrontation between police and citizens, especially Black, brown and indigenous communities; and,

WHEREAS, where police departments that have engaged in good faith efforts to meet their communities and engage in de-escalation and police reform—including but not limited to those in Newark, Camden and Flint—there have not been riots and protests have remained peaceful; and,

WHEREAS, as aviation's first responders, Flight Attendants are trained to de-escalate incidents in the air. De-escalation is the minimum we can expect from law enforcement. We know this is possible. When heavily-armed mostly white protestors stormed the Minnesota state capitol and threatened lawmakers just weeks ago, police were able to maintain calm and did not take aggressive action; and,

WHEREAS, the coronavirus crisis has exposed additional consequences of systemic racism especially in economic and health outcomes for Black, brown and indigenous people; and,

WHEREAS, systemic racism is an economic issue that negatively harms all working people to benefit the owner class; and,

WHEREAS, Flight Attendants experience direct consequences of social unrest in the form of increased tension and conflicts in the cabin and through the course of our jobs; and,

WHEREAS, Flight Attendants are forced to deal with systemic racism in the form of tensions resulting from increased security enforcement against our Black, brown and indigenous passengers; and,

WHEREAS, Flight Attendants are often caught in the middle of conflicts arising from bias expressed against Black, brown and indigenous passengers by others in our care; and,

WHEREAS, Black, brown and indigenous Flight Attendants experience bias and systemic racism on the job and in our society; and,

WHEREAS, our union from the beginning has fought for equity in contracts, in the law and in our society; and,

WHEREAS, many police and law enforcement unions across the country have refused common-sense steps to reform departments, address systemic bias in law enforcement and hold their own members accountable; and,

WHEREAS, we stand firmly in every person's rights under the first amendment to protest and petition our government for redress of wrongs; and,

WHEREAS, our union and our labor movement fight on the principle that an injury to one is an injury to all; and,

WHEREAS, the labor movement has played a powerful role in the work to dismantle inequality and injustice, and organized labor has a unique set of resources and experience to support efforts to achieve racial, economic and social justice;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that AFA-CWA loudly declares, “Black Lives Matter”; and,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that AFA-CWA has a duty to our members, our passengers, our labor community and our country to directly and unflinchingly address our own role in systemic bias and fight systemic bias in all its forms; and,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we will redouble our efforts to seek out, listen to, and amplify the voices of Black, brown and indigenous Flight Attendants within our union and address the systemic racism in our union and our industry that puts up barriers to their freedom; and,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we will engage with our employers to address systemic racism in policy and implementation across the aviation industry for both aviation workers and the passengers we serve; and,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we will post Black Lives Matter placards on the AFL-CIO Headquarters in Washington, DC and other locations as appropriate and directly demonstrate our solidarity with by joining and supporting peaceful protestors including civil disobedience; and,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we call for the immediate cessation of military and National Guard involvement in protests, and immediate end of all use of force against and detention of those exercising their first amendment right to protest in addition to joining the Union Veterans Council’s call for the Secretary of Defense and Joint Chiefs Chairman to resign; and,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we will directly call upon city councils, mayors, county executives, governors, members of Congress and the President of the United States of America to de-escalate by ending curfews and removing riot police and military equipment from our streets; and,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we will push for and support efforts at the federal level to end the transfer of military equipment and tactics to police departments; and,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we will push for and support efforts in alignment with the Movement for Black Lives and other groups led by Black, brown and indigenous communities, to reform law enforcement and our criminal justice system at all levels, with steps including but not limited to: mandatory training on de-escalation and implicit bias; civilian review boards; real accountability for officers and departments who violate their oath to protect and serve; bail reform; drug law reform, and related demands; and,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we will push for and support efforts such as that of the Minnesota AFL-CIO demanding the removal of officers who clearly show racial bias; and,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we will push for and support efforts at all levels including in our local, state and national Labor Councils and Coalitions similar to those put forward by the King County Labor Coalition demanding law enforcement unions immediately enact policy to actively address racism in law enforcement and especially to hold officers accountable for violence against citizens, or be removed from the Labor movement; and,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we will push for and support efforts to ensure economic and democratic freedom for all especially Black, brown and indigenous communities, including but not limited to; reinvestment in social services and education; access to good, family-supporting jobs; universal healthcare for all, and the right to vote safely without barriers; and,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we will push for and support efforts to ensure immediate relief for all communities during and following the pandemic, with special focus on equitable resources and outcomes for Black, brown and indigenous people; and,

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that we will push for and support all efforts with the labor movement to consider all options available to us to help move forward the cause of racial and economic justice.

Unanimously Adopted as amended on June 5, 2020