**IN SUPPORT OF SINGLE PAYER HEALTH CARE**

**WHEREAS,** the Corona Virus pandemic and ensuing crisis have exposed many of our country's failings and shortcomings of both politics and policy, and none more so than our fractured, for-profit, devil take the hindmost healthcare system, and

**WHEREAS,** any questions about whether the well-being and health of some affects the well-being of all have been answered by this virus; and

**WHEREAS,** given the demand for a national response to the current health crisis, any questions about whether we as a nation can afford to take action or whether the federal government is the proper actor when confronting a national crisis are moot; and

**WHEREAS**, the creation of a single-payer healthcare system in America is, and always has been, a matter of political will; and

**WHEREAS,** mustering the political will to create a single-payer healthcare system must begin by reinforcing the broad progressive coalition dedicated to achieving this goal; and

**WHEREAS,** the American Labor Movement, whose strongest tradition has been to fight for the whole working class, not just our members, should be conspicuously leading this effort; and

**WHEREAS**, health care should never be considered a privilege based on what a person can afford but should be treated as a public good and not a commodity that some individuals are able to afford and others not; and

**WHEREAS**, on average, the United States spends more than twice as much as other industrialized nations on health care, both per person and as a percentage of its gross domestic product, and the rate of health care inflation significantly outpaces other industrial nations; and

**WHEREAS**, despite this high spending, United States health care outcomes consistently rank at the bottom of all industrial nations, and the United States Institute of Medicine, even before the Corona Virus pandemic, had declared an epidemic of substandard health care throughout the nation; and

**WHEREAS**, it is absurd to tie health care to employment, and despite having the highest healthcare costs in the world, there were nearly 30 million Americans with no coverage at all prior to the Corona Virus pandemic, and now tens of millions more are at risk of losing coverage due to loss of employment; and

**WHEREAS**, private insurance markets are simply too ineffective, inequitable, excessively bureaucratic, wasteful and profit-driven to be an effective means to assure access to health care; and

**WHEREAS,** many with health insurance can no longer afford to use it due to high deductibles, out of pocket expenses, co-pays, and the unaffordability of pharmaceuticals; and

**WHEREAS**, many employers have effectively abandoned a genuine concern for the health of their workers or their families, sacrificing the physical and mental health of their workforce and their families on the altar of cost savings and corporate profits; and

**WHEREAS**, employers, at a loss to control health care costs themselves, are forcing their employees and our union’s members to accept an ever-increasing share of health care costs. This misguided “consumer driven” approach has done and can do nothing to reduce overall healthcare cost escalation; and

**WHEREAS**, the cost of health insurance has continued to rise more than the Consumer Price Index and has resulted in less money for wages and a continual decline in employer-offered coverage, dramatic increases in premiums, copayments, and deductibles, overall reductions in benefits, and inappropriate utilization of review procedures that deny working families access to needed care; and

**WHEREAS**, sixty percent of all bankruptcies in the United States now relate to medical costs, though seventy-five percent of bankrupt families had health coverage at the time of sustaining the injury or illness; and

**WHEREAS**, even before the Corona Virus pandemic, Improved Medicare for All had moved to center stage as the only viable comprehensive alternative to the current corporate profit-driven health care system in America, and despite negative framing by pollsters and pundits, the majority of Americans now support a single payer healthcare system; and

**WHEREAS**, too many of our local unions are not able to secure comprehensive healthcare coverage for our members and their families, leaving may AFT members and their families with limited, expensive or no access to health insurance; and

**WHEREAS**, those bargaining units with good health care coverage are constantly being compared to workers with less expensive health care in a perpetual, reckless, and self-defeating race to the bottom; and

**WHEREAS**, the current structures prioritizes payment over patients, healthy profits over healthy people, and are destructive to labor relations, the American Labor Movement and the American economy; and

**WHEREAS**, the current system of health care financing is regressive and especially onerous on the working poor, whose vulnerabilities have been laid bare by the Corona Virus pandemic; and

**WHEREAS**, a national system of publicly guaranteed health care, such as described in HR 1384, the Medicare for All Act of 2019 which has been cosponsored by a majority of Democrats in the U.S House of Representatives and its companion S 1129 (2019) would provide both healthcare security and economic security to all American workers; now therefore be it

**RESOLVED**, that the American Federation of Teachers, a union of educators, healthcare providers and public employees, affirms strongly and unequivocally its support for a single payer health coverage system modeled after the federal Medicare system, and

**RESOLVED**, that the American Federation of Teachers will mobilize its members and local affiliates, in conjunction with labor and community allies, to make such legislation a priority in all federal electoral efforts and will work tirelessly for its passage.