

## **RESOLUTION NO. 54**

### **RE: CONTINUING THE FIGHT FOR HEALTH CARE JUSTICE: WE NEED SINGLE PAYER WITH MEDICARE FOR ALL**

#### **(REAFFIRMED AS AMENDED)**

WHEREAS, Healthcare in the United States remains a national disgrace with the highest costs in the world, ranking 28th in infant mortality and 24th in life expectancy with nearly 50 million Americans having no coverage at all and millions more having such meager coverage that a single major medical event will push them into bankruptcy; and

WHEREAS, For Unions, these high costs have helped to sustain a climate of concessionary bargaining, pushing down wages, causing bitter strikes and lockouts, government imposition of agreements, triggering attacks on public sector workers and retirees and shifting more and more of the costs onto the backs of the workers; and

WHEREAS, We in the United States spend approximately twice as much of our gross domestic product as other developed nations on health care, we remain the only country without universal coverage. Our problem worsens each year as insurance costs increase and as gradual solutions have failed to make a dent in the problem; and

WHEREAS, The United States health system continues to treat health care as a commodity distributed according to the ability to pay, rather than as a social service to be distributed according to need. Insurance companies and HMOs compete not by increasing quality or lowering costs, but by avoiding covering those whose needs are greatest; and

WHEREAS, The Affordable Care Act (ACA) has been supported as a preliminary step because it will improve access to healthcare for millions of Americans but, under the ACA, up to 30 million will remain uninsured and profit will continue to drive healthcare policy; and

WHEREAS, The ACA will pose significant challenges to our unions' ability to negotiate decent coverage for their members and families by increasing 'race to the bottom' pressures through tiered benefits and the so-called "Cadillac" excise tax and undermining the ability of union sponsored multi-employer plans - long recognized as providing the gold standard of healthcare for America's workers - to compete with nonunion employers and to continue to provide decent benefits to low wage, part time and seasonal workers; and

WHEREAS, A single payer, Medicare for All healthcare program would be a powerful alternative to the austerity policies being foisted upon America's workers because economists have determined that the entire federal deficit would be eliminated if the United States spent per capita on healthcare what other industrialized nation that treats healthcare as human right spends; and

WHEREAS, Congressman Keith Ellison (D-MI), joined by 121 co-sponsors in the 115th Congress, has introduced HR 676, Expanded and Improved Medicare for All Act. A similar bill sponsored by Senator Bernie Sanders with 17 co-sponsors is being put forward in the Senate. This single payer health care program proposes an effective mechanism for controlling skyrocketing health costs while covering all 50 million uninsured Americans. The bill also restores free choice of physicians to patients and provides comprehensive prescription drug coverage to all; and

WHEREAS, HR 676 would save billions annually by eliminating the high overhead and profits of the private health insurance system and HMOs. The transition to national health care would apply the savings from administration and profits to expanded and improved coverage for all. HR 676 will also save Medicare from those who seek to cut its benefits or destroy it entirely. Therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED, That this Fourth National Convention of the Brotherhood of Maintenance of Way Employees Division of the International Brotherhood of Teamsters wholeheartedly go on record of endorsing HR 676 and work with other Unions and community groups to build a groundswell of popular support and action for single payer universal health care and HR 676 until we make what is morally right for our nation into what is also politically possible; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That this Fourth National Convention of the Brotherhood of Maintenance of Way Employees Division of the International Brotherhood of Teamsters will send a copy of this resolution to Congressman Ellison, to all members of the United States House and Senate and to President Hoffa and the International Executive Board; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That this Fourth National Convention of the Brotherhood of Maintenance of Way Employees Division of the International Brotherhood of Teamsters offer education and training on this issue to all National Division officers and Staff, Federation and System Officers and make this training available for all other internal education programs of the National Division; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That this Fourth National Convention of the Brotherhood of Maintenance of Way Employees Division of the International Brotherhood of Teamsters continue to join the Labor Campaign for Single Payer and applaud President Simpson for his leadership role in this important movement on the Board of Directors and continue to assign representatives of the National Division to support and coordinate the work of Labor Campaign for Single Payer in general and specifically within the Rail Labor movement.