

Resolution on Workers' Self-Directed Enterprises

WHEREAS corporate business-as-usual is deepening economic, political, and cultural inequalities and injustices; eliminating jobs, eroding wages, increasing pollution, undermining critical environmental and health protections, especially harming lower-income families and people of color;

WHEREAS in the U.S. since the 1970s, and especially since 2007, those who control the dominant mega-corporations continually make decisions that *undermine* the goal of raising the standards of living for the vast majority of people;

WHEREAS computerization, automation, and the export of jobs are altering the long-term supply-and-demand balance of labor power, and long-term real wage stagnation has set in;

WHEREAS these same factors have contributed to steadily rising productivity, but fast-deepening income and wealth inequality, punctuated by economic recessions;

WHEREAS although working people spend much of their lives at work, they have little or no decision-making power on the job;

WHEREAS the workers of an enterprise are usually more knowledgeable about their business than absentee-owners who often reside far away from that business;

WHEREAS for real Democracy, the decision-making power usually assigned to corporate boards of directors and major shareholders, must be transferred to working people in general. Workers' self-directed enterprises (**WSDEs**) embody economic democracy by locating it first and foremost inside the enterprises producing the goods and services upon which society depends;

WHEREAS WSDEs, in offices, factories, farms, and stores, support and encourage democratic decision-making, in which the employees democratically perform the following key enterprise activities:

(a) determine what is to be produced, how it is to be produced, and where it is to be produced, and

(b) decide on the use and distribution of the resulting output and/or revenues;

WHEREAS while corporations offshore jobs, pollute our air and water, and worsen climate change; WSDEs anchor businesses in, are responsible for, and are more responsive to, the needs of the local communities in which they operate, while supporting better jobs and a safer environment, and prioritizing the needs of working

42 people and their community's environment ahead of corporate profits;

43

44 **WHEREAS** there are many past and present examples of worker and producer
45 cooperatives, ranging from small to large, found in many countries;

46

47 **WHEREAS** WSDEs are not about some future, utopian possibility, but rather the extension
48 of a model that has attracted workers in many different circumstances, and has been
49 proven successful around the world and as exemplified by Pacific Northwest Companies
50 such as Pacific Cabinets Incorporated and Bob's Red Mill; and

51

52 **WHEREAS** worker cooperatives align well with other sorts of cooperatives (consumer
53 cooperatives, sales cooperatives, credit unions, and property-owning cooperatives such as
54 REI and Puget Consumer Co-op) in a generalized cooperative economy, and their growth
55 and proliferation represent the mechanism to transition to a far better future system;

56

57 **THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that the Washington State Democrats promote the
58 concept of Workers' Self-Directed Enterprises and support the conditions needed for
59 successful worker cooperatives to form and grow.

60

61

62 Submitted by the Pierce County Democrats.

63

64 The Platform Committee recommended that this resolution be passed at their June 15,
65 2018 meeting.

66

67 The 2018 Washington State Democratic Convention passed this resolution on June 16,
68 2018.