

**FIGHTING FOR WORKING PEOPLE, THEIR FAMILIES AND THEIR
COMMUNITIES DURING THE COVID-19 CRISIS**

1 **WHEREAS:**

2 AFSCME represents 1.4 million members serving in hundreds of occupations across the
3 nation m nurses to corrections officers, childcare providers to sanitation workers—providing
4 the vital services in both the public and private sectors including non-profits that make America
5 happen; and

6 **WHEREAS:**

7 The COVID-19 pandemic is not only a health care emergency but also an
8 unprecedented economic crisis. Displaced workers—those who lose their jobs and those who
9 see cuts in their hours and pay—will need economic support at least until the crisis passes.
10 Overall, services generally represent two-thirds of the economy; we already are seeing steep
11 declines throughout that sector and in transportation; and

12 **WHEREAS:**

13 We are facing unprecedented circumstances. Even if people have money in their
14 pockets, they cannot spend it fast enough to spark the economy. Displaced workers need
15 financial support at this time to buy food and pay rent and other living expenses; and

16 **WHEREAS:**

17 The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA) provided \$280 billion
18 in assistance to state and local governments. Much of the state fiscal relief funding was for the
19 federal share of Medicaid funding (FMAP), and while FMAP is our traditionally preferred
20 mechanism for getting money to states, it can have limited impact below the state level. In
21 addition to providing more money through FMAP, Congress must create a robust, direct, non-
22 dedicated general assistance grant program to states and municipalities; and

23 **WHEREAS:**

24 The rapid and unprecedented economic downturn will destabilize state and local
25 government finances. Without assistance similar to that in ARRA, which was aimed at
26 combating unemployment in the general economy, local governments will struggle to recover
27 as UI is one of the greatest forms of stimulus to an economy; and

28 **WHEREAS:**

29 An under-reported challenge associated with the pandemic are problems in the
30 municipal bond market where interest rates are rising rapidly, and some issuers have cancelled
31 sales. The Federal Reserve has stepped in to support federally issued Treasury Bonds.
32 However, there has been no such support for state and local bonds; and

33 **WHEREAS:**

34 Testing for the coronavirus (SARS-CoV-2) has been insufficient to meet the needs of
35 all Americans, not least of whom are health care professionals who cannot get back to work
36 due to the lack of testing; and

37 **WHEREAS:**

38 The right of workers to collectively bargain is a strength in this crisis, and unions have a
39 necessary role in the nation's efforts to fight the pandemic and rebuild our economy; and

40 **WHEREAS:**

41 It is outrageous that any worker would face discipline as a result of advocating for the
42 health and safety of our members.

43 **THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED:**

44 That AFSCME calls on all employers to help prevent the spread of COVID-19 and
45 protect workers by following guidance and protocols based on the best scientific information
46 available, rather than fear and misinformation; and

47 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:**

48 That AFSCME demands that all workers on the frontlines of this pandemic, including
49 first responders, health care workers child care workers, home care providers and others who
50 are at risk, have the necessary equipment and training to avoid exposure to COVID-19; and

51 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:**

52 That AFSCME and its affiliates will continue to lobby Congress for substantial, direct
53 federal assistance to states and local governments so they can maintain services. Federal
54 assistance must be sufficient to meet the large revenue shortfalls caused by the public health
55 crisis and resulting economic downturn and should be equitably allocated to each state and its
56 local governments; and

57 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:**

58 That AFSCME and its affiliates will continue to lobby Congress for meaningful
59 financial help for all workers and families, including immediate and substantial expansion of
60 unemployment insurance and direct stimulus payments; and

61 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:**

62 That AFSCME will continue to advocate that employers make it easier for
63 all employees to telecommute where feasible, to stay home when showing symptoms of
64 COVID-19 and to care for family members with symptoms of COVID-19 and children whose
65 schools or daycare providers are closed. AFSCME also will advocate against workers being
66 disciplined or penalized for taking time off related to COVID-19; and

67 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:**

68 That AFSCME urges Congress to authorize and require the Federal Reserve to buy non-
69 federal municipal notes to ensure state and local governments' access to capital markets and to
70 target interest rates at the Federal Funds rate; and

71 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:**

72 That AFSCME urges the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) to
73 issue an emergency temporary standard (ETS) to protect all workers at potential risk of
74 occupational exposure to infectious diseases, including COVID-19. Specifically, workers must
75 have access to the appropriate resources, training, equipment and protocols to protect
76 themselves and avoid infecting other people. The standard must extend to all public sector
77 workers, not just those who are states with OSHA approved state plans; and

78 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:**

79 That AFSCME demands that COVID-19 testing facilities prioritize testing of health
80 care professionals, first responders and other critical public service workers who are putting
81 themselves at risk to serve the public health at this critical moment; and

82 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:**

83 That AFSCME supports testing and treatment of COVID-19 at no out of pocket cost to
84 individuals, in order to ensure prompt recognition of, and response to, COVID-19 cases
85 including treatment due to unknown long-term effects from exposure; and

86 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:**

87 That AFSCME will fight efforts to use this crisis as an opportunity to dismantle
88 collective bargaining agreements or attack workers' livelihoods; and

89 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:**

90 That AFSCME supports all workers in their efforts to protect themselves and co-
91 workers during this crisis and that we stand united against retaliation for exercising our rights
92 to a safe work environment and opposes actions and inaction that further endanger workers'
93 lives in a health crisis; and

94 **BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED:**

95 That the national union will continue to support affiliates by producing communications
96 materials, offering best practices and keeping affiliates up to date on next steps with regard to
97 policy, the economy and legislation.