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FOR A COP-FREE AFSCME

1   **WHEREAS:**

2           Racism is a tool of the ruling rich to divide the working class so that we fight amongst  
3 ourselves, where white workers place blame on workers of color instead of placing blame on  
4 exploitative institutions; and

5   **WHEREAS:**

6           Law enforcement systematically subjects the Black community to targeted intimidation,  
7 beatings and countless killings through state-sanctioned violence and mass incarceration; and

8   **WHEREAS:**

9           Law enforcement systematically targets LGBTQ+ communities, removing trans children from  
10 happy families, and subjecting LGBTQ+ people to disproportionate violence, arrests, and  
11 incarceration; and

12   **WHEREAS:**

13           Law enforcement systematically targets Latinx and immigrant communities, destroying  
14 families and subjecting people to disproportionate violence, arrests, incarceration and deportation;  
15 and

16   **WHEREAS:**

17           Law enforcement systematically targets Native nations and peoples, continuing the settler  
18 colonial tradition through targeted killings, family separation and incarceration; and

19   **WHEREAS:**

20           If Roe v. Wade is overturned, law enforcement will be used to enforce abortion bans across  
21 the nation and incarcerate people just for exercising autonomy over their own bodies; and

22   **WHEREAS:**

23           Since the killing of George Floyd by a Minnesota police officer two years ago, reforms like  
24 those endorsed by AFSCME at its International Convention in 2020 have done nothing to stem the  
25 tide of police killings and abuse. Fundamental, material change is necessary to stop this violence; and

26   **WHEREAS:**

27           The Black community, since the inception of law enforcement, has continuously experienced  
28 the deaths of loved ones through police violence and other symptoms of systemic anti-Black racism,

29 including the murders of Breonna Taylor, Daunte Wright, Patrick Lyoya, and countless others whose  
30 names may not be recognized nationally but who are kept in memory by their families and  
31 communities who continue to fight for justice; and

32 **WHEREAS:**

33 Police, prisons, and the parole and probation systems uphold systemic racism and settler  
34 colonialism, disproportionately impacting Black union members and the communities they are a part  
35 of; and

36 **WHEREAS:**

37 Correctional officers and police, and the unions that represent them, have an obvious interest  
38 in upholding mass incarceration in order to preserve jobs and have weaponized false, racist narratives  
39 of criminal threats and rising crime rates; and

40 **WHEREAS:**

41 After the brutal beating of inmate Kenneth Davis over the course of 24 hours by at least 16  
42 AFSCME-represented correctional officers, AFSCME not only defended these correctional officers  
43 and covered up their crimes but was instrumental in passing the Correctional Officers Bill of Rights  
44 (COBR) which has made any type of accountability for COs extremely difficult; and

45 **WHEREAS:**

46 The refusal to enact bold structural change leaves Black people in danger. COVID-19 and the  
47 resulting economic crises have hit Black people and other communities of color the hardest, and have  
48 been followed by the latest violence against those communities at the hands of police officers and  
49 racist vigilantes; and

50 **WHEREAS:**

51 Black grassroots organizations have taken up this call in response to state-sanctioned violence  
52 by demanding justice, accountability and material change; and

53 **WHEREAS:**

54 Institutional racism reduces the standard of living for all workers by lowering wages and  
55 working conditions and driving a wedge between workers who would otherwise have everything in  
56 common, and every reason to unite in struggle, but don't because white workers relatively benefit  
57 from racism, competing for crumbs; and

58 **WHEREAS:**

59 The core principle of the labor movement - "An injury to one is an injury to all" - requires all  
60 working people of conscience to take a stand for justice and for the common good so that when police  
61 murder Black and brown workers with impunity, the working class is obligated to unite on an  
62 international, multiracial basis against the conditions that oppress those sections of the working class;  
63 and

64 **WHEREAS:**

65 Regardless of the intentions of individual police officers, cops are fundamentally aligned  
66 against the working class and have throughout their history existed to defend private property,  
67 specifically white private property, and are routinely called in to break up strikes and protests, enforce  
68 evictions and repossessions and engage in union busting; and

69 **WHEREAS:**

70 For defense of the union in general, and public sector unions in particular, it is essential for  
71 labor to disaffiliate from police rather than incite calls for the de-unionization of public sector workers  
72 as a reaction to murders by killer cops. These actions tarnish the reputation of our union and hinder  
73 our ability to organize the masses of marginalized workers. We must rid our organization of this  
74 cancer, or the entire body will be destroyed; and

75 **WHEREAS:**

76 Police unions continue to wield their collective bargaining power to protect abusive practices  
77 and behaviors, which prevent reforms and accountability. A recent study of unionized sheriff's  
78 deputies in Florida provided even more evidence that collective bargaining rights make law  
79 enforcement more violent and less accountable. Police unions are incompatible with AFSCME's  
80 stated "dedication to making our communities stronger, healthier, and safer." Our forebears in the  
81 AFL recognized this when they excluded a union of Cleveland police officers in 1897, correctly  
82 observing that "It is not within the province of the trade union movement to especially organize  
83 policemen, no more than to organize militiamen, as both policemen and militiamen are often  
84 controlled by forces inimical to the labor movement;" and

85 **WHEREAS:**

86 Ridding our union of law enforcement serves to protect our integrity and the integrity of the  
87 labor movement. This is a necessary first step to building an anti-racist union, and a labor movement  
88 that fights for the common good. In the face of reactionary attacks on public sector unions, law

enforcement unions present a dangerous liability. Our union cannot truthfully say it fights for racial and economic justice while providing refuge to instigators of injustice.

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED:**

That AFSCME International joins the Writers Guild of America, East and call on the Executive Council of the AFL-CIO to enact the process described in Article X, section 8(b) of the AFL-CIO Constitution to suspend the AFL-CIO's affiliation with the International Union of Police Associations (IUPA) and other law enforcement unions, on the constitutional grounds that the policies or activities of the IUPA and others are consistently directed toward the "achievement of the program or purposes of authoritarianism, totalitarianism, terrorism and other forces that suppress individual liberties and freedom of association and oppose the basic principles of free and democratic trade unionism;" and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:**

That AFSCME support police accountability by endorsing the national and local demand for prosecution of police accused of violence and murder and also the broader demand to reopen all past cases of police violence, murder and misconduct, including harassment of witnesses and cover-ups; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:**

That AFSCME International supports the national and local demand to defund and demilitarize law enforcement and fund Black communities. These structural changes will reallocate resources for communities to thrive. It will expand union job opportunities for social workers, public defenders, librarians, EMS, non-profit, public works and parks and recreation workers; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:**

That AFSCME International and all affiliates call on all candidates it endorses to take the No Cop Money pledge to reject donations from any law enforcement unions or associations in their run for political office; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:**

That AFSCME create an MLK memorial fund for Black workers within AFSCME, provide anti-racist training for all workers, increase representation of Black union leadership proportionate to Black membership, no longer commemorate National Police Week and add racial justice to our list of priority issues; and

119 **BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED:**

120 That AFSCME International expel all law enforcement membership from its union.

SUBMITTED BY: Alice Rosewater, Delegate  
AFSCME Local 3758, Council 2  
Washington