

Resolution to Create Solidarity Ploughshares Campaign (People's Budget, Just Transition)

All of the 2016 presidential election candidates in both the GOP and Democratic party are comfortable with the use of military might to combat problems that must be solved by other means. There is real divide along party lines about where to go and how to use that military, but usage of the military as a means of resolution in conflict remains a significant part of foreign policy. Use of drone strikes and the related issue of extrajudicial killings, for example, are particularly controversial with regard to public opinion. But even to Bernie Sanders, a favorite of the labor movement left, they are an acceptable method of fighting terrorism.

One sizable contributing factor in this situation is the economic power of the military-industrial complex. In 2015, military spending accounted for 54 percent of all federal discretionary spending, totaling nearly \$599 billion. That doesn't include funding for the National Intelligence Programs (including the CIA,) which received \$45.6 billion in congressional discretionary funding and that still doesn't include all the discretionary spending buried in other line item allocations since many are intentionally concealed in unlikely funding areas. Bernie Sanders, like every other candidate, is forced to stand with arms-makers rather than constituents that support an anti-war agenda because he needs the jobs the industry provides. He might be genuinely opposed to a defense policy of endless war, but he needs the industrial complex that needs that endless war... but he's not the only one who depends on that industry for survival.

Within this industrial complex, union members play a vital and financially significant role. American Federation of Government Employees (AFGE) represents more than 240,000 bargaining unit employees throughout the Department of Defense and 230,000 throughout the Department of Homeland Security. The International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers (IAM) represents nearly 700,000 active and retired members under more than 5,000 contracts in aerospace, transportation, shipbuilding and defense related industries.

US Labor Against the War is already committed to working on the issue of defense spending, both as a part of its central mission calling for a demilitarized economy and foreign policy, but also in terms of our support for a Just Transition toward a greener economy. USLAW has developed a relationship with the People's Budget Campaign, solidifying our commitment to creating a federal budget that meets the needs of the people. We are also active participants in the Labor Network for Sustainability, a force to help the labor movement become a part of the solution to the climate crisis. These commitments are bearing fruit and we are grateful to engage with our allies in the struggle, but we need to do more in our role as a labor organization. We need to do build connections to union members and leadership who have a stake in seeing a future like the one we support. Who else is in a better position than us?

This Assembly therefore RESOLVES to create a campaign to create a sympathetic relationship between USLAW and union members who are in the defense industry on a variety of levels. This relationship is intended to bring about a change not just in policy and political focus, but a change in the way we view and use our bonds as members of the same movement. Solidarity can't just be about discussing issues where we are all in agreement. We need a deeper connection that allows for us to talk about the things that are difficult for that word to have meaning. Further, our work on campaigns like the People's Budget and Just Transition desperately need voices from locals like the IAM and AFGE, but currently those workers are not at the table in sufficient numbers.

We further RESOLVE that the campaign plan should begin with research into targets, then continue with an honest assessment of where USLAW has organizational strength (using the new Membership Development and Recruitment Committee as a resource) and determine where inroads can be made with CLCs and other labor organizations local to the targeted areas.

Finally, we RESOLVE that the ultimate goal of this effort should be a gathering of those contacted and connected (summit, etc.) where discussions can be held on ways to move forward together.