

# I AM Essential

## RESOLUTION NO. 1

### OREGON AFSCME COUNCIL 75 2021-2023 BIENNIAL CONVENTION

#### WHEREAS

AFSCME is a Union of Essential Workers across the County. We are doctors, nurses and frontline healthcare workers who save lives every day as well as in a crisis, we are the administrative staff who order the PPE and make appointments.

We are tree trimmers and road crews who clear 4,000 downed trees after an ice storm so that power can be restored, we are the mechanics who fix those trucks, we are the custodians who maintain our workspaces and we are the flaggers who keep everyone safe.

We are the counselors, therapists, caregivers, and childcare providers who are helping the entire state of Oregon and the country cope everyday and especially during a crisis, who help us survive the isolation of the pandemic, the devastation of the wildfires and the losses from every crisis.

[We are the emergency responders, dispatchers, and public safety and corrections personnel who support response efforts across our state to help keep our communities safe.](#)

We are all of these jobs and more. We are Oregon AFSCME. We Are Essential; and

#### WHEREAS

simply calling someone “Essential” without concrete investment in those Essential workers and those Essential Services is disrespectful to us, to our work, and to the communities we serve. Too often when a crisis causes revenue to take a hit there is a knee jerk reaction to cut Essential Services

27 when it is exactly those Essential Services and those Essential Workers  
28 who will get us out of the crisis if we are allowed to do our jobs properly.  
29 And it is not just the work we perform every day and especially in a crisis, it  
30 is our knowledge, answers, experience and insight that is critical, and

31 **WHEREAS**

32 too many employers declare us Essential in the crisis and then snap back  
33 to “business as usual” without learning from the experience and without  
34 prioritizing solutions we’ve suggested: better safety protocols, training on  
35 emergency response, advanced planning, and the equipment we need to  
36 telework so that we can continue to perform our vital work during wildfires  
37 and ice storms and a pandemic, and

38 **WHEREAS**

39 for all of these reasons, Oregon’s Essential Services must be fully funded  
40 and staffed. There must be adequate public funding for Essential Workers  
41 and Essential Services equal to the personal investments that Essential  
42 Workers are making themselves. Our Essential Workers, all of AFSCME’s  
43 workers, sacrifice and invest in their careers and the work we do, getting  
44 called out at all hours, working holidays, getting more certifications, going  
45 back to school, showing up during a pandemic, the wildfires, an ice storm,  
46 continuing to serve the community literally through hell and highwater, and

47 **WHEREAS**

48 many employers are not going to volunteer to help us create this new  
49 normal, but we pledge to build the power we need to help them get there.  
50 We will build our own leadership, build our locals, and build our Council. We  
51 will train more Stewards, recruit more officers, recruit all the new hires into  
52 our membership, build our Political Action Committee, train more Union  
53 members to run for office, lead by example, and build the power we need to  
54 get our members what they need: the rights, pay and respect we deserve  
55 every day, not just when we are leading in a crisis. After all we have lived  
56 through and learned together in the last year, we will not allow  
57 Essential Workers to get anything less, and

58 **WHEREAS**

59 while all AFSCME workers are Essential Workers, there are tens of  
60 thousands of other Essential Workers who are not AFSCME; grocery store  
61 workers, servers, postal carriers, delivery drivers, teachers, cleaners and  
62 janitors who helped us all survive over the last year. And many other  
63 Essential Workers have no Union at all, and

64 **WHEREAS**

65 it is undeniable that communities of color have consistently been  
66 underserved during times of crisis and that is unacceptable. Oregon  
67 AFSCME will not be silent about the disparities in services delivered to  
68 underserved communities, therefore

69 **BE IT RESOLVED**

70 that Oregon AFSCME and its affiliate locals will invest in training stewards  
71 and bargaining teams, will focus on engaging new hires, and will build  
72 Equity and Inclusion into all of our training and initiatives, and

73 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that Oregon AFSCME will engage localss  
74 and members in legislative and bargaining fightss for essential pay; and

75 ~~**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that Oregon AFSCME will use our electoral  
76 and legislative capital power to create advocate funding for our Essential  
77 Services and hold public officials accountable for not funding our Essential  
78 Services or distributing it equitably throughout the communities we serve,  
79 and~~

80 **Oregon AFSCME pledges to use our electoral and legislative power to**  
81 **advocate for Essential Service and Worker funding and legislation**  
82 **that provides for reliable, safe and sustaining jobs that can continue**  
83 **to serve our communities in times of crisis and to hold elected**  
84 **leaders, public officials and other decision-makers accountable for**  
85 **actions that destabilize or cut funding for these services; and**

86 **BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED** As we **commit to** build our power for

87 AFSCME Essential Workers we also commit to build power for all  
88 Essential Workers.

89 SUBMITTED BY:

90 **Oregon AFSCME Council 75 Executive Board**