

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**