



## Resolution Supporting Public Education

**WHEREAS**, a strong public education system is integral to the functioning of a democratic society; and

**WHEREAS**, Montana was granted statehood on condition that our constitution prohibit the use of public funds for sectarian education, cementing public education as a cornerstone of Montana's history and founding ideals; and

**WHEREAS**, Montana educators first organized in 1882 to ensure fair pay, good benefits and a secure retirement, affirming that well-compensated and quality educators are necessary to achieve quality education standards; and

**WHEREAS**, pursuant to Article X, section 1 of the Montana Constitution, the legislature is required to provide a basic system of free quality public elementary and secondary schools throughout the state of Montana that will guarantee equality of educational opportunity to students; and

**WHEREAS**, the 2023 Montana Legislature and the Governor introduced, considered, and passed into law a number of measures that attack educators, interfere in the democratic governance and autonomy of local school boards, and divert funding from public schools to charter schools and vouchers that can be used for private or sectarian instruction; and

**WHEREAS**, the passage of anti-public education and anti-educator legislation threatens Montana's ability to live up to our constitutional ideals; and

**WHEREAS**, corporate interests doubled down in their attempts to undermine the collective bargaining rights of public employees, including school employees; and

**WHEREAS**, national, corporate interests are organizing in Montana to legislate, litigate, and engage in electoral politics from our school boards to our national offices to implement an anti-public school agenda,

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, the Montana AFL-CIO reconfirms our commitment to supporting policies that uphold and strengthen public elementary, secondary, and higher education.

**THEREFORE, BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, the Montana AFL-CIO supports local and state government programs, and the use of public taxpayer dollars, that are designed to serve all people, not the wealthy or special interests.

**THEREFORE, BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED,** the Montana AFL-CIO will continue to fight any efforts to undermine the collective bargaining rights of public employees, and will support policies to strengthen those rights in the workplace.

**THEREFORE, BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED,** the Montana AFL-CIO will oppose any efforts to privatize public education, undermine the rights of or impugn school employees, divert taxpayer dollars from traditional public schools to public charters or private schools, or utilize taxpayer dollars for vouchers or other schemes to divert public funding to private interests.

**THEREFORE, BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED,** the Montana AFL-CIO will support candidates for public office that demonstrate a firm commitment to the preservation and strengthening of our public education system, better pay and benefits for educators, and the workplace rights and freedoms of public employees.