RESOLUTION #1 – Support of Union Workers

Whereas, the 35-day Lockout of federal workers or forced work without pay, put our lives and livelihoods in danger, risked the safety of everyone who flies, and threatened our entire economy; and,

Whereas, many Americans breathed a sigh of relief when the shutdown ended, assuming that the crisis had passed. But things will only get worse if the shutdown continues into day 36 on February 16; and,

Whereas, many of the people who keep our airports and our planes safe were forced to work more than a month without pay, and others were locked out completely. These are real people who suffered real consequences, and who work in intense, safety-sensitive jobs. No money to pay for rent, childcare, medicine – and no sense of when the nightmare would end. Uncertainty and stress were introduced to a system that requires one level of safety with certainty and focus; and,

Whereas, Flight attendants are not federal workers, but aviation doesn’t work without federal workers. Air travel is a fully-integrated operation that relies on government and private industry working together; and,

Whereas, on a normal day, air traffic controllers have jobs so stressful they're required to retire at 56. They train for 3-5 years before becoming fully certified and must be fit for duty on every shift. They are already at thirty-year lows in staffing and twenty percent are eligible for retirement today, which means up to half of today's flights would cancel without their service. A single air traffic controller is often watching over as many as 35 planes at one time. A controller at Chicago O'Hare may be responsible for as many as 5,000 lives at any time. There is no room for error. Planes don’t get into fender benders; and,

Whereas, some transportation security officers couldn't even afford gas to get home or back to work, so they slept in their cars between shifts. Some simply couldn’t afford to stay on the job, leading to long check-in lines – and the overall stress increased the risk of a security breach, endangering all of us; and,

Whereas, most Federal Aviation Administration staff who conduct safety inspections of planes were furloughed, leaving critical gaps in safety. If these workers are locked out again, there will be a higher chance of issues like mechanical failures, planes grounded, and flights canceled because aircraft can’t get certified; and,

Whereas, the Federal Aviation Administration was rolling out new equipment to prevent incidents where a plane takes off or lands in the wrong place – incidents that happen at least twice a day and cause too many near-misses. But this program, and others, were
put on hold during the shutdown and haven’t been restarted because agencies don’t know if they will be closed again; and,

Whereas, if the shutdown continues, we won’t know when or where problems may happen, meaning travel could be disrupted at anytime, anywhere – and that’s not even counting the damage if there’s a serious incident; and,

Whereas, Flight attendants are aviation’s first responders and the last line of defense. We take our responsibility seriously. That’s why, through our unions, we’ve fought to ban smoking on planes, to keep knives out of the cabin, and so much more; and,

Whereas, there are serious issues we need to debate as a country, but our democracy and economy only work when the basic functions of our government are in place. It is immoral to put American lives in danger with reckless political games; and,

Whereas, there is bipartisan support to keep the government open with stable, long-term funding. Americans overwhelmingly support this solution. But if Congress ignores the will of the American people and take us to Day 36 of the shutdown, flight attendants will not risk the lives of our colleagues and our passengers.

Therefore Be It Resolved, we have a duty to protect our members and the people on our planes from danger; and,

Be It Further Resolved, AFA-CWA will continue to coordinate with other labor groups and industry partners to assess the conditions of the aviation system as a result of the lockout; and,

Be It Further Resolved, AFA-CWA will leaflet at airports across the system to inform the traveling public we are less safe than prior to the shutdown and we cannot allow the shutdown to continue into Day 36; and,

Be It Further Resolved, AFA-CWA will secure permits and continue working with unions and community partners to conduct protests at airports on February 16th to demand a government that promotes our safety, security, and good jobs; and,

Be It Further Resolved, working people have power when we come together. If Congress chooses the chaos of a continued lockout, we will use that power; and,

Therefore Be It Finally Resolved, the AFA-CWA Board of Directors will meet again by conference call on the evening of February 13, 2019.