

UNITED FEDERATION OF TEACHERS
52 Broadway
New York City 10004

DELEGATE ASSEMBLY AGENDA

Wednesday, May 17, 2023

The agenda will be as follows:

- Announcements
- President's Report
- Staff Director's Report
- Question Period (15 minutes)
- Motions directed to the agenda (10 minutes)

Special Order of Business:

1. NYC Council Endorsement Resolution
2. Resolution in Support of the Writers Guild of America Strike
3. Resolution on the New York City's Budget for Fiscal Year 2023
4. Resolution to Reduce United States Maternal Mortality Rates
5. Resolution in Support of the People of Turkey and Syria
6. Resolution to Call on the Panel for Educational Policy to End High-Stakes Standardized Testing in Grades 3-5
7. Substitute Teacher and Paraprofessional Resolution
8. Resolution: Tell the US Supreme Court, Big Business, and Corporate Politicians: Hands Off the Right to Strike!

Required for a quorum: 735

Tentative date for our next D.A.: June 7. Await Confirmation.

RULES OF ORDER:

1. TO PLACE AN ITEM ON THE AGENDA OF THE CURRENT MEETING – A motion to suspend the rules is required. IT IS NOT DEBATABLE and needs a 2/3 vote to carry.
2. TO PLACE AN ITEM ON THE AGENDA OF THE NEXT MEETING – A delegate may move to place an item on the agenda at the end of the question period. One speaker is allowed on each side; a majority vote is required.
3. INTRODUCTION OF NEW MOTIONS IN EITHER OF THE ABOVE CASES – A motion to add an item to the agenda of either the current or a subsequent meeting and which is more than 3 sentences long will be entertained only if the motion is written and distributed to the delegates.
4. DISTRIBUTION OF LITERATURE – ANY MEMBER (or group) may distribute literature at the door or before the beginning of the meeting, provided it conforms to the rules of propriety as defined in Roberts' Rules.
5. ADJOURNMENT – A motion to adjourn is automatically placed before the body at 6:00 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM #1 – NYC COUNCIL ENDORSEMENT RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, the UFT will endorse 25 NYC Council candidates in May 2023;

WHEREAS, the 2023 local elections in New York City require all 51 sitting City Council members to run for election due to redistricting; and

WHEREAS, City Council candidates seeking to represent City Council Districts 1, 2, 6, 9, 11, 15, 16, 18, 19, 20, 22, 30, 33, 34, 36, 37, 39, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 48, and 49, submitted our UFT City Council candidate questionnaire; and

WHEREAS, Christopher Marte from CD 1, Carlina Rivera from CD 2, Gale Brewer from CD 6, Inez Dickens CD 9, Eric Dinowitz from CD 11, Oswald Feliz from CD 15, Althea Stevens from CD 16, Amanda Farías from CD 18, Tony Avella CD 19, Sandra Ung from CD 20, Tiffany Cabán from CD 22, Robert Holden from CD 30, Lincoln Restler from CD 33, Jennifer Gutiérrez from CD 34, Chi Ossé from CD 36, Sandy Nurse from CD 37, Shahana Hanif from CD 39, Darlene Mealy from CD 41, Chris Banks CD 42, Wai Yee Chan from CD 43, Kalman Yeger from CD 44, Farah Louis from CD 45, Mercedes Narcisse from CD 46, Amber Adler from CD 48, and Kamillah Hanks from CD 49, all demonstrated to their respective borough Political Action committees that they will be the best representatives for their districts, and continue to support their local school communities and our members' needs; and, therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the UFT endorses Christopher Marte, Carlina Rivera, Gale Brewer, Inez Dickens, Eric Dinowitz, Oswald Feliz, Althea Stevens, Amanda Farías, Tony Avella, Sandra Ung, Tiffany Cabán, Robert Holden, Lincoln Restler, Jennifer Gutiérrez, Chi Ossé, Sandy Nurse, Shahana Hanif, Darlene Mealy, Chris Banks, Wai Yee Chan, Kalman Yeger, Farah Louis, Mercedes Narcisse, Amber Adler, and Kamillah Hanks, to be the next City Council Members to represent their respective districts.

AGENDA ITEM # 2 – RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF THE WRITERS GUILD OF AMERICA STRIKE

WHEREAS, the United Federation of Teachers stands in solidarity with fellow labor unions in pursuit of fair and equitable working conditions for their members; and

WHEREAS, the Writers Guild of America, East (WGAE) and Writers Guild of America West (WGAW) represent writers in motion pictures, television, cable, digital media and broadcast news and are determined to maintain the integrity and value of their members' profession; and

WHEREAS, the WGA Negotiating Committee entered these negotiations with the intention of securing a fair deal for its members, who are facing an existential crisis, but in return has received wholly insufficient responses from the studios; and

WHEREAS, the media companies' actions have created a gig economy within a union workforce and have demonstrated a commitment to further devaluing the profession of writing, including by refusing to guarantee any level of weekly employment in episodic television, by creating of a "day rate" in comedy variety, and by stonewalling on the questions of unpaid work for screenwriters and on regulating AI for all writers; and

WHEREAS, last year, eight Hollywood CEOs collectively made nearly \$800 million, while pay for TV writers has fallen by 23% over the last 10 years, highlighting the growing income inequality and disregard for the value of writers' work within the industry; and

WHEREAS, the rise of streaming services has adversely affected the pay and working conditions for writers, as half of TV series writers (up from 33% in 2013–14) are currently paid the basic minimum rate, and the companies have used the transition to streaming to cut writer pay and separate writing from production, which worsens working conditions for series writers at all levels; and

WHEREAS, the WGAE and WGAW, acting upon the authority granted to them by their memberships, have voted unanimously to call a strike, effective May 2, 2023, following six weeks of negotiations with major media companies under the umbrella of the Alliance of Motion Picture and Television Producers; be it therefore

RESOLVED, that the United Federation of Teachers fully supports the Writers Guild of America, East and Writers Guild of America West in their decision to call a strike and their ongoing efforts to secure a fair and equitable deal for their members; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the UFT encourages its members to support the Writers Guild of America strike by following the WGAE and WGAW on social media platforms, sharing their posts and raising awareness about the strike and its objectives within their personal networks; and be it finally

RESOLVED, that the UFT encourages its members to join the striking writers on the picket lines to demonstrate our solidarity and commitment to the labor movement and the rights of all workers to fair and equitable working conditions.

AGENDA ITEM #3 - RESOLUTION ON THE NEW YORK CITY'S BUDGET FOR FISCAL YEAR 2023

Whereas, the Mayor's preliminary budget cuts at least \$500 million from the New York City Department of Education (DOE) budget, in addition to the cuts imposed on this school year; and

Whereas, according to the New York Independent Budget Office, the cuts in the Mayor's preliminary budget for FY 2024 are projected to lead to another headcount loss of about 900 positions; and

Whereas, it is unclear how the DOE proposes to spend the additional \$568 million in state Foundation Aid for next year, the final payment in three-year phase-in of about \$1.3 billion, resulting from the CFE lawsuit meant to provide NYC students with their right to a sound, basic education including smaller classes; and

Whereas, it is also unclear if the adopted changes in the Fair Student Funding (FSF) formula, which will send an additional \$90 million to schools with a high number of students in temporary housing and/or those in poverty will cause other school budgets to be cut by that same amount; and

Whereas, starting this fall, the DOE is mandated to start lowering class size by 20%, with far smaller class size caps to be required of all schools over the next five years, which will require more funding for space and staffing; be it therefore

Resolved that the UFT demands data showing the total and individual level at which schools would be funded next year (FY 2024) as compared to this year (FY 2023), via their entire Galaxy budgets as well as FSF allocations, to have a clear understanding of any potential reductions in school budgeted amounts; be it further

Resolved that the UFT will advocate that the budget, if adopted, will be used to maintain or supplement current staffing levels at schools unless there are register losses; be it further

Resolved that the UFT asks the DOE to clarify that the additional \$90 million in FSF funds provided to schools with a high concentration of students in temporary housing and/or in poverty will not cause other schools to be cut by that same amount; be it further

Resolved that the UFT demands that funding for new capacity in the capital plan be expanded rather than cut, to ensure sufficient space for all schools to meet the class size caps in the new state law; be it further

Resolved that the UFT demands that DOE include details as to how the \$568 million in additional State Foundation Aid will be spent; be it further

Resolved that the UFT will urge DOE to allocate these funds to schools to allow them to restore critical programs and positions eliminated during FY2023, and to help them reach the smaller class size caps that are mandated by the new state law.

AGENDA ITEM #4 – RESOLUTION TO REDUCE UNITED STATES MATERNAL MORTALITY RATES

Whereas, over 70% of the membership of the United Federation of Teachers are women; and

Whereas, reproductive and maternal health is a primary concern for many of our members and the families and communities we serve; and

Whereas, according to the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, maternal mortality is defined as the death of a childbearing person, while pregnant or up to one year following the pregnancy, from a cause related to, aggravated by, or irrespective of the pregnancy; and

Whereas, the maternal mortality rate in the United States is higher than most other high-income countries; and

Whereas, according to the Centers for Disease Control National Center for Health Statistics, this rate currently stands at 32.9 deaths per 100,000 live births which represents a significant increase from 20.1 in 2019 and 23.8 in 2020; and

Whereas, a recent National Public Radio article on the CDC study cited the US rate *“which is more than ten times the estimated rates of some other high income countries, including Australia, Austria, Israel, Japan and Spain which all hovered between 2 and 3 deaths per 100,000 in 2020;”*

Whereas, the 2021 maternal mortality rate for Black women at 69.9 deaths for 100,000 live births is more than double the average rate of other American women; and

Whereas, research has shown that in the United States, Black women are also twice as likely to have a preterm birth (PTB), give birth to a low birth weight (LBW) infant, or experience the death of a child before age 1, when compared to white women; and

Whereas, the maternal mortality rates for people who are Indigenous, low-income and over 40 year old are also abnormally high in comparison to the national average; and

Whereas, according to the American Medical Association, the Centers for Disease Control, the Commonwealth Fund and other national organizations have reported that many instances of maternal mortality are preventable; and

Whereas, lack of access to comprehensive, coordinated and respectful healthcare, the prevalence of chronic conditions, and inadequate postpartum support are among the reasons attributed to our nation’s high maternal mortality rates; and

Whereas research indicates that these disparities are symptoms of broader underlying social and economic inequities that are rooted in racism and discrimination; and

Whereas, the trauma that results from these incidents, while rarely discussed, has long lasting and profound impacts on our schools, offices, families, colleagues and communities; and

Whereas, In the latest data released by the DOE, 41.1 percent of public school students are Hispanic, 24.4 are percent Black and 71.9 percent are economically disadvantaged and their mothers of childbearing age are at risk; be it therefore

Resolved, the United Federation of Teachers calls upon healthcare organizations to offer ongoing resources, education and professional development for those providing reproductive care in effort to decrease maternal mortality rates, especially among women who are most affected; and be it further

Resolved, the UFT will work with educational, public health, and other organizations to offer resources and direct assistance to support educators, school counselors, social workers and psychologists as well as whole schools and communities serving people affected by maternal mortality; and be it further

Resolved, the UFT supports legislation promoting the expansion of birthing centers, particularly in communities where maternal mortality rates are highest, so that more women may receive quality reproductive care that is caring and respectful to all families of newborns; and be it further

Resolved, the UFT encourages professional learning and instruction that addresses implicit bias among staff and students, for instructional staff must be able to address implicit bias within themselves in order to teach students headed into professions where unconscious beliefs about different groups can create harmful racial disparities to treat all people equally; and be it further

Resolved, the UFT calls for increased research on the causes of these disparities and supports working with coalition partners to increase investment in efforts to decrease maternal mortality rates in the United States.

AGENDA ITEM #5 - RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF THE PEOPLE OF TURKEY AND SYRIA

Whereas, on February 6, 2023 a 7.8 magnitude earthquake occurred near the Turkish city of Gazianter.

Whereas, the impact of this earthquake was felt for hundreds of miles but caused the most damage in Turkey and Syria.

Whereas, it is expected that casualties will rise to over 20,000 persons losing their lives and over 80,000 more severely injured.

Whereas, it is expected that millions will be without shelter and power for many weeks to come.

Whereas, the United Federation of Teachers and its members have a long history of assisting people in need throughout the world.

Therefore, be it resolved, that in solidarity with our sisters, brothers, and siblings in Turkey and Syria, AFT, NYSUT and the UFT and their Disaster Relief Fund will be in contact with international relief agencies including the International Red Cross and Red Crescent in an effort to find out how we can assist those in need; and be it further

Resolved, that the United Federation of Teachers will lead a campaign of seeking monetary donations from all of our schools in an effort to assist the hundreds of thousands of victims in Turkey and Syria.

AGENDA ITEM #6 - RESOLUTION TO CALL ON THE PANEL FOR EDUCATIONAL POLICY TO END HIGH-STAKES STANDARDIZED TESTING IN GRADES 3-5

WHEREAS, when Chancellor Banks first introduced his initiative of a Multi-Tiered System of Support, he said, "When I talk about reimagining the school experience so that it's relevant to our students and excites them, this is what I mean. Why don't we provide the kind of experiences where kids can't wait to get up in the morning to get to school?" and

WHEREAS, high-stakes standardized testing has led to a narrowing of the curriculum to focus only on reading and math, thereby impeding Chancellor Banks' initiative to make school experiences exciting for students; and

WHEREAS, the fixation with high-stakes standardized testing has led us to only teach to the test at the expense of other important subject areas, including art and music; and

WHEREAS, New York City students have already been through the loss and pain of the pandemic, and we need to address students' mental and emotional health needs rather than increase pressure on them with high-stakes standardized test taking and test prep; and

WHEREAS, although the federal government requires some annual testing as part of distributing federal funding for all schools, it does not require that high stakes be attached to these tests. Removing these high stakes would mitigate the pressure on our students and move us toward eliminating test prep; therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the UFT call on the Panel for Educational Policy to end high-stakes standardized testing in grades 3-5 so schools and teachers can focus on curriculum that promotes students' academic performance as well as their well-being; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the UFT call on the Panel for Educational Policy to focus on academic intervention supports and programs for our students who have fallen behind academically due to the pandemic and to support our students' learning by giving schools the support and resources they deserve.

AGENDA ITEM #7 - SUBSTITUTE TEACHER AND PARAPROFESSIONAL RESOLUTION

Whereas, many schools in the New York City Department of Education have had a difficult time finding substitute teachers and substitute paraprofessionals,

Whereas, the DOE has told schools that they are unable to nominate substitutes if they have not used Sub Central a sufficient number of times,

Whereas, the DOE does not mandate that schools use Sub Central,

Whereas, the pandemic has created a myriad of reasons for teachers and paraprofessionals to be absent,

Whereas, certain schools have additional difficulty finding subs because of transportation and other issues,

Whereas, the inability of a school to either nominate or attract substitutes results in the overutilization of emergency coverages and lost preps, which in turn leads to teacher and paraprofessional burnout,

Whereas, the inability of a school to either nominate or attract substitutes also results in schools illegally and unethically pulling paraprofessionals from their mandated assignments and ICT partners from their classrooms, therefore be it

Resolved, that the UFT calls on the DOE to allow schools more flexibility in the nomination of substitute teachers and paraprofessionals during the ongoing pandemic, and be it further

Resolved, that the UFT push the DOE to consider the possibility of a Hard-to-Staff differential for substitutes serving schools that have had difficulty filling substitute positions.

AGENDA ITEM #8 - RESOLUTION: TELL THE US SUPREME COURT, BIG BUSINESS, AND CORPORATE POLITICIANS: HANDS OFF THE RIGHT TO STRIKE!

WHEREAS, the right to strike is a fundamental human right and is the most powerful weapon in the hands of workers, and union sibilings have fought bravely over the years in numerous battles in the streets and in legislatures to win, defend, and exercise this fundamental democratic right; and .

WHEREAS, in the last two years we have seen an upsurge of workers striking—in healthcare, manufacturing, education, transportation, construction, and in new organizing campaigns including coffee workers and warehouse workers; and

WHEREAS, our labor movement has proudly stood with these and other workers as they struck to demand and secure their fundamental rights including good pay and working conditions; and

WHEREAS, the bosses, corporations, and their representatives in government, recognizing the power of strikes, have always tried to deny or erode the right of workers to strike, through fear tactics; by hiring scabs, seeking court injunctions, and trying to pass new laws that limit or outlaw strikes; and even through acts of violence against workers; and

WHEREAS, these attacks on the right to strike, while often aimed at individual groups of workers, are in fact attacks against all of us, since An Injury to One Is an Injury to All; and

WHEREAS, now in 2023, corporations, aided by the U.S. government, are mounting their most vicious assault on our right to strike in decades, demanding that the U.S. Supreme Court allow employers to sue unions for economic damages resulting from strikes; and

WHEREAS, this case, Glacier Northwest, Inc. vs International Brotherhood of Teamsters, which was argued before the U.S. Supreme Court this January, with an expected Court decision to be issued this spring, comes out of the 2017 strike by our union sibilings at Teamsters Local 174, who bravely struck Glacier Northwest over the company's rampant abuse and intransigence in negotiating a fair contract, and in doing so were standing up for the rights of all construction workers to fair treatment and good working conditions; and

WHEREAS, the company is insisting it should have the right to sue the union for economic damages even though the union concrete workers, in effectuating the strike, returned the concrete mixing trucks to the work yard and kept them running to ensure that the wet concrete would not damage the trucks; and WHEREAS, the U.S. Supreme Court in 1959 affirmed that employers do not have the right to sue workers or unions for economic damage if the workers are engaging in a lawful strike, or even in a strike that is "arguably" lawful, unless the National Labor Relations Board has found the strike to be unprotected; and

WHEREAS, corporate interests now want to overturn this 63-year-old precedent and are demanding the unlimited right to sue striking workers for economic damages, because they realize this will be a potent weapon to wield against unions everywhere; and

WHEREAS, while the particular facts of the legal case involve our Teamsters 174 union siblings, this legal case represents an attack on all of us as an adverse decision will impact all workers and would open the door to bosses filing lawsuits against workers any time they strike, thereby empowering employers, intimidating workers, and preempting strike activities; and

WHEREAS, The Supreme Court has already made clear its intention to further attack organized labor following the Janus decision, including Democratic appointee Ketanji Brown Jackson, who was supported by many labor leaders when she was appointed by Joe Biden in 2022, and who, in the public Supreme Court debate on the Glacier Northwest case, shamefully compared our union siblings in Teamsters 174 to “the arsonist who says I’m going to walk away, but as I do, let me strike a match and burn down the factory,” making clear that this is a bipartisan attack which will require mass action from workers and the union movement to defeat; and

WHEREAS, unions are crucial bulwarks against racism, sexism, transphobia, and other attacks on workers; Black workers have the highest rate of union membership among any racial or ethnic group; Black union workers’ wages are more than 16 percent higher than their non-union counterparts and they are more than 17 percentage points more likely to have employer-provided health insurance; and the right to strike is critical to maintaining and improving upon these benefits and for fighting racism and other forms of discrimination in the workplace; and therefore an attack on the right to strike, no matter what the source, is an attack on our Black, non-white, women, and LGBTQ siblings; and

WHEREAS, many workers are not yet aware of this dangerous assault on our rights, and we have a duty to educate one another about this attack and mobilize ourselves and our fellow workers to speak out and take action; and

WHEREAS, the Glacier Northwest assault on our rights unfortunately isn’t an isolated case, but comes in the immediate aftermath of the Biden administration and Congress banning railroad workers using the sharpest tool, the strike, to fight for a contract that included reasonable sick days; and

WHEREAS, the Glacier Northwest assault isn’t simply a partisan attack on workers, even though we recognize that the US Supreme Court is stacked with Republican appointees, but it’s part of a long-term erosion of our rights due to the combined actions of big business and the political establishment of both major parties;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the United Federation of Teachers commits to educate our members and participate in mobilizing to fight back against this attack on our fundamental rights, by putting materials on our website, in newsletters, and by discussing it at union meetings; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the United Federation of Teachers urges the New York City Central Council to call for a Day of Action in the next month outside the Thurgood Marshall Federal Courthouse in Manhattan, to fight back against this corporate assault, aided by the U.S. government, on our fundamental rights; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the United Federation of Teachers will forward this resolution to the New York State AFL-CIO, calling for a day of coordinated actions in our state, and also to the National AFL-CIO, calling for a national Day of Action to defend the Right to Strike well in advance of the US Supreme Court’s expected date of issuing a ruling in Glacier Northwest, and urge the New York State AFL-CIO to do the same.