

RESOLUTION 2
Demanding Health and Safety for All Workers

WHEREAS:

Fifty years after the passage of the Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1970, the number of deaths on the job in our country still averages 14 workers a day, and another 95,000 workers are estimated to die each year from occupational diseases; and

WHEREAS:

Maryland employees still face unregulated occupational safety and health hazards every day such as infectious diseases, indoor air pollution, workplace violence and ergonomic problems. In addition, there no standards that require employers to engage with their employees about health and safety issues; despite evidence that such collaboration between employer and employee can significantly reduce on-the-job injuries and save money; and

WHEREAS:

In Maryland alone, there have been over 141,000 individuals who have tested positive for COVID-19, and more than 900 of these positive cases have been Maryland state and higher education employees working on the frontline. At least three state employees have died from COVID-19; and

WHEREAS:

Our federal and state government leaders did not cause the coronavirus outbreak in the United States, but their actions, and failures to act, have worsened its effects. They did this by understaffing and under-resourcing our government agencies and response; disregarding science, facts and the experts; failing to deploy critical resources like adequate testing, personal protective equipment and other basic provisions, and “reopened” worksites without a comprehensive plan to keep workers and the public safe, right as positive cases are surging into a second wave; and

WHEREAS:

An injury to one, is an injury to all. We all must work together to stop more preventable deaths and injuries from occurring. Whatever legal and contractual coverage AFSCME members have, the most important factor affecting workplace safety continues to be how effectively we organize in our workplaces and how strongly we mobilize members to stand up for their right to a safe workplace.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED:

That AFSCME Council 3 will continue to make the fight for safer workplaces, and protecting the lives and health of our members and all workers in Maryland, a top priority; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

That AFSCME Council 3 will urge the Administration and Maryland General Assembly to fully fund Maryland Occupational Safety and Health (MOSH); and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

That AFSCME Council 3 will work with other labor organizations and community groups to pass legislation requiring our state and federal occupational safety and health agencies to finally issue regulations and standards concerning infectious diseases, workplace violence, indoor air quality and other safety and health issues facing our members; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED:

That AFSCME Council 3 will pursue legislation at the state level that requires employers, in consultation with employees, to implement effective and enforceable injury and illness prevention programs so that employers are responsible for finding and fixing safety hazards, and we can ensure that all Maryland workers have a voice on the job when it concerns their safety without the fear of retaliation or reprisal.

SUBMITTED BY:

Executive Board, AFSCME Council 3