

CIVIL RIGHTS

2012 Resolutions

MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE

CHAIR - Veronica White, Cleveland Heights #795
Heather Courtwright, Berea #1699
Jean Hribar, Berea #1699
Laverne Thomas, Berea #1699
Wellyn Collins, Cincinnati #1520
Sandra Faulkner, Cincinnati #1520
Sandy Hawley, Cincinnati #1520
Brandon King, Cincinnati #1520
Sonya Lackey, Cincinnati #1520
Andrea Dockery, Cleveland #279
Dorothy Fair, Cleveland #279
Justin Hons, Cleveland #279
David Sanford, Miami Valley #4575
Kim Mautz, New Lexington #4186
Brian Bugos, Newton Falls #4864
Zachary Parent, Newton Falls #4864
Dennis Slotnick, Oregon #1080
Catherine Hernandez, Toledo #250
Katie Bowersock, Van Wert #4088
Lisa Zellner, OFT Staff

BULLYING FREE ENVIRONMENT REQUIRES STRONGER POLICIES (SUB. HB 116), ACTIVE ENFORCEMENT, OPEN DISCUSSION

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4 WHEREAS the recent occurrence of tragedies that have resulted from bullying, taunting
5 or publicly embarrassing students is an alarming reminder that much work must still be
6 done on educating society, including our children, about tolerance and mutual respect,
7 and on keeping our young people safe in and outside of school, and
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9 WHEREAS all of us—parents, teachers, superintendents, civic and religious leaders,
10 and others—must strengthen our efforts to recognize and root out this unacceptable
11 behavior. We must also work together to make sure our schools and communities are
12 safe places for young people to learn, grow and thrive. We have an obligation to protect
13 our children from the hatred that has led so many youth, with so much potential and
14 promise, to take their own lives—hatred based on others viewing them as different,
15 most recently because of religion or sexual orientation, and
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17 WHEREAS children cannot live and learn when they are constantly being taunted and
18 humiliated. They should feel safe in and outside of school, and they should never feel
19 threatened or targeted. We must do what we can to teach our children to embrace
20 diversity, and we must also make clear the real-life consequences of their actions. Yet
21 while written policies exist in many school districts, there is too little training and
22 discussion on how to actively address, respond to, prevent, and create a bullying free
23 environment, and

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25 WHEREAS any incident of bullying is reprehensible and unacceptable. While most
26 incidents are among students, sadly, educators too have bullied students. As a teachers
27 union, we support the highest standards of professional conduct to ensure that the
28 learning environment is safe and secure. Teachers and other school employees must
29 be trusted as positive influences and good role models. Bullying by anyone, anywhere,
30 under any circumstances, is hurtful, harmful and as we have seen over the past few
31 years, can be deadly. All students deserve to live and learn without fear of taunts or
32 humiliation from anyone, and

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34 WHEREAS a recent study shows 32 percent of all students aged 12-18 reported being
35 bullied -- 7 percent on a daily basis -- and 9 percent reported being physically assaulted
36 (Dinkes, Kemp & Baum, 2009). The success of our young people rests on how well they
37 are given the opportunity to reach their true potential. It goes without saying that if they
38 feel unsafe and uncomfortable in school and in their community, it will be far harder for
39 them to achieve academically and socially, now therefore

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41 BE IT RESOLVED that all districts and schools must adopt policies that foster bullying
42 free environments, and

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44 BE IT RESOLVED that the state should take the lead on setting enforceable policies on
45 this subject such as Sub. House Bill 116. Sub. HB 116 adds race, gender, religion,
46 sexual orientation, gender identity, and other enumerated protections to Ohio's anti-
47 bullying law, without changing the general prohibition against any bullying or
48 harassment. Research demonstrates that enumerated laws, or laws which provide
49 specific protection to categories which are frequently the subject of bullying and
50 harassment, make a difference in the lives of students. Groups like the Ohio Suicide
51 Prevention Network, Ohio Psychological Association, University of Toledo Law School's
52 Safe Schools Project, and many others strongly support enumerated anti-bullying laws
53 and policies, and

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55 BE IT RESOLVED that such policies must be backed by active and open discussions
56 about how to reach this goal through means that include community meetings,
57 parenting workshops and intervention, and training to empower all school personnel
58 with the tools and knowledge needed to sustain a bullying free school environment, and

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60 BE IT RESOLVED that information and materials on preventing bullying and
61 maintaining a safe school environment are available from a variety of sources that
62 should be publicized and made available to all school personnel, students and families.
63 Some highly recommended resources are available on the websites of the following
64 organizations: AFT; American Association of School Administrators; National
65 PTA: PTA.org/schoolsafety & PTA.org/bullying; America's Promise Alliance; Gay,
66 Lesbian and Straight Education Network; It Gets Better; Best Friends
67 Foundation; Community Matters; Girl Scouts of the USA; Girls Incorporated; TrueChild;
68 4-H Club; Teaching Tolerance; Facing History and Ourselves.

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72 **STRONGER AND DEEPER COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT IS NECESSARY**
73 **FOR THE UNION TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN OHIO**

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75 WHEREAS the Ohio Federation of Teachers is a strong and vibrant organization but
76 cannot be the sole influence on policies that better our state, and

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78 WHEREAS stronger connections with other unions as well as groups and individuals in
79 the communities we serve are necessary to build a better Ohio, and

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81 WHEREAS OFT set the stage for building focused community engagement efforts
82 during its 2011 convention, and

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84 WHEREAS it was proven during the We Are Ohio campaign to repeal SB 5 that
85 community engagement is beneficial, now therefore

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87 BE IT RESOLVED that OFT sustain community engagement through dialogue with and
88 mutual support for community groups and individuals, and

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90 BE IT RESOLVED that OFT make community engagement a priority in its work and
91 continue to promote a strong focus on community engagement from the state level to
92 train local leaders to build relationships with community, faith, civic and business
93 leaders.

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95 **ETHNIC INTIMIDATION: LAW SHOULD EXPAND TO PROHIBIT**
96 **SUCH TREATMENT OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES**

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99 WHEREAS ethnic intimidation is unfair and a violation of our civil rights, and

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101 WHEREAS current law does not address acts of ethnic intimidation against those with
102 disabilities, now therefore

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104 BE IT RESOLVED that ethnic intimidation should not be permitted against persons with
105 disabilities, and

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107 BE IT RESOLVED that OFT supports Senate Bill 53, and encourages its adoption.

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110 **RACIAL PROFILING MUST BE ELIMINATED**

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112 WHEREAS racial profiling is unfair and biased, and can lead to inaccurate judgments
113 against a person for no other reason than the color of his or her skin, and

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115 WHEREAS current law does not prohibit the practice of racial profiling, and

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117 WHEREAS racial profiling is a direct example of a violation of our civil rights, now
118 therefore

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120 BE IT RESOLVED that such practices should be halted wherever they are used and/or
121 promoted as a means to address law enforcement, and

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123 BE IT RESOLVED that OFT supports Senate Bill 42, and encourages all law
124 enforcement agencies and officers to rely on their investigative skills rather than racial
125 profiling.

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128 **THE UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS DOCUMENT**
129 **USED IN SCHOOLS TO TEACH AND SUPPORT**
130 **STUDENT AND HUMAN RIGHTS**

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132 WHEREAS since the introduction of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR)
133 was introduced in 1948, once the human loss of the Holocaust was realized, schools
134 and society have recognized the need to end intolerance, yet acts of abuse,
135 discrimination and intolerance persist and are on the rise in our schools, communities
136 and around the world, and

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138 WHEREAS the General Assembly of the United Nations proclaims the UDHR "as a
139 common standard of achievement for all nations, to the end that every individual and
140 every organ of society, keeping this Declaration constantly in mind, shall strive by
141 teaching and education to promote respect for these rights and freedoms", and

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143 WHEREAS most children in the United States have experienced the right to education,
144 freedom of thought and the right of movement, current reports show increasing numbers
145 of children also have experienced their rights being denied through bullying, cyber-
146 bullying, physical abuse, sexual abuse, and murder, and

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148 WHEREAS learning about human rights is the first step toward respecting, promoting
149 and defending the rights of all and acknowledging that schools have a responsibility to
150 provide this opportunity and that this learning has potential to take place in any part of
151 the curriculum, therefore

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153 BE IT RESOLVED that the OFT encourages all Ohio schools to consider immediately
154 adopting and including the UDHR authentic document, concepts, and supports into
155 applicable lessons and to further promote said human rights by implementing
156 progressive measures to secure their universal and effective recognition and
157 observance.

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160 **VOTER SUPPRESSION: FAIR ELECTIONS REQUIRE**
161 **OPEN ACCESS TO VOTING**

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163 WHEREAS House Bill 194, passed by the Ohio Legislature in mid 2011, attacks our
164 basic civil rights by severely restricting voting rights by limiting the period -- as well as
165 specific times and days -- during which Ohioans can vote, and

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167 WHEREAS HB 194 also overreaches by increasing requirements for proof of

168 identification, and

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170 WHEREAS HB 194 actually makes it harder for Ohioans to vote and to have their votes
171 counted, and

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173 WHEREAS Fair Elections Ohio collected and delivered the required number of valid
174 signatures to place a referendum on the 2012 ballot to repeal HB 194, and

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176 WHEREAS OFT members, leaders and staff collected signatures to place the HB 194
177 repeal on the ballot, and

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179 WHEREAS the right to vote is a basic civil right, and

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181 WHEREAS restricting voter access is discriminatory in the way it impacts certain
182 communities, now therefore

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184 BE IT RESOLVED that OFT firmly opposes HB 194 and endorses its repeal, and

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186 BE IT RESOLVED that OFT will vigorously mobilize members to educate friends, family
187 members and community neighbors about voting rights and encourage Ohioans to vote
188 to repeal HB 194.