

1 **DENOUNCING SYSTEMIC RACISM AND**
2 **PLANNING A PATH FORWARD**
3 **RESOLUTION**
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5 WHEREAS, more than 400 years after Africans arrived upon these shores where they and their
6 descendants were enslaved for nearly 250 years, and more than 150 years after the 14th
7 Amendment to the U.S. Constitution granted citizenship and equal protection under the law to
8 all, followed by another century of Jim Crow laws, and 66 years after the Brown v. Board of
9 Education U.S. Supreme Court ruling affirmed and extended that promise, Black Americans
10 continue to struggle for full protection under the law and continue to be victims of police
11 violence as evidenced by the murder of George Floyd, and
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13 WHEREAS, black men and women are still fighting for the right to live safely and free from
14 harm in their homes and communities, as evidenced by the killing of Breonna Taylor; and a new
15 generation of young Black Americans is witnessing the barbarity of racial violence, injustice,
16 and discrimination as evidenced by the murder of Ahmaud Arbery, and
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18 WHEREAS, the continuing surge of hate and racial animus, fueled and emboldened by Donald
19 Trump and his supporters, is a reminder of the great unfinished work of this nation, the labor
20 movement, and our union to ensure that the promise of justice and liberty is a reality for all
21 people; and
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23 WHEREAS, police departments and the military have been weaponized to stoke escalation of
24 police violence during protests, driving a culture of conflict and confrontation between the police
25 and community, and
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27 WHEREAS, where police departments have engaged in good faith efforts to meet with their
28 communities and engage in de-escalation and police reform, such as in Flint, Newark, and
29 Camden, police violence has not occurred; and
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31 WHEREAS, systemic racism - defined as a system in which public policies, institutional
32 practices, cultural representations, and other norms work in various, often reinforcing, ways to
33 perpetuate racial group inequity - exists across multiple sectors of our society, including, but not
34 limited to, our criminal justice system, health system, housing system, economic system, and
35 education system, and
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37 WHEREAS, because of this systemic racism, adverse childhood experiences are
38 disproportionately experienced by Black children when compared to White children thus having
39 disproportionately negative impacts on academic, behavioral, and physical health outcomes of
40 Black children; and
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42 WHEREAS, the negative repercussions of historical racism, including but not limited to
43 discriminatory lending practices of the 20th century known as “redlining,” impact current
44 outcomes regarding economic security, healthcare options, educational achievement, access to
45 nutritious food, rates of lead poisoning, and infant mortality; and

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47 WHEREAS, the underfunding of public education, along with biased and unfair testing
48 practices, has disproportionately impacted these “redlined” communities depriving our black
49 students of the same resources and opportunities as neighboring schools in white communities,
50 and

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52 WHEREAS, creating, implementing, and promoting positive change must not only include
53 calling out racist and violent actions of police officers when they occur, but also examining and
54 reviewing the current practices, protocols, and policies within our organization and within the
55 education system; and

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57 WHEREAS, the sustainability of the labor movement is built upon the foundational belief that
58 the lives of all people have inherent value, and together we fight for fairness, justice, and dignity
59 for everyone—regardless of race, religion, national origin, familial status, gender identity or
60 sexual orientation; and

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62 WHEREAS the AFT has a long history of fighting for civil rights including filing an amicus
63 curiae brief in the 1954 Supreme Court Case *Brown v Board of Education of Topeka* and
64 expelling locals that refused to follow a mandate to desegregate, and

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66 WHEREAS OFT members, as educators, social workers, and support staff, serve a critical role in
67 impacting the future by both educating students about racism and by being role models on how
68 treat all people with respect;

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70 THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, the Ohio Federation of Teachers (OFT) declares “Black
71 Lives Matter”; and

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73 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the Ohio Federation of Teachers (OFT) recognizes that racism
74 is a public health crisis that affects all members of our society on local, state, and national levels
75 and deserves action from all levels of government, labor, and civil society; and

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77 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the OFT recognizes that the fight against systemic racism
78 cannot be done alone and requires partnerships with other like-minded organizations and allies
79 including but not limited to Black Lives Matter, Color of Change, and NAACP and that we will
80 work in alignment with them to push for and support efforts to reform law enforcement and our
81 criminal justice system at all levels, with steps including but not limited to: mandatory training
82 on de-escalation and implicit bias, civilian review boards, and real accountability for officers and
83 departments who violate their oath to protect and serve; and

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85 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the necessary function of school safety should be separated
86 from policing and police forces. School security personnel should be trained as peace officers
87 and integrated within the school community, with a focus on nonviolent resolution of conflicts
88 with a minimal use of force; and as such, the OFT commits to help protect our students by
89 providing support to locals that decide to advocate for evaluating, altering, or ending school
90 district contracts with law enforcement agencies and

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92 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that OFT will seek out, listen to and amplify the voices of our
93 Black members and facilitate conversations among all members on understanding racism and on

94 taking steps to be actively anti-racist; and
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96 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the OFT Executive Committee and Human Rights
97 Committee will identify components of systemic racism within our education system and initiate
98 legislation and policies to correct these systemic problems as well as support legislation that
99 fights against any racism that impacts our black students, their families, their schools, and their
100 communities; and
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102 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that OFT will fight for equitable school funding that will allow
103 for students in underserved communities to have the same advantages and opportunities as their
104 wealthier counterparts, and
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106 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that OFT will continue to fight against privatization efforts that
107 further segregate our schools and drain resources from the public schools that have majority
108 black populations, depriving black students of equal opportunities for advancement; and
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110 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the OFT commits to continuing to promote and support a
111 community learning center model built upon connecting with community members to identify
112 both their needs and how they would like to see those needs met within the school, including
113 more counselors, more nurses, more mental health specialists and other services that provide
114 children with supports to overcome adverse childhood experiences and other non-academic
115 barriers that hold children back from reaching their full potential; and
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117 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the OFT will continue to work with coalitions to engage in
118 efforts to ensure economic and democratic freedom for all, especially our black citizens,
119 including but not limited to revising tax policies to generate revenue; increasing investments in
120 social services, education, and local communities; ensuring access to quality healthcare; and
121 expanding voting rights; and
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123 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the OFT will institute anti-racism training for elected OFT
124 Officers, Executive Committee members, committee chairs, and OFT staff and expanding to all
125 committee members and local Presidents with a goal of having initial trainings completed by
126 September 1, 2021; and
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128 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the OFT will work toward building the capacity for ongoing
129 anti-racism training through developing a train-the-trainer model with the result of reaching the
130 member level of the organization; and
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132 BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, the OFT will continue to advocate for systemic changes that
133 fight racism in the United States of America, the State of Ohio, and municipalities throughout
134 Ohio.