

National Partnership Agreement

Between the American Federation Labor - Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO) and United Students Against Sweatshops (USAS)

Background

United Students Against Sweatshops is the nation's largest youth-led campaign organization dedicated to building a student-labor movement, with affiliated locals on over 150 campuses that run locally and nationally-coordinated campaigns for corporate accountability and economic justice in partnership with organizations of workers. USAS's campaigns expose and hold accountable corporations that exploit people who work on our campuses, in our communities, and in the overseas factories where our collegiate apparel is produced, employing the unique moral authority, energy, and power students hold within universities that act as anchor institutions in communities and the global economy. Since 1997, USAS has won precedent-setting victories; educated students about the growing dominance of a handful of corporations in the global economy the lack of enforceable labor standards in the global supply chain, and the intersection of identity, social justice, and labor issues; and has trained and inspired thousands of young activists to become skilled organizers, researchers, and campaigners with labor and social justice organizations.

The AFL-CIO is the largest organization of working people in the United States with 58 affiliated national and international unions representing over 13 million workers from every sector of the economy from professors and student employees to construction workers and farmworkers. The AFL-CIO's State Federations and Central Labor Councils across the United States aim to coordinate the legislative, policy, political, and organizing work of a united local labor movement. The AFL-CIO is dedicated to improving the lives of all working families and to bringing fairness, dignity and democracy to the workplace. The AFL-CIO shares the values of USAS and its vision for global solidarity and social justice.

Goals and Objectives

This agreement is entered into in order to strengthen the parties' collaboration in both organizing and advocacy and thereby to build power for students and workers, in:

- Global campaigns to protect and promote the rights of garment and other workers exploited by ruthless multinational corporations.

- National and local campaigns to organize and improve standards for workers on campuses and workers whose labor is connected to university communities.
- Campaigns to protect higher education from corporate influence and to achieve a system of higher education that is accessible and fair to all students and workers.
- Other efforts to build a larger, stronger, more self-sustaining student-labor movement.

Priority Activities

We will accomplish our mutual goals and objectives by:

- Maintaining regular and substantive communication between the national staffs of USAS and the AFL-CIO.
- Facilitating strong relationships between USAS locals and Central Labor Councils, State Federations, Young Worker groups, as well as state and regional bodies of AFL-CIO affiliates.
- Encouraging AFL-CIO affiliates, Central Labor Councils, State Federations and USAS locals to collaborate on campaigns of mutual concern at all levels of the global economy.
- Encouraging AFL-CIO affiliates to partner with USAS on affiliate campaigns to organize workers on campuses, including faculty, adjunct faculty, administrative and service workers, student workers, and others.
- Sharing expertise, including in strategic research to support campaigns.
- Promoting USAS, AFL-CIO, and AFL-CIO affiliates' campaigns through our respective public communication infrastructures.
- The AFL-CIO assisting USAS' efforts to secure needed support and resources.
- USAS continuing to educate students about the critical role of labor unions and the importance of organizing, supporting, and joining unions.

Mechanism for Promoting Common Objectives

Critical to the success of this partnership is the building of relationships between the student and labor movements at the state and local levels. Shared planning, strategizing, and organizing at those levels will help us build the trust and institutional connections necessary for us to strengthen our movements and better advance the interests of both students and workers.

- The AFL-CIO will inform and educate affiliates, Central Labor Councils, and State Federations about this agreement and urge them to work in concert with USAS locals when it will advance the parties' shared goals and objectives.

- USAS will inform and educate its locals about this agreement and urge them to work in concert with Central Labor Councils and State Federations when it will advance the parties' shared goals and objectives.
- The AFL-CIO and USAS will promote local partnership agreements between USAS locals and Central Labor Councils and State Federations.

Ground Rules

- This agreement must strengthen, and not undermine the work of the AFL-CIO, its affiliates, and USAS.
- The parties will respect each other's autonomy and internal decision-making processes.
- This agreement will not undermine or interfere with the support and resources available to USAS.

Either party is free to terminate this agreement upon notice to the other party.

Together in solidarity,