

1                   **Resolution on Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands**

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3       **Whereas**, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands have suffered one of its worst catastrophes in  
4       the last one hundred years with massive superstorms amounting to more than \$100 billion in  
5       damages, according to Moody's Analytics; and

6       **Whereas**, the islands are suffering from unprecedeted devastation with a death toll of more  
7       than four hundred, more than 1.5 million people without power, people living in houses with  
8       soaked interiors, and many with no access to clean drinking water, and

9       **Whereas**, The response of the Trump administration has been both slow and wholly inadequate  
10      in addressing the urgent needs of 3.6 million US citizens of Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin  
11      Islands, and

12      **Whereas**, President Trump has added insult to injury with his racist remarks on Puerto Rico, and  
13      **Whereas**, the people of Puerto Rico are not responsible for incurring the massive public debt  
14      imposed on their island, and

15      **Whereas**, The Jones Act, notwithstanding the AFL-CIO's support of the act<sup>1</sup>, is an imposition  
16      on the people of Puerto Rico forcing restrictions on commerce and maritime transportation  
17      making it especially difficult for countries to provide aid to Puerto Rico, and

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19      **Therefore, be it resolved:** that Puerto Rico receive a waiver or permanent exemption from  
20      the Jones Act, so that foreign countries can more easily provide vitally needed aid, and

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<sup>1</sup> See <https://aflcio.org/about/leadership/statements/support-jones-act>

22     **Be it further resolved that:** the PSC affirms and supports the following positions of AFL-CIO's  
23     Resolution 56: The Humanitarian Crisis in Puerto Rico and the Need for Immediate Federal  
24     Action<sup>2</sup>:

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26                 THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the AFL-CIO Convention commends the heroic  
27     and courageous efforts of the AFL-CIO union members and volunteers who participated  
28     in the multi-union emergency relief mission; and

29                 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the AFL-CIO expresses solidarity with our sisters  
30     and brothers in the Puerto Rico Federation of Labor and the Virgin Islands Central Labor  
31     Council in their efforts to rebuild and protect all their residents following the disaster; and

32                 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the AFL-CIO will support and lift up the workers  
33     and their unions who are providing relief, care and supplies in Puerto Rico, the U.S.

34                 Virgin Islands and the mainland United States; rebuilding the islands; working to reopen  
35     schools and nurture children and senior citizens; and returning a sense of normal life to  
36     the people of Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands; and

37                 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the AFL-CIO will support and promote Operation Agua,  
38     launched by the American Federation of Teachers, the American Federation of State,  
39     County and Municipal Employees, Operation Blessing and the Hispanic Federation, and  
40     other efforts to provide a reliable source of clean, safe drinking water to families across  
41     Puerto Rico; and

42                 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the AFL-CIO calls upon Congress to provide  
43     assistance to Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands on the scale of the damage done by

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<sup>2</sup> See <https://aflcio.org/resolutions/resolution-56-humanitarian-crisis-puerto-rico-and-need-immediate-federal-action>

44 the storms, to ensure full funding for FEMA in order to substantially escalate its relief  
45 efforts on the ground, to end the cap on federal funding for Medicaid in Puerto Rico and  
46 the U.S. Virgin Islands, and to set federal matching rates for Medicaid in the same  
47 fashion as they are set in the mainland United States; and  
48 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the AFL-CIO calls upon the Trump administration  
49 to deploy the Department of Defense and other federal agencies to provide the resources  
50 necessary to restore drinking water, electric power and telecommunications to the people  
51 of Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands; and  
52 BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that the AFL-CIO calls upon Congress to enact a long-  
53 term moratorium on payments of all Puerto Rican public debt, followed by debt  
54 forgiveness, to prioritize the lives of Puerto Ricans over debt payments to Wall Street and  
55 free up millions of dollars for both short- and long-term recovery efforts.

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