

Resolution 1

The only difference between this new resolution and a previously passed PSC resolution is the addition of the next-to-last “Whereas” clause:

Whereas, the American Federation of Teachers (AFT) passed a sweeping resolution supporting a Green New Deal at the 2020 Convention and passed a resolution supporting divestment of pension funds from fossil fuel holdings in 2016

Full Divestment of New York State Public Pensions from Fossil Fuels

Whereas, scientists agree that the burning of fossil fuels has raised the earth’s temperature and, if left unchecked, would flood coastal areas, displacing and destroying lives all across the globe; and

Whereas, the latest UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change reports that the earth has only 11 years to quickly shift from a fossil fuel-based energy economy if it is to avoid disastrous tipping points; and

Whereas, Governor Cuomo and Mayor de Blasio have both pledged to divest the state’s and the city’s pensions from investments in fossil fuels; and

Whereas, none of signatories of the Paris Agreement are now poised to meet even the lower target of 2 degrees C. based on their current consumption rates and their so far, very limited transition to renewable alternatives; and

Whereas, The Institute for Energy Economics reported that fossil fuel stocks have underperformed over the last five years as compared to the General Stock Index; and

Whereas, the health and safety of us all require that 80% of the industry’s 2,795 gigatons of coal, oil and gas reserves, five times the amount that would be safe to use, remain in the ground; and

Whereas, the value of fossil fuel stocks is based on burning all existing reserves; and

Whereas, as the economy shifts toward renewable energy, the fossil fuel industry is likely to be holding billions in “stranded assets” which means losses for those still invested in the industry; and

Whereas, the fossil fuel industry is facing dozens of lawsuits due to the damages from the pollution of air and water associated with extraction and transportation; and

Whereas, these lawsuits increase the risk of keeping our retirement funds in fossil fuels; and

Whereas, the fossil fuel industry spends millions of dollars to lobby, fight and deny the well documented environmental health and safety consequences of extracting and burning fossil fuels at the current rate; and

Whereas 1,000 institutions, including 100 colleges and universities, have already removed over \$14 trillion dollars from fossil fuel industries across the globe; and

Whereas, the Corporate Knights Report on New York State Pension Funds shows that fossil fuels have been, and will likely continue to be a poor investment for New York State Teachers Retirement System, the NYC Teachers Retirement System and other public employees pensions; and

Whereas, accelerating the transition to renewable energy in NYS. can produce thousands of decent paying jobs for New Yorkers throughout the state; and

Whereas, the American Federation of Teachers (AFT) has passed a sweeping resolution supporting a Green New Deal at the 2020 Convention and has passed a resolution supporting divestment of pension funds from fossil fuel holdings in 2016; and

Whereas, most NYSUT members' retirement savings are in either the NYS Teachers Retirement System (TRS), NYC TRS, or with the NYS Common Retirement Fund; therefore be it

Resolved, that NYSUT urge NYSTRS and NYCTRS to protect public pensions and divest from all fossil fuel holdings in keeping with their fiduciary responsibility; and be it further

Resolved, that NYSUT urge Comptroller DiNapoli to divest the NYS Common Retirement Fund he oversees from fossil fuels and consider investing in renewable energy, including community owned renewable power.

Resolution 2

Resolution in Support of Public Power

- Whereas, the United Nations' Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change and the overwhelming majority of climate scientists have stated that current concentrations and ongoing emissions of greenhouse gases will transcend generations by causing increases in global temperatures, warming of the world's oceans and rising average sea level for many centuries, and irreversible changes in major ecosystems; and
- Whereas, the burning of fossil fuels such as coal, oil, and natural gas for the purposes of electricity generation and transportation is the primary source of climate changing greenhouse gas emissions; and
- Whereas, working families, frontline communities, communities of color and low income communities and other vulnerable populations, including and especially our students and their families, suffer disproportionately from environmental degradation and climate change events such as extreme hurricanes, wildfire, drought and flooding, extreme heat and the spread of infectious disease; and,
- Whereas, widespread social analyses (e.g. Naomi Klein's *This Changes Everything: Capitalism vs the Climate*) clearly articulate the dangers to all of failing to rapidly curb the use of fossil fuels as well as the increased risks to those living close to rising sea levels; and,
- Whereas, the AFT and the PSC have supported the Green New Deal and rapid decarbonization and both the Green New Deal and THRIVE platforms call for rapid decarbonization; and
- Whereas, Trade Unions for Energy Democracy has shown that markets have proven unable to create a sufficiently rapid transition towards a low carbon economy, thereby necessitating a strong role for the public sector and democratic control in driving the measures needed to undertake this transition; and,
- Whereas, in New York State, Con Edison and other investor-owned utilities deliver profits to shareholders, thus requiring rates above cost, while delaying the transition to clean energy and accepting the necessity of inequitable brownouts to vulnerable populations in response to its inability to manage demand or its own infrastructure; and
- Whereas, NYPA is the largest publicly owned utility in the country, with a track record of providing the most affordable energy in the state, it makes sense for NYPA to be at the forefront of our renewable energy transformation, though under current law, NYPA cannot own or build new utility-scale renewable generation projects; and
- Whereas, the Public Power NY Coalition, has proposed that NYPA (the New York Power Authority) and new public utilities can and should generate, transmit and distribute to New York the 100% renewable, democratically controlled, publicly owned energy system it needs, therefore,

Be it resolved that:

- NYSUT shall support efforts for public ownership of utilities in New York State and New York City, bringing New York the 100% renewable, democratically controlled, publicly owned energy system it needs.

- NYSUT shall also support efforts to ensure that workers in the private energy sector in New York be supported in any transition to increased use of public power and be prioritized for unionized employment in NYPA.
- NYSUT shall join the Public Power NY Coalition to bring the New York State energy system into public ownership and democratic control.
- NYSUT shall network with other NYSUT chapters to build support for public power and shall encourage NYSUT to formally support this campaign.
- When appropriate, the PSC shall include support for public power in its electoral questionnaires and advocate supportive positions in upcoming candidate endorsements.
- NYSUT shall inform its locals how public power will facilitate achieving renewable energy goals for NYS.

Sources:

- Ashley Dawson, “[Public Power in a Green City](#),” *Jacobin* (October 25, 2020)
- Jackson Koeppel, Johanna Bozuwa, and Liz Veazey, “[Community Ownership of Power Administration](#),” *Solidarity, The Next System, and We Own It* (January 29, 2020)
- Jumaane Williams, “[Municipalizing New York City's Electric Grid](#),” Office of the New York City Public Advocate (August 7, 2020)
- Sean Sweeney and John Treat, “[Energy Transition: Are We Winning?](#)” *Trade Unions for Energy Democracy* (January 2017)
- Sean Sweeney, Kylie Benton-Connell, and Lara Skinner, “[Power to the People: Toward Democratic Control of Energy Generation](#)”, *Trade Unions for Energy Democracy* (June 2015)

Notes:

- Public Power Coalition: <https://www.nypublicpower.com/our-partners/>
- Existing NY Public Service Commission information: <https://www.ny.gov/agencies/department-public-service>

Resolution 3

Big Tech Threat to Academic Freedom

Whereas the responsibility of universities to safeguard academic freedom is foundational to higher education in the United States, widely recognized in governance plans, and established by the American Association of University Professors (AAUP) in its [*1940 Statement of Principles on Academic Freedom and Tenure*](#);

Whereas, the privatization of higher education has intensified dramatically during the COVID-19 pandemic, particularly with respect to out-sourcing of educational platforms to Big Tech companies;

Whereas private corporations are accountable to shareholders, not to an academic community whose norms and values enshrine the freedom to pursue research, teaching, and extra-mural speech on controversial matters;

Whereas several instances of the cancellation by Zoom and other “Big Tech” platforms of university-sponsored webinars and online virtual class sessions including controversial speakers have been reported by [*The New York Times*](#) and other outlets; and

Whereas “Big Tech” companies may be more susceptible to coordinated political pressure campaigns than are university administrators, who understand the value of academic freedom as the lifeblood of university research and teaching; therefore, be it

Resolved, that that NYSUT unequivocally affirms its support for academic freedom in the context of online education and the accelerated privatization of platforms for teaching and learning; and

Resolved, that NYSUT affirms the call by PSC-CUNY and the AAUP for college and university administrators to take affirmative steps to safeguard academic freedom in its online learning platforms. These steps should include but not be limited to: public acknowledgment of the threat to academic freedom posed by the institution’s reliance on private, third-party vendors; and review and renegotiation of contracts with Big Tech companies “[to better protect the rights of faculty and students to engage with controversial ideas.](#)”

Resolution 4

NYSUT Calls for Defunding the NYPD and Redirecting Resources to Education, Public Health and Other Community Needs

Whereas, the brutal murder of George Floyd is an egregious instance of racist policing that has claimed numerous Black and Brown lives;

Whereas, we have witnessed racist police violence in other cities across New York State, including the pepper-spraying of a nine-year-old girl in Rochester on January 29 and the killing of Daniel Prude on March 23, as he was pressed face-down onto the street;

Whereas, the movement to defund the New York City police department and redirect resources to education, public health and other community needs, if successful, could be important to communities throughout the state;

Whereas, studies have shown that police reforms and training programs aimed at reducing abuses have not altered the consequences of systemic racism in policing;

Whereas, governments typically spend far more on policing than on public health, homeless services, youth services and other vital agencies;

Whereas, in 2019, New York City allocated nearly \$6 billion to the NYPD, compared to \$1.9 billion for the health department; \$2.1 billion for homeless services; \$1.4 billion on housing, preservation, and development; \$907.3 million on youth and community development; and \$73.8 million on workforce development, thus budgeting more on policing than on health, homeless services, youth development and workforce development combined;

Whereas, 106 organizations, including unions such as locals of UAW and 1199SEIU, National Domestic Workers Alliance, and New York Taxi Workers Alliance, have publicly urged Mayor de Blasio and the New York City Council to defund the NYPD;

Whereas, New York legislators including Julia Salzar, Corey Johnson, Danny Dromm, Scott Stringer, Jumaane Williams, Carlina Rivera, Antonio Reynoso, Ben Kallos, Carlos Menchaca, Brad Lander, and Mark Levine have called for cuts to the NYPD budget;

Whereas, in response to the mass protests in New York city and across the country following the police killing of George Floyd, Mayor de Blasio announced a shift in funding from the NYPD to youth and social services, a series of police reforms, including moving the enforcement for street

vending out of the NYPD to a civilian agency, and adding community ambassadors to the NYPD to serve as liaisons between officers and New Yorkers;

Whereas, while we welcome Mayor de Blasio's announcement, the proposed cuts are only a gesture toward the needed shift in priorities and must be followed by action and transparency;

Whereas, with the devastation the city has suffered from COVID-19, there is an urgent need to reduce NYPD funding and reallocate the resources in the areas of public health, housing, education, and community needs; therefore be it

Resolved that NYSUT joins the PSC in calling on Mayor de Blasio and the New York City Council to defund the NYPD by reducing the NYPD budget by at least one billion dollars and reallocating the funds to resources that have been proven to support poor communities of color like public health, housing, education and youth employment programs;

Resolved that NYSUT demands transparency on how much funding New York City will cut from the NYPD's \$6 billion annual budget;

Resolved that NYSUT calls on Mayor de Blasio and the New York City Council to make the redirection of NYPD funds a first step in reimagining public safety in New York City and re-creating systems of public safety that would keep all New Yorkers safe;

Resolved that NYSUT calls on CUNY to refrain from requesting or approving NYPD presence on CUNY campuses in non-emergency situations and, additionally, revise its 1992 Memorandum of Understanding with the NYPD to eliminate all provisions permitting the NYPD on campus in non-emergency situations;

Resolved that NYSUT calls on the New York State AFL-CIO to urge the national AFL-CIO to end its affiliation with the International Union of Police Associations.