

RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF HIGHER EDUCATION STRIKERS AND PROTESTERS IN THE AMERICAS

WHEREAS, in their communiqué of May 22, 2012 at the Camp David summit meeting, the leaders of Britain, the US, France, Germany, Italy, Canada, Japan and Russia (the G-8) said that productivity and growth could be increased through “structural reforms and *investments in education* and in modern infrastructure”; and

WHEREAS, in reality, the G-8 countries have radically *disinvested* in education, and the student groups and faculty/staff unions that have protested the disinvestment have come under political assault, as have those north and south of our borders, most recently in Québec and Brazil; and

WHEREAS, the Québec government proposes to disinvest in higher education and instead to shift its costs onto the shoulders of students, by raising tuition, and onto faculty, by destroying their unions, thereby provoking a massive strike; and

WHEREAS, the Québec government has adopted Bill 78, which makes it illegal for groups of more than 50 persons to engage in peaceful assembly without prior approval of authorities; which allows the government to defund student associations, impose heavy fines on student demonstrators, and force employees who support the student strike back to work; and which also criminalizes expressing support for demonstrations that are contrary to the bill, subjecting individual Canadians and organization to large fines; and

WHEREAS, in Brazil the National Union of Teachers of Higher Education Institutions (ANDES-SN) has been on strike since May 17, 2012 against an accelerated reduction of public funds and diminished working conditions and salaries, and has called for resolutions of support from international unions; and

WHEREAS, in Haiti, several strikers and strike leaders, members of unions of teachers, hospital workers, transport workers and government workers in the Confederation of Workers in the Public and Private Sector (CTSP, ctsphaiti.com), have been summarily fired for union organizing and strike action in years 2010-2012; and

WHEREAS, in Mexico, the Oaxaca teachers’ union, Section 22 of the SNTE (National Union of Education Workers), led the historic strike in 2006 that became the massive popular movement known as the Oaxaca Commune, supported by unions around the world; and

WHEREAS, Carlos René Román Salazár, a field worker for the union and a social justice leader, was “disappeared” on March 14, 2011 in Oaxaca in retaliation for Section 22’s continued struggle for teachers; he remains missing; and

WHEREAS, the AFT is a leading member of Educational International, which stands for democracy and education internationally, promotes the rights of teachers and students, and defends education activists in struggle:

RESOLVED, that AFT undertake a campaign of support for the struggle in Québec; communicate to its members the importance of supporting the struggle in Québec; send a letter of solidarity to the student strikers’ organization CLASSE; and support students in their legal action to repeal Bill 78; and

RESOLVED, that AFT undertake a campaign of support for the struggle in Brazil; communicate to its members the importance of supporting the strike of the

National Union of Teachers of Higher Education Institutions in Brazil (ANDES-SN), and send a letter of solidarity to ANDES-SN; and

RESOLVED, that AFT continue its support for the fired strikers from CTSP unions in Haiti, demand their reinstatement, and send a letter of support to the CTSP; and

RESOLVED, that AFT call on the Oaxacan State and Mexican Federal authorities to investigate the whereabouts of Carlos René Román Salazár and ensure his safe release, and that AFT send a letter to Section 22 voicing our support.

Submitted by: Professional Staff Congress, Local 2334