



Legislation Text

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Res. No. 4

Resolution calling upon the New York City Department of Education to implement a curriculum and to acquire textbooks that include key moments in the history of the labor movement throughout New York City and the United States.

By Council Members Barron, Brannan and Miller

Whereas, The labor movement in the United States grew out of the need to protect the common interest of workers; and

Whereas, Organized labor unions fought for better wages, reasonable hours, safer working conditions and led efforts to stop child labor, give health benefits and provide aid to workers who were injured or retired; and

Whereas, According to the Department of Labor, union workers fought for decades for improvements in working conditions for Americans, such as 40-hour work weeks and a minimum wage granted under the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938, and the creation of the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) to oversee the welfare of workers; and

Whereas, The achievements of unions benefit all American workers, not just unionized workers, and therefore deserve to be taught as part of American history; and

Whereas, According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, New York State contains the highest amount of unionized workers in the country, as every 1 in 4 workers in the state is affiliated with a union; and

Whereas, The efforts of union workers are more relevant now than ever, as new technologies emerge and working-class Americans experience a decline in standards of living as jobs disappear in the current global economy; and

Whereas, According to the Washington Post and the Albert Shanker Institute, several contemporary history textbooks distort the character of unions by portraying unions as violent and focusing on union strikes and labor unrest; and

Whereas, These textbooks ignore the fact that unions won all Americans improved working standards, ignore the connections unions had to the Civil Rights movement, and ignore the social mobility unions made possible; and

Whereas, Knowledge of unions is important in the creation of a strong middle class and a strong economy; and

Whereas, Today's students must know of the historically violent and deplorable workplace conditions that pushed workers to unionize; and

Whereas, It is imperative that today's students understand the value of collaboration and understand that all workers have dignity; and

Whereas, The sacrifices of past workers who fought for improved working conditions must always be remembered and never forgotten; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Council of the City of New York calls upon the New York City Department of Education to implement a curriculum and to acquire textbooks that include key moments in the history of the labor movement throughout New York City and the United States.

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