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USW President Cites New AFL-CIO Direction on Trade Policy *Joins AFL-CIO's Trumka to Oppose 'Fast Track' Renewal*

Las Vegas – The United Steelworkers (USW) President Leo W. Gerard announced approval by the AFL-CIO Executive Council of a resolution that calls on the U.S. Congress to assert its constitutional responsibility to institute new reforms on trade that stop American jobs from being exported and put workers and their companies on a level playing field of global trade.

In announcing the AFL-CIO's declaration for a new direction in America's trade policy, Gerard said, "For globalization to live up to its promise to improve the lives of workers and the poor – not just the wealthy and powerful – we need an entirely new set of rules and institutions." Citing a \$764 billion record trade deficit, weak worker rights and environmental provisions in trade agreements and NAFTA, Gerard declared, "Our nation's trade policies have failed."

He made it clear that "Workers support the value of trade deals, but only if everyone shares in the benefits."

As chairman of the AFL-CIO's standing committee on economic policy, Gerard joined Richard L. Trumka, AFL-CIO Secretary-Treasurer following yesterday's Executive Council meeting in Las Vegas that challenged President Bush's call to renew the current trade promotion authority (TPA) or "fast track," and instead lays out an alternative vision.

The AFL-CIO called for four major reforms:

- A strategic review of existing trade agreements before we start any new trade negotiations.
- Congress should have a role in choosing trade partners and in laying out "readiness criteria," which it does not have under our current set of rules.
- The negotiating objectives laid out by Congress must be mandatory, rather than optional.
- Congress must certify that an agreement has met all the mandatory objectives before the agreement can be signed.

Trumka emphasized the AFL-CIO vision of trade policy "puts good jobs as the top priority, strengthens the role of Congress in trade negotiations, protects workers' rights and environmental standards in all upcoming trade agreements." He said when fast track authority expires on June 30, it should not be renewed.

"We call upon Congress to reassert control of our nation's failed trade policy," Gerard said. "Congress must implement reforms that will keep the U.S. competitive in the global market while protecting fundamental workers' rights and good American jobs."

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