

# **LULAC Resolution for Fair Trade and NO to Job Exploitation and Loss of Jobs**

Whereas the year 2004 marks the 10th anniversary of the enactment of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA); and

Whereas, NAFTA has caused the loss of more than 800,000 manufacturing jobs, and net job losses in every U.S. state and the District of Columbia, including 50,270 manufacturing jobs in Texas; and

Whereas NAFTA has a proven record of negative impacts that disproportionately impact working Mexicans and Latinos living in the United States:

- > although Latinos represent 13 percent of the entire US population, they were a disproportionate 37 percent of all workers who have applied for assistance under the NAFTA Trade Adjustment Assistance program, the program designed to provide unemployment benefits and training for workers whose jobs are relocated to Mexico or Canada; and
- > both sides of the border suffer from NAFTA's negative impact on environmental laws and protections – a disproportionate number of U.S./Mexico border residents suffer from environmental health problems related to air pollution, inadequate water and sewage treatment, pesticides and hazardous wastes; and
- > wages for manufacturing in Mexico fell 20.7% between 1993 and 1999—it now takes 5 Mexican minimum wages to support basic needs for a family of four; and
- > in the last 10 years more than 1.3 million Mexican farmers have lost their livelihoods and migrated north to the cities and to the border looking for jobs in the maquiladoras; and
- > 30 percent of the jobs that were created in maquiladoras in the 1990s have since relocated to even cheaper markets in Asia and Central America; and
- > real wages in Mexico are lower now than when NAFTA took effect; and
- > undocumented migration to the U.S. from Mexico has more than doubled since NAFTA was enacted; and
- > increased U.S. border policing and militarization since NAFTA has led to more than 2,700 deaths from failed border crossings in desperate attempts to seek the American dream; and

Whereas, the U.S. Trade Representative (USTR) is negotiating trade agreements that could have a greater potential impact on state and local governments than does NAFTA, including the Central American Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA), which could come before Congress as soon as the Summer 2004; and

Whereas, the passage of CAFTA would further encourage the relocation of manufacturing jobs to cheaper labor markets pitting U.S. Latinos and Mexicans against citizens of the global south in a race to the bottom; and

Whereas, CAFTA fails to include adequate enforcement for violations of internationally recognized labor and environmental standards; and

Whereas Human Rights Watch, the International Labor Organization and the U.S. State Department have each published reports denouncing human and labor rights abuses in the Central American countries party to the CAFTA agreement; and

Whereas CAFTA includes foreign investor rights modeled after NAFTA as well as trade rules that could challenge state and local authority in such areas as water services, electricity, health facilities, health insurance and zoning; and

Whereas CAFTA allows foreign corporations to bring actions against governments that pass labor, public health or environmental laws that reduce corporate profits, as corporations are allowed to do under NAFTA Chapter 11;

Therefore, be it resolved that LULAC calls upon our state-level organizations and local chapters to educate members about the negative impacts of NAFTA and the threat CAFTA poses to workers, health and prosperity; and

Be it further resolved that LULAC supports the efforts of fair trade advocates to defeat passage of the Central American Free Trade Agreement; and

Be it finally resolved that LULAC urges members of Congress to reject CAFTA and work for fair trade agreements that raise the standards of living for labor and protects our environmental standards.

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