

## **RESOLUTION NO. 3**

The core mission of BAC is unchanging – and remains essential to skilled trowel trades craftworkers everywhere. There are different ways to define that mission, but all contain the central truth: BAC builds communities, and it builds lives.

Through a history that spans over 150 years, the International Union of Bricklayers and Allied Craftworkers has faced – and bested – myriad existential threats. From yellow-dog contracts that sought to outlaw unions, to the Great Depression, to two World Wars, to the recent Great Recession, BAC has consistently overcome the biggest obstacles posed by the history of the last three centuries, and never wavered from its mission.

Today, we face a new challenge – a global pandemic that has afflicted 30 million people worldwide, killed over two hundred thousand in the United States and Canada alone, and thrown the economy into near total paralysis. COVID-19 has shuttered schools, offices, hotels, restaurants and other services, and left tens of millions unemployed. Yet throughout the crisis, BAC members have bravely continued their essential work of building our communities, and BAC local leaders have ensured that they can do so safely. Our jobsites have provided a tangible sign of human resilience, and have demonstrated, once again, the mettle and adaptability of our members and our Union leaders.

This Convention is itself evidence of that adaptability. The grave reality of this pandemic did not prevent us from coming together to fulfill our constitutional duties. Instead, we adapted by moving the Convention online, an option that would have been unimaginable just 20 years ago, much less in our founding year of 1865.

An online Convention will require us to adopt new ways of conducting business, and demands that we direct our limited meeting time toward the core constitutional requirements of the Convention. Accordingly, we honor our legacy with Resolutions 1 and 2, and present this sole remaining resolution to focus the Convention on the most immediate challenges facing BAC.

When this crisis has passed, and we can meet face-to-face – with time to carefully deliberate, debate and set the course for the longer term – we will address the many other issues facing our Union, our members, our industry, and our nations. But by affirmatively focusing on the following urgent matters during the crisis, we'll be ready to tackle those other priorities, and more, as we continue to build communities and build lives for the future.

### **Building Safer Workplaces**

The COVID-19 global pandemic – the most profound safety and health issue of our time – has raised unique challenges for the construction industry. Most BAC craftworkers, whose work was deemed essential, have remained on the job throughout the pandemic. Our members and signatory employers have adapted to myriad state, provincial and local orders addressing social distancing, personal protective gear, personal hygiene, symptom screenings, testing, and workplace sanitation.

We have accomplished all this despite the vacuum of leadership in the US federal government. While our brothers and sisters in Canada have benefitted from coherent and compassionate guidance from their federal government, the Trump Administration's Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) has provided no safety and health response for workers at all to COVID-19, and most critically has failed to develop exposure standards for essential workers – including construction workers. In the absence of any federal leadership, BAC has worked with national partners to develop a model standard for exposure control, raising the bar for the health and safety of all construction workers. Furthermore, BAC successfully advocated for the Center for Construction Research and Training (CPWR) to develop a COVID-19 Exposure Control Plan tool to help construction employers develop written plans using the latest rules, guidance and data.

Effective job and safety training is critical to safe construction. BAC training programs, led by the International Masonry Training and Education Foundation, have worked diligently to safely provide continuous training. Given the challenges to safely providing in-person training in large numbers presents during this pandemic, IMTEF has arranged for much of this training, including OSHA training, to be delivered via online platforms. This online training is reaching BAC members where they live and will continue to supplement in-person training even after the pandemic ends.

During this global health and economic crisis, BAC has focused on safely keeping members employed. BAC leaders at every level have prioritized safety and health on the jobsite and at the bargaining table; shared safe work practices with one another and with the broader industry; continuously engaged bargaining partners; and increased access to healthcare coverage, other health resources, and hardship funds. We will not cede these gains, and we will never cease our fight for cleaner, safer, and healthier jobsites.

### **Building Community Through Communication**

BAC is able to build communities because the Union is itself a community – one that we have built and nurtured over generations. At the heart of that community is effective and sustained communication between officers, members, and the outside world. By communicating with each other, we develop a common understanding of our goals and aspirations; by communicating with those outside the Union, we facilitate organizing and ensure that BAC's interests are represented in every arena.

Throughout our history, most of that communication has taken place face-to-face. Business agents and officers meet members at the center of the Union's world, the construction jobsite, to make sure that the workplace is safe and that our collective bargaining agreements are enforced. Union representatives visit contractors and government officials at their offices, look them in the eye, and advocate for our positions. And at the heart of our traditional communication is the union meeting, where members come together to make their voices heard, share food and drink, and celebrate the bonds of our trade.

The COVID-19 pandemic, and the resulting restrictions on in-person gatherings, have interrupted this communications model. Access to jobsites and meetings with contractors, industry partners, and politicians have given way to safety restrictions. Even the boisterous debate and laughter of our union meetings has been silenced. But we cannot simply stop communicating indefinitely. Our members need their voices heard, and in turn need to hear guidance from their leaders. We must advance our interests when critical policy decisions are made by government. And non-union craftworkers, who are exploited and endangered worse than ever thanks to the virus, are hungry for change – but they won't know that we can help if we aren't reaching out to them.

Fortunately, there are online and digital communications options available at all levels of the Union. Membership meetings – the cornerstone of our internal communications – may not be possible in the hall, but they're happening online in Locals across the continent. Whether they're on Zoom, GoToMeeting, Google Meet, or another platform, online meetings are proving to be a very effective communication tool. The IU Communications Department has conducted webinars for local leaders regarding best practices for online meetings and is available to assist affiliates looking to temporarily replace, or learn how to supplement, their standard meetings.

Reduced access to jobsites doesn't mean we can't reach members on short notice. Text messaging, with its 99% open rate, is unsurpassed as a tool for reaching members on and off the jobsite. The IU provides texting programs for all BAC Locals and ADCs at no cost, and many have taken advantage of the opportunity – utilizing texts to send important announcements, event registrations, meeting reminders, safety and health alerts, GOTV notices, and more.

Social media, and especially Facebook, is indispensable to find members where they spend their time. Our members are active on social media – non-union workers are too – and they're actively discussing our crafts and our Union. We can no longer view social media participation as optional – it's essential. IU communications staff are expert users of these tools and regularly train local leaders on how best to use these effective and powerful tools, including how to interact with the dozens of popular unofficial Facebook groups aimed at both union and non-union craftworkers.

More now than ever, well-designed websites are critical to engage members, attract potential members, and to highlight our strengths to contractors and owners. With the AFL-CIO, BAC provides attractive and free local websites through the "Union Hall" program. Websites can be set up quickly and are easily updated by even the smallest Local. BAC's own official website, [bacweb.org](http://bacweb.org), was redesigned and launched in March 2019 with a mobile-responsive design, clear site navigation, fast-loading pages, personalized user logins, cross-platform compatibility, a "Join BAC" form, a regional and local contact list, answers to frequently asked questions, and more.

We look forward to the end of the pandemic, and a return to the face-to-face communication that has built BAC. But the steps we take now to strengthen our virtual and digital communication will pay dividends long after we resume meeting in person, and the powerful tools we adopt now will ensure that BAC continues building communities online.

## **Building the Future of BAC**

Having only recently fully emerged from the Great Recession, the building and construction market is now faced with the rapid incorporation of a new “normal” in terms of contracting, risk mitigation, new technology, new fabrication techniques, new materials, and new installation methods. Our trade is perhaps the oldest in construction – but to maintain and expand our market share, the union masonry and tile industry must evolve and implement new technologies and applications and be fully prepared for new project delivery methods.

Enhanced machinery and robotics continue to grow in popularity in the construction trades, and BAC and our industry partners have consequently researched and investigated, asserted jurisdiction over, and trained for the use of these new and emerging technologies. During this pandemic, BAC, IMI and IMTEF have enhanced our virtual communications and training to ensure that we continue to advance the union masonry industry, while adapting to advances within the broader construction industry. Now more than ever we must embrace technological advances on jobsites, in the office, and during training, in order to enhance work opportunities for signatory contractors and BAC members, and to minimize the real risk of the replacement of our crafts and materials in construction.

Over the past decade, project delivery has also changed significantly within the construction industry. Traditional design-bid-build (DBB) is increasingly ceding ground to more collaborative models, including design-build (DB), integrated project delivery (IPD), and public-private partnerships (PPPs). There is also significantly more interest from owners, general contractors, and construction managers in mitigating their own risk and in limiting the number of workers on jobsites. This is happening through consolidation of traditional building divisions and broader scopes of work, and through an increasing demand for prefabrication and off-site construction. The consequences of the global pandemic and the resultant economic crisis – including jobsite social distancing and funding challenges – has only increased and intensified the rate of change. BAC must be poised to adjust to these changes and must partner closely with signatory contractors to do so.

BAC must also address the growing effects of climate change, and position our industry as a valued resource in meeting environmental challenges. BAC, together with our industry partners, must be proactive in shaping climate-safe policy, encouraging greener production of our materials, and promoting masonry’s contributions to a cleaner and sustainable built environment that creates work opportunities for our members.

BAC has a long and proud tradition of inclusivity amongst all craftworkers, born out of the recognition that where unions are most firmly organized is where the rights of working people are most respected. It is this dedication of BAC members to their craft, to their communities, and to each other that has characterized our membership over the years. And it is in that spirit that we must reaffirm our commitment to racial justice, by strengthening our ties to all communities to ensure that the benefits of collective bargaining, health and retirement programs, and our unparalleled training programs are available to all who seek to make a career within the masonry industry.

## **Building a Government That Works for Us**

It is no exaggeration to say that the middle-class is facing its greatest threat since the Great Depression. Even before the pandemic, decades of economic policies that favored Wall Street and corporate CEOs had created an economy that was dangerously out of balance. The pandemic has magnified two undeniable truths: first, that working people, especially in critical industries like ours, are the true builders of the North American economy; and second, that too many working families have little financial security and no adequate safety net.

Workers deserve, and must reclaim, our fair share of control over the rules of our economy. We must reassert the right to organize and bargain for fair wages and benefits and ensure that workers have a voice on critically important jobsite issues such as safety. We must demand more investment in infrastructure and good jobs. We must protect access to healthcare and the pensions that our members have worked a lifetime to earn. We must restore balance to a tax code that has favored investments and inheritance over wages earned from hard work. We must defeat those who seek to distract us from these goals – those who sow hatred and division to goad the many into voting for the interests of the very few.

We must elect the candidates who will fight for us in municipalities, states and provinces, on Capitol Hill and Parliament Hill. But this year's race for President of the United States may be the most consequential election of our lifetimes.

On the one hand, we have an incumbent who has worked with unprecedented zeal to undercut the rights of workers; who supports "right to work;" who tried to dismantle our apprenticeship system; who opposes Davis-Bacon; whose labor board has ruthlessly targeted union organizing, construction industry pre-hire agreements, project labor agreements and labor speech; and who will surely, if he gets a second term, dismantle Medicare and Social Security just to lower taxes for his super-wealthy cronies. He cares so little for others that he brazenly lied to us about the seriousness of the COVID pandemic for months, actively impeded critical life-saving prevention and mitigation measures, and thus contributed greatly to the loss of over 200,000 American lives and the financial ruin of millions of others. Donald Trump is, quite simply, not fit to serve.

On the other hand, we have a man of great courage, compassion and integrity; a man who in the Senate and as Vice President, has always fought for the workers who are the backbone of this country; and a man whose plan for rebuilding the economy closely aligns with ours – BAC's endorsed candidate, Vice President Joe Biden.

As President, Joe Biden will continue to fight hard for our members, and for all Americans. His plan to build a stronger, more inclusive economy starts with placing checks on corporate power and empowering more workers to form and join unions. By investing at least \$1.3 trillion in our nation's infrastructure over the next 10 years, he will create and sustain millions of good jobs, revitalize communities, expand transportation manufacturing, and offer millions of Americans access to opportunities. And through his four-point plan for essential workers, he will ensure that those working on the front lines of the COVID-19 crisis will finally receive not only the respect they deserve – but the hazard pay, safety equipment, and testing that they've earned. He will fight to preserve our pensions and health care, and with a modest payroll tax on earnings

above \$400,000 a year, he will not only preserve, but expand, the Social Security and Medicare benefits that workers in this country have earned and so clearly need.

Joe Biden has long stood with working people, and now it is time for working people to stand with Joe Biden. It's a choice so clear that it's really not a choice at all. BAC must do all that we can in these next weeks to ensure that Joe Biden is elected the next President of the United States.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that this BAC 2020 Convention strongly encourages BAC Local Unions and ADCs continue to promote the highest levels of safety and health for BAC craftworkers and improved cleanliness and professionalism of jobsites, both during and after the global pandemic;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this Convention recognizes how critical communication is to BAC's ability to build the community of unionism, and accordingly urges our affiliates to use all digital tools available to maintain and expand our communication with members, contractors, government, and non-union tradespeople during the pandemic and after its conclusion;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this Convention urges all affiliates to prepare for new and different delivery models and changes to the very nature of the worksite; to coordinate with signatory contractors and industry partners in pursuit of resulting work opportunities; and, with IMTEF, to provide the necessary training and support for contractors and craftworkers to assert jurisdiction over new technologies and systems;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this Convention reaffirms that climate change is a significant issue of our time, that we must support sustainability, and that we must proactively address climate change and the threat it poses to the health and well-being of BAC members and to the long-term sustainability of the global economy;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this BAC 2020 Convention condemns the evil of racism, and calls on all BAC affiliates, and all BAC members, to strengthen our efforts to root out and defeat racism in all its ugly forms;

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this BAC 2020 Convention calls on the International Union, and all US BAC affiliates, to work to ensure that Joe Biden is elected as the 46<sup>th</sup> President of the United States of America.

SUBMITTED BY:

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