

***BUILDING A STATEWIDE MOVEMENT WITH AROS
FOR THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS ALL OUR STUDENTS DESERVE***

WHEREAS, the purpose of public education is to help students at all educational levels develop the skills and knowledge they need to be prepared for successful and fulfilling lives; and

WHEREAS, educators every day make a difference in the lives of students, working to foster the joy of learning and to create a welcoming and safe environment that engages students in powerful learning, safe from bigotry and hate; and

WHEREAS, this election period has resulted in uncertainty and many students—particularly immigrants, Muslims, girls, Latinos and other youth of color, LGBTQ students and those with disabilities—are concerned about the effect some of President Trump’s proposed policies will have on their safety and their families and homes; and

WHEREAS, America’s public schools, which educate 90 percent of our children, face an unprecedented challenge to their very existence from a president and secretary of education, Betsy DeVos, who seek to destabilize and defund public schools and end public education as the key opportunity agent for the nation’s children; and

WHEREAS, the majority party in the Pennsylvania Legislature for the past several years has refused to fund all Pennsylvania schools adequately, leaving the state with the largest gap between what wealthy and poor school districts spend; and

WHEREAS, Pennsylvania’s legislature has passed or attempted to pass legislation expanding Educational Improvement Tax Credit (EITC) and Opportunity Scholarship Tax Credit (OSTC) programs and allowing unfettered expansion of charter schools, without adequate accountability or transparency; and

WHEREAS, the AFT Pennsylvania is committed to protecting our students, our schools and institutions of higher education, and our communities; and

WHEREAS, the Alliance to Reclaim Our Schools was formed out of local coalitions, with the AFT playing an important leadership role, and has now grown into a national community-union alliance for educational justice; and

WHEREAS, AROS is leading a national campaign for the public schools all our students deserve, and has already organized several days of nationally coordinated actions with tens of thousands of people participating in more than 300 cities and several thousand schools and campuses, highlighting full funding and support for community schools, calling for more

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Co-Chairs: Rosemary Boland and Hillary Linardopoulos

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teaching and less testing, demanding that all schools that are publicly funded be held to the same high standards, and calling for fair funding for public colleges and universities; and

WHEREAS, member engagement and working with community partners are essential to safeguarding our values and aspirations:

RESOLVED, that AFT Pennsylvania reaffirms its commitment to protect our students, our public schools and institutions of higher education, and our communities; and

RESOLVED, that AFTPA recommits itself to reclaiming the promise of public education at all levels, and to making every public school and college campus a place where all students are engaged in powerful learning and feel safe, welcome and valued; and

RESOLVED, that to advance this purpose, AFTPA and its locals support Alliance to Reclaim Our Schools national days of action, to protect our schools and institutions of higher education, communities and students; and

RESOLVED, that AFTPA will work to mobilize affiliates throughout the state by joining with AROS to make future days of action and other mobilization activities an opportunity to build a powerful movement to support and advocate for our public schools and to ensure that all students have the opportunity to pursue their dreams free from fear.