

PSC Delegate Assembly Resolution

April 25, 2013

Updated Resolution to Re-Enfranchise Legal Non-citizen Residents in Local Elections
(Originally Adopted October 30, 2003)

Whereas over 1.3 million non-citizen residents of voting age live in New York City (one in five); and

Whereas non-citizen residents contribute to the economic vitality of New York City, by paying taxes, purchasing goods and services, and working in every sector of the economy; and

Whereas non-citizen residents contribute to the social and cultural vitality of NYC by sending their children to schools, developing and participating in the life of their communities through churches, synagogues, mosques, and community groups; and

Whereas non-citizen residents serve in the military and have died defending this country; and

Whereas non-citizen residents are excluded from participating in the selection of representatives who make laws and public policy affecting their lives on a daily basis; and

Whereas excluding such a significant portion of the city's population undermines the health, representativeness and legitimacy of our laws and public policies; and

Whereas the average time it takes to attain citizenship is ten years; and

Whereas non-citizens voted in local, state and national elections in the U.S. from the Founding until the 1920s and in forty states and federal territories, until it fell casualty to nativism and elite reaction to the potential power of growing working class movements and electoral strength (which also brought literacy tests, poll taxes, restrictive residency and voter registration requirements); and

Whereas the Civil Rights Movement ushered in noncitizen voting in NYC school board elections from 1969 to 2003 (when school boards were eliminated); and

Whereas nearly a dozen other jurisdictions in the U.S. have more recently extended voting rights to non-citizens or are currently considering such legislation, including in Chicago, Maryland, San Francisco, and Portland, Maine; and

Whereas more than forty countries in the world currently permit resident aliens to vote; and

Whereas non-citizen voting is a proven practical pathway to political incorporation, citizenship and participation as reflected in America's previous practice with it and as evidenced in contemporary jurisdictions in the U.S. and globally that allow noncitizens to vote—all of which shows voting gives newcomers greater incentives to develop ties to local communities and facilitates civic education and political participation; and

Whereas non-citizens, such as permanent legal residents, comprise a significant proportion of the membership of the PSC and the student body of CUNY who understand the value of the franchise and would be empowered to participate in the democratic process; therefore be it

Resolved, that PSC-CUNY urge its members to support pending legislation by the City Council (Intro 410) which would allow noncitizens to vote in New York City elections, including for Mayor, Comptroller, City Council, Borough Presidents, District Attorneys, and Judges.