

Support for the Jazz Musicians of Local 802: The Soul of the City

Submitted by: Professional Staff Congress

Whereas, the jazz musicians of Local 802 of the American Federation of Musicians are mounting a campaign to gain pension benefits after the State Legislature passed a tax break in 2006 on ticket sales in which the revenue would have been used to pay for pension and health benefits; and

Whereas, the previous union leadership and club owners collectively lobbied the State for a reduction in the sales tax and maintained that an informal agreement for pensions had been reached; and

Whereas, six years later, in 2012, none of the clubs has signed collective bargaining agreements with Local 802; and

Whereas, collective bargaining agreements are legally required before the clubs can begin paying into Local 802's pension system; and

Whereas, the newly elected union leaders have prioritized pensions for jazz artists and have targeted five of the biggest jazz clubs in New York City to reach an agreement – The Blue Note, The Village Vanguard, Birdland, The Jazz Standard, and The Iridium; and

Whereas, Local 802 proposed that club owners make contributions for every musician they hire, whether the musician is vested in the pension plan or not; and

Whereas, jazz and jazz musicians are essential to cultural life and political expression in New York City—“the soul of the city,” as some have called them; and

Whereas, NYSUT has a historic tradition of commitment to the principles of collective bargaining; therefore be it

RESOLVED, that NYSUT express its solidarity with the American Federation of Musicians, Local 802, in their campaign to achieve collective bargaining agreements with club owners; and be it further

RESOLVED, that NYSUT urge its members to participate in all support actions for Local 802's campaign; and be it further

RESOLVED, that this resolution be circulated to the AFT for similar action.