

Resolution on Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands

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Whereas, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands have suffered one of its worst catastrophes in the last one hundred years with massive superstorms amounting to more than \$100 billion in damages, according to Moody’s Analytics; and

Whereas, the islands are suffering from unprecedented devastation with a death toll of more than four hundred, more than 1.5 million people without power, people living in houses with soaked interiors, and many with no access to clean drinking water, and

Whereas, The response of the Trump administration has been both slow and wholly inadequate in addressing the urgent needs of 3.6 million US citizens of Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands, and

Whereas, President Trump has added insult to injury with his racist remarks on Puerto Rico, and

Whereas, the people of Puerto Rico are not responsible for incurring the massive public debt imposed on their island, and

Whereas, The Jones Act, notwithstanding the AFL-CIO’s support of the act¹, is an imposition on the people of Puerto Rico forcing restrictions on commerce and maritime transportation making it especially difficult for countries to provide aid to Puerto Rico, and

Therefore, be it resolved: that Puerto Rico receive a waiver or permanent exemption from the Jones Act, so that foreign countries can more easily provide vitally needed aid, and

¹ See <https://aflcio.org/about/leadership/statements/support-jones-act>

22 **Be it further resolved that:** the PSC affirms and supports the following positions of AFL-CIO's
23 Resolution 56: The Humanitarian Crisis in Puerto Rico and the Need for Immediate Federal
24 Action²:

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26 THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the AFL-CIO Convention commends the heroic
27 and courageous efforts of the AFL-CIO union members and volunteers who participated
28 in the multi-union emergency relief mission; and

29 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the AFL-CIO expresses solidarity with our sisters
30 and brothers in the Puerto Rico Federation of Labor and the Virgin Islands Central Labor
31 Council in their efforts to rebuild and protect all their residents following the disaster; and

32 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the AFL-CIO will support and lift up the workers
33 and their unions who are providing relief, care and supplies in Puerto Rico, the U.S.
34 Virgin Islands and the mainland United States; rebuilding the islands; working to reopen
35 schools and nurture children and senior citizens; and returning a sense of normal life to
36 the people of Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands; and

37 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the AFL-CIO will support and promote Operation Agua,
38 launched by the American Federation of Teachers, the American Federation of State,
39 County and Municipal Employees, Operation Blessing and the Hispanic Federation, and
40 other efforts to provide a reliable source of clean, safe drinking water to families across
41 Puerto Rico; and

42 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the AFL-CIO calls upon Congress to provide
43 assistance to Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands on the scale of the damage done by

² See <https://aflcio.org/resolutions/resolution-56-humanitarian-crisis-puerto-rico-and-need-immediate-federal-action>

44 the storms, to ensure full funding for FEMA in order to substantially escalate its relief
45 efforts on the ground, to end the cap on federal funding for Medicaid in Puerto Rico and
46 the U.S. Virgin Islands, and to set federal matching rates for Medicaid in the same
47 fashion as they are set in the mainland United States; and

48 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the AFL-CIO calls upon the Trump administration
49 to deploy the Department of Defense and other federal agencies to provide the resources
50 necessary to restore drinking water, electric power and telecommunications to the people
51 of Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands; and

52 BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that the AFL-CIO calls upon Congress to enact a long-
53 term moratorium on payments of all Puerto Rican public debt, followed by debt
54 forgiveness, to prioritize the lives of Puerto Ricans over debt payments to Wall Street and
55 free up millions of dollars for both short- and long-term recovery efforts.

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