

**October 30, 2003**

**Resolution to Enfranchise Non-citizen Residents in Local Elections**

**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 twenty-two 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 San Francisco, and Washington, D.C.; and

**Whereas** twenty-two 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 a Resolution or legislation by the City Council which would allow noncitizens to vote in New York City elections, including for Mayor, Comptroller, City Council, Borough Presidents, District Attorneys, and Judges.