

**Coalition of Labor Union Women
16th Biennial Convention
Orlando, Florida
September 7 - 10, 2011**

WE NEED NEW PRIORITIES! END THE WARS, INVEST IN AMERICA

The economic crisis we are experiencing is the worst in eighty years and has had a disproportionate impact on working and poor people.

More than fifty million Americans lack health care; home values have plummeted forcing millions into foreclosure and bankruptcy; 43.6 million Americans now live in poverty; thousands of teachers, fire fighters, police and other dedicated public workers are losing their jobs; real unemployment and underemployment together are in excess of 15% and in some communities of color, over 50%; educational resources are being slashed; social services and public programs are being cut or eliminated; parks and libraries are being closed; public infrastructure continues to deteriorate yet goes unrepaired.

The burden of these conditions is borne overwhelmingly by working and middle class Americans whose standard of living has declined as a wealthy elite has enriched itself at the expense of the majority, producing a nation that is growing far more unequal.

The crisis in the U.S. can be directly traced to a tax system that benefits the wealthy and large corporations; the deregulation of our financial system; trillions of dollars in bailouts to Wall Street and giant corporations; runaway military spending; and the cost of wars of choice, and extended occupations, which have been estimated to reach as much as \$5 trillion dollars by Joseph Stiglitz, Nobel prize winning economist, when costs of replacing equipment, paying interest on war debts, medical care for returning veterans and other residual costs are included.

The people of the United States this year alone will pay approximately \$172 billion dollars to wage war in Iraq and Afghanistan and hundreds of millions more for military actions in Libya; and will devote over one trillion dollars to its national security budget (a 60% increase to the Pentagon since 2001), including a \$180 billion ten-year commitment to "modernize" our nuclear arsenal, which is useless against terrorists.¹

More than 6,000 members of the US armed forces have died in these wars, hundreds of thousands more have been wounded, suffer from PTSD, Traumatic Brain Injury, mental health problems or addiction; military suicide rates have skyrocketed; and hundreds of thousands of civilians in Iraq and Afghanistan have been killed, maimed, and wounded, while millions more have been turned into refugees. Iraqi and Afghani women have been subject to honor killings, rape and kidnapping, threatening their ability to work or attend school.²

Osama bin Laden is dead and according to the CIA there are fewer than one hundred al Qaeda remaining in Afghanistan.

The severity of the economic crisis has created budget shortfalls at all levels of government that call for a re-examination of the allocation of resources and national spending priorities.

The Iraqi government is attempting to wipe out trade unions, which are badly needed as a force for women's rights, as an antidote to authoritarianism and sectarianism, and which are vital to the rise of a peaceful and just Iraqi state; and Iraqi union organizers need a global, union-

backed call for the Iraqi government to protect workers' rights.³

CLUW members have historically identified with working women and men around the world, and have supported their right to organize to protect their jobs and communities, and achieve better futures for their children and their nations.

CLUW is an affiliate of US Labor Against the War (USLAW— www.uslaboragainstar.org), which organizes within the US labor movement and in coalition with anti-war groups to end the wars and occupations, provide solidarity, political and material support to the Iraqi trade union movement, and is now engaged in a “Move the Money” campaign, in conjunction with the New Priorities Network, to redirect our nation’s spending priorities from the military to domestic needs.

New Priorities (www.newprioritiesnetwork.org) is a national network of groups that seek to fund urgently needed jobs and restore vital public services by ending the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan and substantially cutting the core Pentagon budget. Cross-constituency coalitions around the country have already formed to “move the money” from military to local programs and to help our struggling states, cities and communities. Many are led by the people hardest hit in communities of color and low-income communities. The network will help new groups and coalitions become part of this effort.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED:

The Coalition of Labor Union Women and its Chapters will continue our affiliation with USLAW, participate in its efforts to end the wars and occupations, and in its solidarity work, especially in Iraq, where unions seek adoption of a new labor law, the legitimization of unions in the public and private sectors, and protection of activists from arrest, harassment and exile.

CLUW will participate with US Labor Against the War in its “Move the Money” campaign, in conjunction with the New Priorities Network, based on the following principles: 1) End the wars and occupations; 2) Redirect the inflated war and military budgets to create jobs and meet other human needs; 3) Provide greater benefits for and care of returning veterans and their families; protect military sector workers and their communities; and 4) Raise taxes on the rich and corporations.

To advance this campaign, CLUW and its Chapters will engage in activities such as: Introduce the New Priorities platform at their local union; move union resolutions, locally and nationally; network with Iraq Vets Against the War, Military Families Speak Out, and Veterans for Peace; help build local coalitions with peace, economic and racial justice groups, and other unions and progressive organizations to provide public education, advance City Council Resolutions directed to Congress through town hall meetings and hearings, stage demonstrations and develop effective messaging about the budget priorities we want.

CLUW shall communicate this resolution to its members and actively seek to inform and educate them about these issues to more effectively mobilize them to hold elected officials accountable to fulfill the intent of this resolution — to create a more just, equitable and sustainable economy in a world in which moral leadership is more important than military might and security is defined by the welfare of our people, not just the size of our military budget.

¹ Costofwar.com; Center for Defense Information, FY 2011

² Costofwar.com; New York Times 6/23/11

³ USLAW (www.uslaboragainstar.org)