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## BOARD RESOLUTION – JUNE 2020

### **Runaway Inequality**

Whereas, the COVID-19 health crisis has exposed inequalities that have existed all along in communities in New York State and our nation, including deep divisions of poverty and institutional racism that have long impacted the poor and communities of color; and

Whereas, the burdens of COVID-19 are falling on our most vulnerable populations with rates of illness and death disproportionately falling upon low-income communities of color and immigrant communities; and

Whereas, we are outraged by the injustices that are perpetrated in our country every day against people of color; and of the reality that our nation is, in many ways, still a work in progress; and

Whereas, these inequalities are evident in the ongoing underfunding and inequitable funding of public schools, universities and hospitals across every community in New York, inequalities exacerbated by austerity budgeting and undemocratic tax and spending caps; and

Whereas, NYSUT members have risen to tackle these inequalities in their communities and workplaces both before and during this crisis by providing meals for the food insecure, advocating for access to education and healthcare to obtain equity for all students and patients, lovingly caring for and supporting the sick and dying, and advocating for a voice in the workplace and in government for our members and those they serve; and

Whereas, extreme wealth and income inequality are America's "preexisting condition" and unless we do something about it --- with public policies aimed at reversing runaway inequality and wage gaps based on gender and race — the pandemic will continue to exacerbate our existing inequalities of income, wealth and opportunity; and

Whereas, researchers project that poverty rates in the United States could soon reach their highest levels in half a century, and, meanwhile, the wealth of America's billionaires increased by nearly 10% over just three weeks as the COVID-19 crisis took hold; and

Whereas, this is not a question of resources; it is a question of will, as New York has enough ultra-millionaires and billionaires to increase the tax revenue needed to Fund Our Future; and

Whereas, the extraordinary times in which we are living are shining a spotlight on so many issues of equity, and the lack of it: on the ways that rights and opportunity are unevenly distributed across our society, and the worth of our labor and our lives unequally valued; and

Whereas, NYSUT and its members stand as leaders for not only the state and their local communities, but for the entire nation as we stand for good jobs; affordable, accessible and high-quality health care; a strong and vibrant democracy; great public schools; and justice as we fight back against discrimination, hatred and bigotry; and

Whereas, as a union we understand our responsibility, our power and our privilege at this moment to do everything we can to set us on a new course in this country, knowing that now is the time to stand together for justice in New York and across the nation, therefore, let it be

Resolved, that NYSUT will advocate for maintaining strong public universities and colleges with full and adequate funding, working to keep top-notch faculty and professional staff that lead to better jobs and higher incomes as we rebuild NY after COVID-19, knowing that New York cannot overcome the deepening recession with a hollowed-out public university system, and be it further

Resolved that NYSUT will continue to advocate for full funding of public schools to ensure students have the caring, qualified and committed educators they need to succeed and are granted their constitutional right to a sound basic education, and be it further

Resolved, that NYSUT urge its members and local and national affiliates to join them in calling on representatives in local, state and federal government to take action to support New York's public schools, universities and healthcare systems

to avert further crisis and arrest the runaway injustices that are faced by communities of color and the poor; and be it further

Resolved, that NYSUT call on those representatives to take immediate action including supporting and passing state and federal revenue measures that will fully fund public schools, universities and public hospitals; and be it further

Resolved, that NYSUT serve as a model for change by educating its workforce, local leaders and membership on issues of inequality, cultural competency and institutional racism by offering a wide-scale Runaway Inequality and Implicit Bias training program for all NYSUT staff, local union leadership and the larger membership; and be it further

Resolved, that NYSUT will not be silent on issues of poverty, racism, discrimination, and injustice that have plagued our society; together we fight for justice in New York and our nation.