

## **Resolution #80A-25-04**

### **Protecting Our Public Services**

CWA members have organized and mobilized for many years to build political power to help secure a government that genuinely serves and represents the interests of working people. We have worked to advance stronger rights to organize and bargain, for higher wages, better health care and a secure retirement, and a better future for the working class.

CWA members in education, health care, public safety, and other core public functions have organized their workplaces to both build better lives for themselves and their co-workers, and also to ensure that working people across their states receive the high quality services that they deserve.

Low-road contractors and anti-union politicians have worked for many years to privatize vital services. Privatization of core public services presents many problems for both public employees and all working people who depend on those services.

Corporate executives often present unrealistic projections of costs, resulting in little or no savings, and in many cases actually higher costs to operate those services. Moreover, even those often-unrealistic projections usually only project savings as a result of paying workers less, providing fewer benefits, and cutting jobs. Privatizing public services is a way of busting unions and executives profiting on the backs of the working class.

Service quality also routinely declines when services are privatized. Corporate executives don't share the same commitment to the common good and providing services to all that public service workers do, and tend simply to prioritize the corporate bottom line. There is a long record of state and local governments privatizing public services, only to see outcomes like poor performance, longer wait times for residents, higher user fees, and failure to complete tasks. Furthermore, because private companies are often exempt from government transparency rules, it is all the more difficult for the public to hold companies accountable for these sorts of failures with public dollars.

Pressure to privatize public services will very likely increase in the near future. The recently passed federal budget bill will blow a hole in the budgets of state governments, likely leaving many governments desperate to save money, no matter the impacts on workers or public services. The Trump White House and the Department of Labor have also issued policies this year that would weaken merit staffing protections for many public services funded in part by money from the federal government. Increasingly, tech companies are pushing for the use of artificial intelligence to replace customer service, public reporting and other functions, so they will likely push to secure government contracts for themselves as these technologies advance.

Sound public policy would ensure genuine transparency and accountability in the privatization process to protect quality jobs and services. Governments should categorically not enter into

privatization agreements without securing meaningful protections for good jobs, service quality and significant financial savings that do not result simply from laying off and underpaying workers. Nor should they enter into contracts with companies with records of abusing workers and violating the law, or that do not respect the rights of workers to organize. Governments should hold companies to high standards of transparency and accountability.

**RESOLVED:** CWA will organize and mobilize to protect high-quality public services and good union jobs. We will fight to defeat anti-worker, pro-corporate policies and we will proactively seek to put in place protections for public services.

**RESOLVED:** CWA will educate, advocate and build coalitions to help a wide audience of policymakers and working people understand the valuable role of public services.