

Resolution to Call for US-Cuba Collaboration to Save Lives in the Fight against Covid-19

Whereas, the US has the highest number of Covid-19 cases and deaths in the world – over 5 million confirmed cases, one fourth of the world’s cases, and over 170,000 deaths; and

Whereas, US deaths from Covid-19 fall disproportionately on Black, Latino and Indigenous communities; and

Whereas, in Washington State, deaths from Covid-19 also fall disproportionately on communities of color with Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander people and Hispanic people registering eight times higher cases and hospitalization rates than whites; Blacks and Native Americans and Alaska Natives have three times the number of cases and hospitalizations than whites; and

Whereas, by nature a pandemic is global and Covid-19 cases has topped 20 million, doubling the number of confirmed cases in just six weeks and continues to grow; and

Whereas, now is the time to call for international cooperation and solidarity in the face of this pandemic to save lives; and

Whereas, Cuba has a record of saving 80% of their patients in critical and serious condition and where worldwide, some 80% of Covid-19 patients in critical condition are dying; and

Whereas, Cuba has 0.8 deaths/100,000 and the US has 42 deaths/100,000 people, and

Whereas, Cuba has a long history of providing international medical aid and healthcare to the peoples of the world, especially in developing countries, under the banner of healthcare is a human right; and

Whereas, Cuba’s Henry Reeve International Medical Brigade was decisive in the fight against the Ebola epidemic in West Africa and has stepped forward in many epidemics around the world, including dengue fever, HIV/AIDS, swine flu and hepatitis; and

Whereas, since the outbreak of Covid-19, Cuba has sent 37 medical brigades equipped with Cuban pharmaceuticals to 30 countries with requests of similar assistance from more countries; and

Whereas, Cuba offers treatment regimens for patients and prevention protocols for health workers including its drug Interferon Alpha 2B Recombinant, now in standard use in China and Cuba and more than 42 countries have expressed an interest in acquiring this pharmaceutical to include in its treatment in some of the worst cases of Covid-19; and

Whereas, Interferon Alpha 2B Recombinant is not available in the US because of the 60-year-old US blockade against Cuba; and

Whereas, the US blockade has severely restricted collaboration on scientific and medical research that interferes with the potential of saving lives in the face of this pandemic; and

Whereas, there has been precedence of medical collaboration between Cuba's Center for Molecular Immunology and Buffalo's Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center in developing CIMAvax, the Cuban lung cancer vaccine, and the collaboration between Cuba and the University of Illinois on infant mortality in Chicago, and

Whereas, the Washington State Labor Council passed a resolution in its 2017 state convention supporting lifting the US blockade against Cuba;

Whereas, the MLK Labor Delegates passed this resolution on August 19, 2020 and is forwarding it for consideration at the September 2020 annual Constitution Convention;

Be it Resolved that Washington State Labor Council calls on the Congress of the United States and the President to lift restrictions on access to Cuban medical expertise, including clinical trials of Interferon Alpha 2B Recombinant, in order to more effectively combat the Covid-19 pandemic and to save lives. Furthermore, we call on our federal government to cease its attempts to stop other countries from accepting Cuban medical brigades and assistance and to stop ongoing US measures that prevent Cuba from accessing and importing medical equipment and medicines to confront Covid-19.

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