

**Stand with the Vermont AFL-CIO and support the right of organised labor to fight against fascism and dictatorship!**

**Sign the open letter to Richard Trumka demanding he drop his “misconduct” investigation.**

This is a call out to all anti-fascists to stand with the Vermont AFL-CIO which is under attack by national AFL-CIO President Richard Trumka. We call on them to endorse an open letter demanding that Trumka drop the politically motivated “misconduct” investigation into the Vermont AFL-CIO.

The investigation is retaliation for a vote it took authorising a General Strike in the event the then President Trump sort to overturn the results of the 2020 election illegally. At the heart of this dispute is the right of organized labor to defend the democratic right of the working class to mobilize against the threat of fascism and dictatorship.

On November 21st, 2020, amidst the deepening political crisis in the aftermath of the November 3rd election, the following resolution was passed by the rank and file of the Vermont AFL-CIO:

“THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Vermont AFL-CIO is empowered by the delegates at the 2020 state convention to call for a general strike of all working people in our state in the event that Donald Trump refuses to concede the office of President of the United States. “

Months before the January 6th attack on Congress by Trump’s “Stop the Steal” mob, it was clear that he had no intention of accepting his defeat by Democrat Joe Biden. Trump was in the early stages of crafting “The Big Lie” narrative, was actively seeking to manipulate court proceedings, and have false delegates seated to the Electoral College, and was being encouraged by Michael Flynn and other neo-fascist advisors to use the military to retain power.

This principled stance of the Vermont Labor Council under the leadership of President David Van Deusen and the “Vermont AFL-CIO United” leadership team which has been in office since 2019 has attracted the ire of national leadership of the AFL-CIO and its President Richard Trumka.

Even before the motion was passed Trumka sent an email to Vermont AFL-CIO trying to stop the vote on the General Strike which read included the following:

“Per Rule 19 of the Rules Governing AFL-CIO State Central Bodies, ‘No state

central body shall have the authority or power to order any local union or other organization to strike or take a strike vote.’ Therefore, the Vermont State Labor Council may not hold a vote to authorize any strike and thus any debate is not germane at your convention”

Trumka’s attempt to stop a general strike in Vermont was a part of his broader effort to ensure that the working class was not mobilised in the face of the coup threat by Trump. Bloomberg reported that even before the election in late October 2020, Trumka cancelled a planned meeting of unions to discuss what their response would be if Trump refused to concede an election loss

As reported by Steve Early in Counterpunch, “In addition, Trumka claims that “internal divisions within the State Labor Council” pose a threat to the “strong unity” needed during “a critical moment of opportunity” for the labor movement. In a March 5 letter, he informed Van Deusen that the AFL-CIO is investigating the council’s “recent conduct” and warned of “further action,” which local activists fear may include removing their elected leaders from office and putting their council under trusteeship.”

Trumka and the national AFL-CIO leadership are operating on behalf of Democratic Party and its backers on Wall Street in this struggle. Even this modest motion on a possible General Strike is seen as deeply threatening to their class interests. Clearly, Trumka and the Democrats are more threatened by an attempt to independently organise the working class to defend their rights than they are by the threat of dictatorship. Workers must be kept on the sideline of the class struggle and their involvement must be channelled into simply voting for the Democratic Party.

Trumka cannot be allowed to succeed in using this retaliatory “misconduct” investigation into Van Deusen and the Vermont AFL-CIO leadership. If this is allowed to succeed it will weaken future efforts to organise labor against any ongoing fascist threat. Trump may have failed to overturn the last election, but the threat continues. Trump and his backers are still firmly in control of the Republican Party and none of the key leaders of the January 6th attack on Congress have faced legal sanction. As the capitalist economic crisis deepens Trump and the sections of the ruling class which he represents are waiting in the wings for their next opportunity.

Fascism poses an existential threat not just to the working class’s democratic rights and rights. Far right ideology aims to divide the working class and therefore it seeks to whip up hatred and violence against Black, Brown, Asian LBGQT communities. Therefore any attempt to attack labors rights to fight this

threat is also an attack on those groups who have been hit with racist attacks and murders

Fascists have no respect for the bourgeois-democratic order which they seek to smash. The actions of AFL-CIO President Trumka and the Democratic Party in the past six months show that they cannot be relied on to take a strong stand against the fascist threat. Only the mobilised working class can fight the threat of fascism! While the trade union movement is only a part of this struggle, the 14 million trade union members in the US cannot be allowed to be sidelined. Workers and labor were mobilised in their tens of thousands in 1939 in New York to protest the American fascist meeting at Madison Square Garden. This historical tradition must be revived and built on. A united front of the working class and its social allies must be built to fight against those who would seek to impose an authoritarian dictatorship in the US, and against those who would wish to disarm the working class politically in this struggle through removing its most potent weapon – the right to strike.

We call on all union members, locals, labor councils, State Federations and National Unions I in the United States to oppose Trumka’s “investigation” and sign onto the demands below.

We call on workers internationally to stand with the Vermont Labor Council and sign onto the demands below in recognition that the fight to defend workers’ rights and fight the threat of fascism in an international one.

## **OPEN LETTER TO AFL-CIO PRESIDENT RICHARD TRUMKA**

To Richard Trumka, AFL-CIO President

We defend the right of the Vermont AFL-CIO to have passed a motion authorising a General Strike if the 2020 election results had been overturned in a coup. This motion voted on by the rank-and-file delegates at the Vermont AFL-CIO 2020 Convention was in the proud tradition of labor fighting together against the threat of fascism and dictatorship. We defend the right of workers and the organised labor movement to strike together to defend their democratic rights.

We therefore stand in solidarity with the Vermont AFL-CIO and demand that you immediately drop the vindictive and retaliatory “misconduct” investigation into the Vermont AFL-CIO

Signed