

**FREE ALL IMMIGRATION DETAINEES TO STOP THE MASS OUTBREAK
AND SPREAD OF COVID-19 IN DETENTION CENTERS**

- WHEREAS:** Detention centers and jails are sites at high risk of mass spreading of disease and pandemics. They have high concentrations of population in crowded spaces. The tragic and preventable deaths in I.C.E. detention centers at the United States' southern border were the result of close quarters allowing disease to spread rapidly, the lack of medical care, food and water, squalid conditions with no soap, people being forced to drink out of toilets, etc. These conditions predate the COVID-19 outbreak and guarantee the exponential spread of the disease among a population already in poor health and extremely vulnerable. Detainees are not provided with basic soap and water let alone masks or hand sanitizer. To continue to hold immigrants in such dangerous conditions during a global pandemic is tantamount to genocide; and
- WHEREAS:** Federal prisons and many state prisons have banned visitations, including most attorney visits, citing the obvious potential for the spread of the virus among prisoners and staff in close quarters. Rather than denying detainees their rights to visitation and proper legal representation, they must be released from these dangerous and deadly conditions where they are certain to be exposed to the virus through guards and other prison staff, through food coming in, through new inmates, and through those who have already been exposed as of this moment; and
- WHEREAS:** Donald Trump's denial of science, spreading of lies and xenophobia, active blocking of mass testing, and advocacy of unproven treatments has made the U.S. the most ill-prepared of any industrialized country to deal with this crisis, and we certainly have many more positive cases than we know. This makes the release of detainees a matter of life and death of the greatest urgency; and
- WHEREAS:** I.C.E. contracts with Michigan jails to hold immigration detainees. Most such contracts allow for immediate termination in the case of an emergency; and
- WHEREAS:** Every immigration detainee being held in custody on the basis of civil, not criminal, charges is being endangered but poses no threat to our communities; and **NOW THEREFORE BE IT**
- RESOLVED:** AFT Michigan calls on Governor Whitmer and Michigan's Congressional delegation to do everything within their power to address the detention crisis in the state of Michigan and further to demand that President Trump and the federal government immediately release all civil immigration detainees in I.C.E. custody in Michigan; and **BE IT FURTHER**
- RESOLVED:** AFT Michigan calls on Michigan sheriffs to terminate their contracts to hold ICE detainees in county jails as an efficient way to significantly reduce jail populations without imperiling public safety.

Submitted by Benjamin Royal, Detroit Federation of Teachers Local 231
Revised and recommended for adoption by the Human Rights Committee
Approved by the 76th AFT Michigan Convention (May 16, 2020)