

LWC CONSTITUTION

ARTICLE 1: Name

This organization shall be known as the Longshore Workers' Coalition (LWC).

ARTICLE 2: Objective

The objective of this organization is to build a stronger and more democratic International Longshoremen's Association (ILA). We believe in reform from within by helping rank and file ILA members fight for their rights on the job and in our union.

We advocate quality working conditions and safety in Longshore and related industries. We stand for social and economic justice in our union, on our jobs, and in our communities.

We do not advocate secession from the ILA, or "dual unionism" in any form whatsoever.

ARTICLE 3: Organization

International organization: Individual ILA members and local chapters of ILA members shall make up the LWC movement. The highest policy-making body of the LWC movement shall be the quarterly membership meetings. The movement shall elect a Steering Committee (SC) as the body to govern it between LWC membership meetings.

Local chapters: The LWC movement builds upon local chapters in cities or in individual union jurisdictions. Each chapter shall be run by locally elected steering committees.

Chapter responsibilities: Local chapters shall be active in local issues, grievances, and contracts. Local chapters shall be responsible for their own finances. Local chapters shall follow LWC principles and the program set by the members at the autumn quarterly meeting.

ARTICLE 4: Membership

Any member or retiree of the ILA without regard to race, creed, color, national origin, sex, religion or political belief is eligible for membership in the LWC. However, the organization reserves the right to exclude those who are opposed to the LWC or its principles.

Membership Rights: All LWC members in good standing (paid dues) may attend membership meetings. All LWC members in attendance have full voting and discussion rights on all matters before the membership meetings. Individual members have the right to attend and speak at SC meetings, subject to SC discretion.

Membership Responsibilities: All LWC members must pay dues to the organization. The autumn membership meeting shall determine membership dues.

Participation builds the LWC movement. The LWC encourages members to participate in LWC activities, distribute LWC materials, and recruit new LWC members.

No individual member may use the resources of this organization for his or her own political advancement. The LWC shall remain independent of any particular political organization.

Although the LWC international organization does not endorse specific local union candidates, we recognize the importance of participation in local unions and in elections by LWC members and chapters. The LWC requires that members, who run for office, do so in a principled manner, in support of the LWC Principles. The LWC expects those who get elected to continue to support and build the LWC and to work for reform of the ILA. The LWC promotes the highest principles of unionism among ILA officers and we work to defend the rights of all ILA members to free and fair elections.

Article 5: Membership Meetings and Procedures

The quarterly membership meetings are the highest body and hold ultimate decision-making power over the LWC.

At the autumn membership meeting, members will elect the SC and decide on the number of SC representatives from the different regions. The autumn membership meeting will set membership dues for the coming year. The autumn membership meeting must set the general program for the coming year to guide the SC, members and local chapters.

A simple majority (50% + 1) of those members in good standing present and voting will decide all votes at meetings.

The approved LWC Rules of Order will govern the proceedings.

Article 6: Steering Committee Responsibilities

The SC will provide leadership for the LWC between meetings and shall carry out the direction and policies set by the members.

The SC will meet quarterly and shall have the power to choose staff, project workers and consultants to help run the organization should finances permit.

In particular the SC must:

- Organize a minimum of 4 regional or port-wide meetings a year
- Put-out, oversee and approve communications by the LWC (Flyers, pamphlets, newsletters, video etc...)
- Help LWC members from different regions communicate
- Coordinate campaigns as needed
- Recruit members in their respective areas
- Raise funds

ARTICLE 7: Officer Responsibilities

Following the election of the SC, the autumn membership meeting shall elect eleven officers from among SC for the following offices: 2 (two) Co-Chairs North/South, 2 (two) Southern General Organizers, 2 (two) Northern General Organizers, 1 (one) Gulf Coast Organizer, Secretary-Treasurer, Recording Secretary, 2 (two) Sergeant-at-Arms and the elected chairperson of the Women's Vision Group.

Co-Chairs will preside at all meetings of the SC and at membership meetings. They shall coordinate the day-to-day functions of the organization. Whenever possible the co-chairs will act as the spokes-people for the organization. Together with the organizers, they shall coordinate the agenda for the SC meetings and membership meetings. They shall make other decisions between SC meetings, but shall not be empowered to decide on policies and programs for the group as a whole.

The General Organizers will oversee the affairs of the steering committees in their perspective areas. The General Organizers will assist in coordination of the agenda for quarterly meetings, and make decisions regarding the implementation of the organization's policies but shall not be empowered to decide on the policies or programs of the group as a whole. The Organizers will act as spokesperson (s) in the absence of the Co-Chairs.

The Secretary-Treasurer shall receive all monies, and keep a correct record of standing of each member. The ST shall receive all monies paid and deposit them in the name of the Longshore Workers' Coalition. The ST will meet with the other officers of the LWC prior to each SC meeting and go over the records, receipts and financial statements necessary to review the books. He or she shall keep a record of names and addresses of all members. The Secretary-Treasurer must prepare an annual report for the autumn membership meeting.

The Recording Secretary shall keep an accurate record of all meetings.

The Sergeant-at-Arms shall act at the request of the presiding officer at any meeting of the LWC to insure that all meetings are conducted in an orderly manner.

The **Chairperson of the Women's Vision Group**, to be elected by the women members in good standing of the LWC, will coordinate the work of the Women's Vision Group. She will convene a Women's Vision Group meeting at each quarterly membership meeting and she will convene conference calls in between meetings. Any recommendations made by the Women's Vision Group will be communicated to the co-chairs for discussion and implementation.

Article 8: Nominations, Elections, Term of Office

- Elections of the SC and Officers shall take place at the autumn membership meeting.
- Only members in good standing (paid dues) will be eligible to nominate, hold elected office and vote in the LWC.
- A member in good standing must nominate all positions.
- The SC and Officers shall be elected for a term of two (2) years.
- Election shall be by secret ballot, no voting by mail or proxy permitted.

Article 9: Finances

All LWC members must pay dues to the organization. The autumn membership meeting shall determine membership dues.

Recognizing that such dues would not begin to meet our real expenses, the SC is empowered to enact voluntary pledge and donation systems for those members who have expressed their ability to pay more than the minimum.

ARTICLE 10: Amendments

This constitution may be altered amended or replaced and a new constitution may be adopted under the following procedure:

The LWC constitution may be amended only at the autumn LWC meeting. Proposed amendments should be submitted by a member to the LWC address at least one month in advance of the autumn meeting and distributed to the membership as soon as possible in advance of meeting. The proposed amendments must be available to the meeting and the meeting must vote on them. Those proposed amendments that pass by a majority, (50% + 1) of members in good standing present and voting at the meeting, shall become effective immediately and be incorporated into this constitution.

LWC PRINCIPLES

Justice

We stand for social and economic justice in the ILA, on our jobs, and in our communities.

Democracy

We stand for direct election of officers, one member–one vote. The ILA membership should directly elect all union officers by secret ballot vote.

Safety and Health

We work to live, not to die. A safe and healthy work environment is a right. We must win the right to truly refuse all unsafe assignments. We have a right to a humane work schedule and safe staffing levels.

Strong Contracts

We must fight to end wage and benefit tiers. The union’s purpose is to expand and preserve what we have, not trade it away. We must have contract campaigns that involve the membership. We need research on our industry to bargain as equals with management.

Hiring free of discrimination and favoritism

All shape-ups, dispatching and hiring should be done in the open with established rules and records posted to the membership.

A fair grievance procedure

Workers should remain on the job until a full hearing and are considered innocent until proven guilty. We will fight to end the back room deals at the contract boards and dock and marine councils.

End to discrimination on the job and in our union

For years the maritime industry has divided us by age, race, gender, language and nationality, making us compete with one another. We must stop injustice and fight to end discrimination on the job and in our union.

An Organizing Plan

We must help our non-union sisters and brothers organize or watch our bargaining power and numbers decline. It is a matter of survival and solidarity.

LWC RULES OF ORDER

Motions

Decisions at meetings are made through the process of motions. Once a motion has been made and seconded, it becomes the sole subject of the meeting until it is adopted, rejected, tabled or ruled out of order.

The motion process

- 1) Recognition – A speaker can only speak when recognized by the chair. Raise your hand to be put on the speaker’s list.
- 2) Making the Motion – Once it is your turn to speak, make the motion.
- 3) Secunder – Every motion has to have a seconder.
- 4) Restating the Motion – The secretary must read back the motion to the membership. If the motion is out of order it must be declared so at this point.
- 5) Discussion – Members are free to discuss the motion. All discussion must relate to the motion. The chair must alternate between pro and con speakers if they wish to speak. If available, there will be two microphones.

Amendments: An amendment may be made to the motion during discussion. The amendment must not alter the intent of the original motion, and must be seconded and accepted by the original member making the motion. Once an amendment is on the floor it replaces the motion as the focus of discussion.

- 6) Once debate is finished or the question is called the motion is re-read to the membership.
- 7) Voting – The vote is usually taken by a show of hands.
- 8) Declaring the Result – The Chair will declare the motion passed or defeated.

Withdrawing a Motion

A motion may be withdrawn with the approval of the mover and seconder.

Tabling a Motion

If a motion requires further study/debate etc., a member may move to table. Tabling a motion requires a seconder and takes precedence over all other motions. It cannot be debated and must be voted on immediately.

Points of Order

A member may call a point of order when

- 1) A discussion is wandering away from the point
- 2) When the bylaws are being violated

3) When the chair allows discussion on a non-debatable motion

A member may interrupt another speaker to make a Point of Order. The Chair must rule on the appropriateness of the point immediately.

Challenge to the Chair

If a member feels that the Chair's ruling violates the bylaws or procedures she can challenge the chair. A Challenge must be seconded. At this point the Chair gives way to another member, usually the co-chair. The challenger states her reason for the challenge. The Chair responds. There is no debate. A vote is called immediately.

The Chair then resumes her position, regardless of the outcome of the challenge.

Points of Information

A member who requires more information on the subject being debated can direct their inquiry to the Chair. The member cannot interrupt the speaker on the floor. But, the Points of Information may take precedence over other speakers on the list.

Limiting Debate

The Chair is allowed to prevent people from speaking more than once to any motion or amendment. Only the mover and seconder may speak more than once to provide clarification or answer a question from the floor.

Debate may also be limited by a motion to limit debate to a certain amount of time. E.g. 10 minutes on a certain topic.