



Australian Chinese Workers Association
澳大利亚华人总工会

Richard Trumka
National President of the AFL-CIO

cc: David Van Deusen
President of the Vermont State Labor Council, AFL-CIO

Dear Richard Trumka,

The Australian Chinese Workers Association (ACWA) calls on you and the national leadership of the AFL-CIO to drop the vindictive and retaliatory “misconduct” investigation into the Vermont AFL-CIO.

We defend the right of the Vermont AFL-CIO to have passed a motion authorising a General Strike if the 2020 U.S. election results had been overturned in a coup. Such a far-right coup would have inevitably opened the door to further attacks on trade unions, racial minorities and progressive community activist organisations. It would have also emboldened violent far-right groups to further unleash physical attacks on black, Muslim and other minority communities in the USA, including the Chinese community. Such an upsurge in racist attacks on black, indigenous and Chinese people and other people of colour in the U.S. would have inevitably spread to Australia, as white supremacist groups here unleash copy-cat attacks.

The idea of the Vermont AFL-CIO delegates to respond to the threat of such a far-right coup with a general strike is a fine idea. It is only through such determined struggle that all working class people - whether in the U.S, Australia or elsewhere - have won whatever rights that we have today, including the eight-hour day, annual leave, sick pay, shift penalties, defined minimum wages etc.

The ACWA is a mass organisation of ethnic Chinese workers in Australia that fights to improve the condition and rights of Chinese workers in Australia by popularising knowledge of the legal rights of workers and residents amongst the Chinese community, by connecting Chinese workers with the broader Australian union movement, by strengthening links between Chinese workers in Australia and Australian trade unions, by helping Chinese workers navigate issues of discrimination and by promoting social change in the interests of ethnic Chinese workers and the broader Chinese community in Australia. The ACWA and our members are deeply worried about the upsurge in racist physical and verbal attacks on ethnic Chinese people and others of East Asian appearance in the recent period in both the U.S. and Australia. China-bashing attacks by several politicians in both countries has incited such attacks and this has only deepened



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since the start of the pandemic. The struggle against racist attacks and discrimination is not only in the interests of those communities targeted - indigenous people (Native Americans in the U.S. and Aboriginal people in Australia), black people, ethnic Chinese and other East Asian people, Muslims, South Asians, people of Middle Eastern background and all people of colour - but in the interests of the entire union movement. Racist divisions weaken our unions and undermine the workers unity needed to fight to improve workers rights. It also stops people from enjoying a harmonious and culturally rich, multi-cultural society. Among U.S. unions, the Vermont AFL-CIO branch has been at the very forefront in opposing racism. Moving away from a wrong approach that sees migrant workers as competitors to local American workers, the Vermont AFI-CIO has shown a real determination to defend the rights of migrant workers. Such a thrust towards anti-racist and social justice unionism should be intensified and broadened rather than its proponents being subject to bureaucratic attacks.

Your sincerely,

David Chen

Chairman
Australian Chinese Workers Association



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