RESOLUTION ON JUDICIAL INDEPENDENCE

WHEREAS:

The National Organization of Legal Services Workers (NOLSW), UAW Local 2320, represents thousands of advocates for the discriminated, underprivileged and disenfranchised throughout the United States.

Our members must appeal daily to the independence of the judiciary to vindicate the rights of those who are favored by neither wealth nor social standing.

We believe that our society as a whole is stronger and more decent for this.

When that independence is compromised by political considerations, we have a front row seat for the unjust and occasionally tragic consequences.

Consistent with our other values, our union is also on record in support of the civil rights of our own LGBT members and of all LGBT people in the United States, including marriage equality.

Judges in several states have recently been targeted by well funded right-wing activist groups for removal because those judges had stood up for minority rights under the law. Most dramatically, in Iowa, large investments of money from outside the state have contributed to the removal of every member of the state’s highest court whose term was up for renewal, including the chief judge, in retaliation for a unanimous decision by the court recognizing the right of lesbian and gay rights to marry.

THEREFORE:

NOLSW condemns this politicization of a judicial re-appointment process promulgated as merit based, and the dire threat to an independent judiciary that it obviously represents.

We reject the justification of such attempts to undermine justice by selectively applying the term “judicial activism” or “judicial legislation” to decisions recognizing the rights of minorities, the poor, or the disempowered.

We call upon all states which re-elect sitting judges in any form to take measures to prevent their procedures from being perverted into majority referenda on minority rights.

We call upon our sisters and brothers throughout the UAW and the labor movement as a whole, and upon our colleagues in the bar associations and other organizations of legal advocates, to adopt similar resolutions. We call upon them actively to lobby state legislatures to institute such protections of judicial independence.

Adopted by the NOLSW/UAW Local 2320 National Executive Board on December 6, 2010