

To: SSSP Board of Directors
From: Val Leiter, Chair, Committee on Social Action
Re: Annual Report of the Committee
Date: July 17, 2017

The Committee on Social Action received six resolutions this year, addressing crucial issues: health care legislation, immigration, climate change, and intellectual freedom. Four of the resolutions were received before the June 1 deadline, and the other two were received after the deadline and were accepted because the bylaws allow late submissions in the case of issues that emerge after the deadline (climate change and intellectual freedom).

Two resolutions were screened out by myself as chair of the committee. The first was from a member who had experienced what he felt was discriminatory actions by a hostel while attending an academic conference, but after several email conversations with the member, it became clear that there was no larger social action that was framed from that particular experience. I explained to the member that this process was geared towards broader social change, not in support of a particular grievance of one person against one business. The member accepted this decision and said that he appreciated being heard and seen at least. The second was from a member who wished to create a media award—this suggestion was forwarded to the board for consideration, as the establishment of awards is a part of the board's business and there was not a larger social action agenda.

The other resolutions were de-identified in terms of authorship and sent out for blind review, to the Committee on Social Action and all of the Division Chairs. I chose this tack because the resolutions were authored by Division Chairs, the Executive Officer, and the President of SSSP, and I was concerned that there might be more reluctance to edit if the authorships were known. My goal was to encourage critical reviews that would make the resolutions stronger, just as blind peer reviews typically result in stronger journal articles. The health care and immigration resolutions were reviewed first by the Committee on Social Action, and then the revised resolutions were sent out to Division Chairs for review. The latter two resolutions were reviewed simultaneously by the Committee on Social Action and the Division Chairs, for the sake of a speedier process, to get them out to the general membership in advance of the annual meeting.

This is a particularly strong group of resolutions, and the Committee on Social Action and the Division of Chairs were incredibly responsive and helpful throughout the process. In particular, I would like to thank Kristen Budd and Noreen Sugrue from the Committee on Social Action, each of whom made several suggestions that improved the resolutions. Huge thanks to Michele Koontz, especially, for supporting me throughout this entire process, and Héctor Delgado for promoting action among our membership. Héctor and I both encouraged people to submit resolutions, which I believe contributed to the high quality and solid number of resolutions this year.

The five resolutions that are now before the general membership for consideration at the annual meeting are provided below:

2017 PROPOSED RESOLUTIONS
THE SOCIETY FOR THE STUDY OF SOCIAL PROBLEMS

Compiled by Valerie Leiter, SSSP Vice President

1. “Resolution on the American Health Care Act of 2017 (AHCA), H.R. 1628”
Submitted by Paul Draus and Ethel Nicdao (Co-Chairs) on behalf of the Health, Health Policy, and Health Services Division
2. “Resolution on Refugee and Immigrant Rights and Executive Order”
Submitted by Executive Officer Héctor L. Delgado (member) on behalf of the Global Division
3. “Resolution in Support of the United States’ Involvement in the Paris Climate Accord”
Submitted by Laura McKinney (Chair) on behalf of the Environment and Technology Division
4. “Resolution on Free Speech and Academic Freedom”
Submitted by President Donileen R. Loseke and Executive Officer Héctor L. Delgado (members)
5. “Expression of Gratitude”

RESOLUTION 1: Resolution on the American Health Care Act of 2017 (AHCA), H.R. 1628¹

Submitted by Paul Draus and Ethel Nicdao (Co-Chairs) on behalf of the Health, Health Policy, and Health Services Division

Whereas the AHCA proposes to **repeal and replace** the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (PPACA) of 2010, also known as the “Affordable Care Act” (ACA) or “Obamacare”, by cutting taxes for large industries,² while harming lowest income households and largely benefiting the wealthy³; and

Whereas the AHCA would eliminate funding for the Prevention and Public Health Fund established by the ACA; and

¹ The full text of the bill may be viewed at the following link: <https://www.congress.gov/bill/115th-congress/house-bill/1628>; a concise description of its contents may be found here: <http://files.kff.org/attachment/Proposals-to-Replace-the-Affordable-Care-Act-Summary-of-the-American-Health-Care-Act>

² <https://www.theatlantic.com/business/archive/2017/03/AHCA-tax-cut/518889/>

³ <https://www.forbes.com/sites/beltway/2017/03/22/the-ahcas-tax-changes-and-transfers-would-benefit-the-wealthy-hurt-the-lowest-income-households/#3d4e5c8c26e2>

Whereas the AHCA would roll back Medicaid expansion that occurred under the ACA and leave millions of Americans uninsured; and

Whereas the AHCA would eliminate universal requirements for a basic package of services to be provided by health insurance plans; and

Whereas the AHCA would eliminate protections for consumers seeking to purchase health insurance, including the federal ban on charging higher premiums to people with preexisting conditions⁴; and

Whereas the AHCA would adversely affect ‘dual eligibles’—low-income Medicare beneficiaries who also are enrolled in Medicaid—for example, by limiting their access to long-term and community-based services⁵; and

Whereas the AHCA would allow insurers to impose penalties on those who do not maintain continuous health coverage; and

Whereas the AHCA would adversely affect the health of women, especially low-income women and women of color, through its reduction of eligibility for coverage as well as its restriction of covered benefits;⁶ and

Whereas the AHCA would eliminate the ACA’s requirement that insurers utilize a community rating system⁷, enabling those insurers to raise individuals’ premiums based on health status; and

Whereas the AHCA has been roundly criticized by doctors, hospitals and insurers, one of whom stated that the bill “raises the specter that the sickest and neediest among us will be disproportionately hit in losing access;”⁸

THEREFORE, Be it resolved that the Executive Officer of the Society for the Study of Social Problems will issue a letter to the editor of *The New York Times*, with duplicates sent to the *Los Angeles Times*, the *Chicago Tribune*, *The Washington Post*, *The Boston Globe*, and the *San Francisco Chronicle*, declaring our firm opposition to the passage of the AHCA; and

Be it resolved that the Executive Officer of the Society for the Study of Social Problems will issue a letter to the leadership of the Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions expressing our firm opposition to the bill; and

⁴ <http://www.commonwealthfund.org/publications/blog/2017/apr/amendment-aca-repeal-and-replace-bill>

⁵ <http://www.commonwealthfund.org/publications/blog/2017/may/ahca-would-affect-medicare>

⁶ <http://kff.org/womens-health-policy/issue-brief/ten-ways-that-the-house-american-health-care-act-could-affect-women/>

⁷ <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/up-front/2017/04/27/new-amendment-to-gop-health-bill-effectively-allows-full-elimination-of-community-rating-exposing-sick-to-higher-premiums/>

⁸ “*In Rare Unity, Hospitals, Doctors and Insurers Criticize Health Bill*”

By REED ABELSON and KATIE THOMAS, *The New York Times*, MAY 4, 2017,

<https://www.nytimes.com/2017/05/04/health/health-care-bill-criticisms.html? r=0>

Be it resolved that the Society for the Study of Social Problems will strongly support and encourage continuing research on the causes and consequences of health disparities, including but not limited to inequities in the provision of health care services; and

Be it resolved that the Society for the Study of Social Problems, in the belief that access to health care is a necessary precondition for full human flourishing, will continue to advocate for a **universal health care system** that does not discriminate based on one's ability to pay for services, or any other social or biological category or characteristic.

RESOLUTION 2: Resolution on Refugee and Immigrant Rights and Executive Order

Submitted by Executive Officer Héctor L. Delgado (member) on behalf of the Global Division

Whereas, the United States historically has been a place of refuge for people fleeing political and religious persecution, famine, terrorism, and other atrocities;

Whereas, immigrants and refugees have contributed enormously to the economic, political, and cultural well-being of the United States since its inception as a nation of immigrants;

Whereas, immigrants and refugees have fought for and have given their lives for the security of the United States;

Whereas, the United States is one of 146 nations who in 1967 signed the United Nations Protocol to the Status of Refugees, and who has since welcomed over millions of refugees from the former Soviet Union, Africa, Asia, Europe, the Middle East, and Latin America;

Whereas, the President of the United States issued an Executive Order on January 27, 2017, suspending the issuance of visas to nationals from Iraq, Iran, Sudan, Syria, Libya, Somalia, and Yemen; shutting down the country's refugee program for 120 days; reducing the number of refugees admitted to the United States in 2017 from 110,000 to 50,000; and halting the resettlement of Syrian refugees indefinitely;

Whereas, on March 6, 2017, a second, modified Executive Order, superseding the January 27 order, was issued in an attempt to address the concerns of the judges who blocked the first order;

Whereas, the second Executive Order was also blocked by the Courts, principally, as a federal judge in Hawaii stated, because, in the view of a "reasonable, objective observer," the order was issued "with a purpose to disfavor a particular religion, in spite of its stated, religiously neutral purpose;"

Whereas, on January 25, 2017, the President of the United States issued an Executive Order on border security that raised concerns among immigration experts and activists regarding human rights, the expanded use of detention, limits on asylum, enhanced enforcement

along the southern border with Mexico, and the construction of a 2,000 mile wall along the border;

Whereas, the SSSP, as an academic and social justice organization, is committed to protecting the human and civil rights of immigrants and refugees, and, toward that end, fashioning immigration and refugee policies that are fair and in the best interest of the United States, and recognize the many contributions immigrants and refugees have made to the United States;

Whereas, the SSSP believes that the Executive Order as presently drafted makes the United States, less, not more, secure, by providing fodder to extremist groups to recruit new members and launch new attacks and alienating Muslims in the United States and other parts of the world at a time that the country should be welcoming them and enlisting their support for and participation in the struggle against terrorist organizations that themselves espouse a form of religious intolerance and distortion that as a nation, the United States should eschew;

Whereas, a policy that targets a religious group diminishes the country's moral standing in the world and undermines the country's ability to work with other nations and international organizations on humanitarian initiatives and peace efforts;

THEREFORE, Be it resolved, that the SSSP supports immigration and refugee policies that allow for a careful review of applications, but on an individual basis, rather than on the basis of religion or country of origin; and

Be it further resolved, that while the SSSP is aware of the powers vested in the Office of the President of the United States on immigration, the SSSP urges the President to review the Executive Order he issued most recently to ensure that it is not motivated by a desire to deny entry to, or even advertently targets, a group on the basis of religion, ethnicity, or country of origin; and

Be it further resolved, that in an attempt to secure the country's border, the United States must ensure that individuals are not denied, intentionally or unintentionally, their human, civil, and legal rights, including sufficient time to find and consult with legal counsel; and

Be it further resolved, that the SSSP applauds the efforts by attorneys and immigration- and refugee-rights organizations and activists to ensure that the United States retain its moral standing in the world as a nation that is welcoming and fair to people fleeing persecution or searching for a better life for their family; and

Be it further resolved, that a copy of this resolution be sent to the President of the United States and the leaders of both parties in the House of Representatives and the Senate, and posted on the SSSP's website.

RESOLUTION 3: Resolution in Support of the United States' Involvement in the Paris Climate Accord

Submitted by Laura McKinney (Chair) on behalf of the Environment and Technology Division

Whereas the President of the United States has announced the United States will withdraw from the Paris Climate Agreement;

Whereas the United States' involvement in the Paris Climate Accord is critical to reaching targets for global emissions reductions;

Whereas failing to achieve emissions reductions as outlined in the Paris Climate Accord poses grave threats to the health and wellbeing of individuals worldwide;

Whereas the adverse effects of climate change are disproportionately concentrated among marginalized populations;

Whereas failing to meet targets for global emissions reductions as outlined by the Paris Climate Accord unnecessarily puts into peril future generations' health and wellbeing;

Whereas withdrawing from the Paris Climate Accord impinges on employment of individuals across diverse sectors of environmental policy, planning, science, research, and development;

THEREFORE, Be it resolved that the Society for the Study of Social Problems stands in solidarity with the policies and practices established by the Paris Climate Accord;

Be it resolved that the Society for the Study of Social Problems will communicate support for the Paris Climate Accord to the leaders of both parties in the House of Representatives and the Senate, all members of the Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works, the House Committee of Natural Resources, the director of the Environmental Protection Agency, and the President of the United States; and

Be it resolved that the Society for the Study of Social Problems will stand in solidarity with the nations and other public and private entities that remain steadfast to upholding emissions reduction targets as outlined in the Paris Climate Accord posting this resolution on its website.

RESOLUTION 4: Resolution on Free Speech and Academic Freedom

Submitted by President Donileen R. Loseke and Executive Officer Héctor L. Delgado (members)

Whereas a democratic society depends upon the free exchange of ideas in classrooms, on campuses, and in the public;

Whereas there can be no knowledge or progress without a genuine search for truth which requires free speech;

Whereas disagreeable or controversial ideas can be challenged only through discussion and debate;

Whereas there is evidence that political organizations such as Professor Watch and Campus Reform take comments out of context, spread accusations, and orchestrate campaigns against faculty deemed to promote “liberal” ideas;

Whereas faculty members in a variety of academic institutions (including the University of Iowa, Texas A & M, Drexel University, Trinity College, Princeton, Syracuse University, Arizona State University, Evergreen College) and in a variety of academic disciplines (including sociology, philosophy, classics, politics and global studies, communications) have been the targets of threats of violence because of their ideas;

THEREFORE, Be it resolved that the Society for the Study of Social Problems stands in solidarity with the American Association of University Professors (AAUP) and the American Sociological Association (ASA) in its commitment to academic freedom and due process and in deploring violence and harassment of all types targeted toward those engaging in free speech;

Be it further resolved that the Society for the Study of Social Problems agrees with the American Association of University Professors that it is the responsibility of campus governing boards to develop and enforce policies that will protect the safety and freedom of faculty;

Be it further resolved that we adopt and add to our website a statement, consistent with the AAUP’s, on academic freedom;

Be it further resolved that the SSSP will send a copy of this resolution and statement on academic freedom to the AAUP and to the presidents of the institutions at which these types of cases have occurred.

RESOLUTION 5: Expression of Gratitude

Our sincere appreciation is expressed to all of the officers, committee chairs, and members who have made this program possible and whose efforts maintain the vitality of the SSSP. First, we thank President Donileen R. Loseke for her outstanding leadership in developing the 67th Annual Meeting and its theme: *Narratives in the World of Social Problems: Power, Resistance, Transformation*. We also thank this year’s Program Committee members Sara L. Crawley (Co-Chair), Hsiao-Chuan Hsia, Karyn D. McKinney, Marc R. Settembrino, and Jessica Sperling, but especially the committee’s chair, Amir B. Marvasti, for putting together such an excellent program; and Local Arrangements Committee Chair Jason Carmichael and his committee Annie Carrier, Alissa Mazar, Naomi Nichols, and Sophie Pomerleau. We thank

the staff of the Montreal Bonaventure Hotel for fine accommodations, and we particularly want to recognize the efforts made by Isabelle Blais, Convention Services Manager.

The Society wishes to express its gratitude to Past President David A. Smith for his years of leadership; Vice President Valerie Leiter for managing the resolutions process; Glenn W. Muschert for his service as Secretary; and Patrick Donnelly for his service as Treasurer.

The Society also thanks Luis A. Fernandez, President-Elect; David G. Embrick, Vice President-Elect; Board of Directors: Louis Edgar Esparza, Saher Selod, Elroi J. Windsor, Sarah Jane Brubaker, Claire M. Renzetti, outgoing members Cheryl A. Boudreaux, Keith M. Kilty, student representatives of the Board Kasey Henricks (outgoing) and Sarah A. St. John; Bhoomi K. Thakore, Chairperson of the Council of the Divisions; Pamela Anne Quiroz, Editor of *Social Problems*; Stephani Williams, outgoing Budget, Finance, and Audit Committee Chair and committee members, Nancy J. Mezey, Lauren Eastwood, Patrick Donnelly, and Susan M. Carlson; Corey Dolgon, outgoing Editorial and Publications Committee Chair and committee members Gregory D. Squires, Valerie Jenness, Anna Maria Santiago, Jackie Krasas, Heather MacIndoe, Stephani Williams, Becky Pettit, and Pamela Anne Quiroz; and the University of Tennessee and the Department of Sociology for hosting the SSSP Administrative Office. A special thanks to the University of South Florida Department of Sociology and President Donileen R. Loseke for their financial contributions to program activities and to Oxford University Press for its financial contribution to the conference bags.

The Society wishes to thank Executive Officer Héctor L. Delgado, Administrative Officer & Meeting Manager Michele Smith Koontz, Information Technology Specialist Rachel Cogburn, Administrative Assistant Marisa Stone, Graduate Research Associate & Webmaster Bethany Nelson (outgoing), and the chairpersons and co-chairpersons of the 22 Divisions for continuing to make the organization run and do all that it does year in and year out.