

**Final Resolutions
Introduced at the
2023 IAOHRA CONFERENCE
August 16, 2023
Bethesda, MD**

Table of Contents

I.	Voting Rights.....	Page 3
II.	Gun Violence in America.....	Page 5
III.	Women's Rights to Reproductive Freedom and Health	Page 7
IV.	Environmental and Climate Justice.....	Page 10
V.	In Support of Honesty, Freedom to Learn, and Anti-Racism in Education.....	Page 12
VI.	Resolution to Support the International Labour Organization's (ILO) Violence and Harassment Convention, NO. 190 (C190).....	Page 15

RESOLUTION # 1

INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF OFFICIAL HUMAN RIGHTS AGENCIES

TITLE: Voting Rights

PURPOSE: The resolution reaffirms IAOHRA's commitment to fair and equal voting laws and its opposition to legislation and other governmental policies enacted to suppress voting rights.

WHEREAS, the International Association of Official Human Rights Agencies (IAOHRA) is a professional association of state, county, and city governmental human rights commissions in the United States of America and several statutory human rights agencies in Canada;

WHEREAS, IAOHRA's goals are "to foster human and intergroup relations, to enhance human rights practices under law, and to promote civil and human rights around the world;"

WHEREAS, the right to vote is a fundamental human right and an essential component of a fair and inclusive society, enabling individuals to participate in the decision-making processes that shape their lives;

WHEREAS, historical and contemporary injustices have led to voter suppression, disenfranchisement, and unequal access to the ballot, disproportionately affecting marginalized communities;

WHEREAS, the struggle for voting rights aligns with IAOHRA's commitment to justice and the protection of individual liberties;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that IAOHRA advocates for the following principles:

1. ****Universal Suffrage**** Every individual, regardless of race, gender, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, or any other characteristic, has the right to participate in free and fair elections.
2. ****Equal Access**** Measures should be taken to ensure equal access to the voting process, including addressing barriers such as voter ID laws, gerrymandering, and other discriminatory practices.
3. ****Inclusivity**** Efforts must be made to actively engage marginalized and underrepresented communities in the democratic process, including those with disabilities, refugees, and indigenous populations.
4. ****Education and Awareness**** Governments and civil society should work together to promote voter education and civic awareness, enabling informed participation in elections.

5. ****Protection Against Discrimination**** Measures should be in place to prevent and address any form of voter suppression or discrimination, whether overt or subtle, that inhibits the exercise of the right to vote.
6. ****International Standards**** States are encouraged to uphold international human rights standards in their electoral processes, ensuring that elections are conducted freely, fairly, and transparently.
7. ****Youth Participation**** Efforts should be made to encourage the engagement of young people in the electoral process, recognizing their role as active citizens and future leaders.
8. ****Transparent Electoral Processes**** Governments should establish transparent and accountable electoral systems that maintain public trust and confidence in the democratic process.

IAOHRA affirms its dedication to promoting these principles and urges its board to adopt this resolution as a testament to the organization's commitment to safeguarding voting rights as an integral part of civil and human rights worldwide.

RESOLUTION # 2

INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF OFFICIAL HUMAN RIGHTS AGENCIES

TITLE: Gun Violence in America

PURPOSE: The resolution states IAOHRA's urgent call for legislation to promote gun safety and gun control.

WHEREAS, the International Association of Official Human Rights Agencies (IAOHRA) seeks to end the tragic consequences and vast racial disparities of gun violence, and to increase effective gun safety and gun control policies; and

WHEREAS, the American Public Health Association deems gun violence as a leading cause of premature death in the U.S., e.g., guns kill more than 38,000 people and cause nearly 85,000 injuries each year. The Gifford Center determines that Black men make up 52% of all gun homicide victims in the U.S. despite being 6% of the population; and

WHEREAS, according to an ABC News report, data from the Gun Violence Archive show that the United States has experienced more than 400 mass shootings in 2023 as of the date of the drafting of this Resolution; and

WHEREAS, an article published by The Guardian on April 19, 2023 entitled "Stand your Ground: the U.S. laws linked to rising deaths and racist violence" presents data from a study last year that found "stand your ground" laws were linked to an 8% to 11% increase in homicide rates, or roughly 700 additional deaths each year, and research on "stand your ground" laws has found huge racial disparities, with White Americans much more likely to be successful with self-defense claims, particularly when they kill Black people;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that IAOHRA will work to educate Congress and advocate for the adoption by Congress of a new ban on the purchase, ownership, and possession of assault style weapons modeled after military grade firearms, military-style assault weapons, high-capacity magazine exceeding 11 rounds or weapons that operate similarly, including a ban on switches, bump stocks and materials used to modify or otherwise convert semi-automatic weapons into automatic weapons; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that IAOHRA remains firmly committed to, and will continue its advocacy for, conducting universal background checks including the alerting and reporting of

anyone either convicted or adjudicated of domestic violence or mental health issues that would impact that person's use of firearms, enforcing minimum waiting periods, enacting and enforcing gun dealer regulations, supporting community led intervention programs and enacting and enforcing legislation and policies that require law enforcement agencies to keep records of firearm sales for the purpose of disqualifying persons from purchasing guns.

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that IAOHRA will educate state legislatures and advocate with national and state representatives for the repeal of all state "stand your ground" laws.

RESOLUTION # 3

INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF OFFICIAL HUMAN RIGHTS AGENCIES

TITLE: Women's Rights to Reproductive Freedom
and Health

PURPOSE: The resolution calls for increased efforts to provide education and advocacy on the issue of reproductive rights in the wake of the Dobbs decision and its aftermath.

WHEREAS, the International Association of Official Human Rights Agencies (IAOHRA) acknowledges reproductive justice as a core principle of civil and human rights and seeks to protect the right of all women, especially African American women, to exercise their reproductive freedom and bodily autonomy safely; and

WHEREAS, reproductive rights refer to "the composite of human rights that address matters of sexual and reproductive health." Reproductive rights can be categorized broadly as the rights to (1) "reproductive self-determination," (2) "sexual and reproductive health services, information, and education," and (3) "equality and nondiscrimination"; and

WHEREAS, reproductive rights, particularly abortion rights, have come under recent attack. In 1973, the Supreme Court established a constitutional right to abortion care in *Roe v. Wade*. In 2022, in *Dobbs v. Jackson*, the Supreme Court overruled fifty years of precedent, leaving decisions about abortion services up to the states; and

WHEREAS, deciding whether and when to have children is vital to women's socioeconomic well-being and health. Considerable research has shown that women who are denied abortion care are more likely to experience gestational diabetes and hypertension, among other complications that increase their risk of death from pregnancy. The prevalence of "back alley" abortions that are inherently unsafe is also cause for concern. In fact, a recent study projected that abortion bans would increase the number of U.S. pregnancy-related deaths by 24% nationwide and by 39% for African American women. In addition to the physical risks, women who are denied abortion care face greater levels of stress and an increased risk of developing depressive, bipolar, and anxiety disorders during pregnancy; and

WHEREAS, abortion bans negatively affect the financial security and social advancement of women. Studies have shown that abortion bans widen the gender pay gap for women with

downstream effects on their children, communities, and local and state economies. Women who are denied access to abortion are often unable to complete their education, participate in the workforce, and contribute adequately to their state and local economies. Consequently, these women experience lower credit scores, increased debt, bankruptcy, and evictions. These economic indicators affect not only abortion-seeking women but also their children, who have a heightened risk of developing behavioral problems, suffering from developmental delays, under-performing in school, and experiencing child poverty and neglect; and

WHEREAS, the *Dobbs* decision immediately triggered a "variegated checkerboard of access to women's healthcare" nationwide. As of January 2023, Alabama, Tennessee, West Virginia, Kentucky, Mississippi, Louisiana, Arkansas, Missouri, Oklahoma, Texas, South Dakota, and Idaho have banned abortion entirely with no or few exceptions. States like Arizona, Florida, Georgia, and Utah follow closely behind with gestational age bans, some of which are being challenged before their respective state supreme courts. In fact, a legal challenge to Florida's 15-week ban is the only thing keeping the South one state shy of a regional ban. New Florida legislation passed on April 14, 2023, that bans abortion after six weeks — before many women know that they are pregnant — is the latest threat to roughly "15 million women of reproductive age who live in abortion banning states throughout the South, many of whom have previously relied on travel to Florida as an option to access care"; and

WHEREAS, at last count, abortion has remained accessible to residents of Virginia and New Hampshire, but without legal protection. Abortion is unavailable in North Dakota after the state's sole clinic was moved to Minnesota. Finally, states like Indiana, Wyoming, Ohio, Iowa, Montana, Nebraska, Kansas, and North Carolina have legislatures that are hostile to abortion; and

WHEREAS, extremist lawmakers nationwide have taken steps to target not only abortion-seeking women but also their allies. A Texas lawmaker has proposed a bill denying tax breaks to any business that helps employees to pay to leave the state for abortion care. Idaho is considering a law that would withhold dollars from municipal governments that refuse to enforce abortion laws. Furthermore, amid a national healthcare staff shortage, lawmakers nationwide are taking measures to subject abortion providers to criminal prosecution. Wyoming, for example, has one of America's worst physician shortages and may find it even more difficult to recruit doctors if it were to move forward with anti-abortion efforts; and

WHEREAS, abortion access is a racial justice issue. Most of the states that have adopted a total ban on abortion, or have hostile abortion laws, are in the South and the Midwest, where the majority of African Americans live, in areas where large shares of Latina women reside, and in the Plains, where a large Indigenous population exists; and

WHEREAS, a 2019 study found that African American women accounted for roughly 38.4% of abortions in the United States. This number is explained in part by the fact that Black women (1) are more likely to live in "contraception deserts" and are less likely to receive comprehensive sex education—a critical factor in preventing unwanted pregnancies, (2) are disproportionately victims of sexual violence, (3) have the highest maternal mortality rate in the United States and (4) are more likely to be trapped in a cycle of poverty as a result of unintended pregnancies. Moreover, African American women are disproportionately affected by the socioeconomic and health consequences of abortion banning; and

WHEREAS, on March 30, 2023, the Women's Health Protection Act was reintroduced in the United States House of Representatives. If passed, the Act would re-establish a nationwide right to abortion; and

WHEREAS, there is a real risk that a decision by a single judge could result in a national ban on the use of mifepristone — a drug used in the majority of abortions in the United States. This case has potential consequences in states where the right to abortion has not been limited and would have a disproportionate negative impact on African American women due to their greater difficulty in accessing and affording surgical abortions; and

WHEREAS, the reversal of *Roe v. Wade* has substantive and procedural legal implications that stretch far beyond the issue of abortion. As of 2023, at least one sitting Supreme Court Justice has signaled a re-evaluation of cases, built on a similar footing to *Dobbs*, challenging the constitutional right to privacy in areas such as contraception, same-sex intimacy, and same-sex marriage. Additionally, at least one state has launched a legislative attack on state courts to restrict the power of judges to grant injunctions.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that IAOHRA opposes legislation in every state, the District of Columbia, and all territories that seeks to undermine the fundamental right to abortion and any other reproductive, civil, and human right, and supports the passage of the Women's Health Protection Act.

RESOLUTION # 4

INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF OFFICIAL HUMAN RIGHTS AGENCIES

TITLE: Environmental and Climate Justice

PURPOSE: The resolution states IAOHRA's commitment to the advancement and integration of environmental and climate justice into the broader framework of human rights.

WHEREAS, the International Association of Official Human Rights Agencies (IAOHRA) is a professional association of state, county, and city governmental human rights commissions in the United States of America and several statutory human rights agencies in Canada;

WHEREAS, IAOHRA's goals are "to foster human and intergroup relations, to enhance human rights practices under law, and to promote civil and human rights around the world;" and,

WHEREAS, the impacts of environmental degradation and climate change disproportionately affect marginalized communities, exacerbating existing inequalities and violating the principles of social justice;

WHEREAS, environmental harm can impede the enjoyment of basic human rights, including the rights to life, health, clean water, food, adequate housing, and cultural heritage;

WHEREAS, the struggle for environmental and climate justice aligns with IAOHRA's commitment to defending human rights and fostering sustainable development;

THEREFORE , BE IT RESOLVED, that IAOHRA advocates for the following principles:

1. ****Equity and Inclusivity**** Environmental policies and climate actions must be designed to address the specific needs of marginalized groups, ensuring equitable participation and benefits for all.
2. ****Right to Information**** Communities have the right to access accurate and timely information about environmental risks and climate actions, enabling informed decision-making and meaningful participation in relevant processes.
3. ****Access to Remedies**** Efforts must be made to ensure that individuals and communities affected by environmental harm have access to effective remedies, both at the national and international levels.

4. ****Community Empowerment**** The meaningful involvement of affected communities in decision-making processes related to environmental and climate issues must be upheld and supported.
5. ****International Cooperation**** States and relevant stakeholders should collaborate across borders to address transboundary environmental challenges and promote global environmental justice.
6. ****Gender Perspective:**** Gender equality and the empowerment of women are essential in achieving environmental and climate justice, as women are often disproportionately impacted by environmental degradation and climate change.
7. ****Accountability**** Governments, corporations, and other actors must be held accountable for environmental violations and climate-related harms, with mechanisms in place for effective enforcement of laws and regulations.
8. ****Education and Awareness**** Promoting environmental and climate literacy is crucial for fostering a culture of sustainability and responsible citizenship.

THEREFORE, BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that IAOHRA remains committed to advancing these principles and advocating for the integration of environmental and climate justice into the broader human rights framework, in pursuit of a just and sustainable world for all.

RESOLUTION # 5

INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF OFFICIAL HUMAN RIGHTS AGENCIES

TITLE: In Support of Honesty, Freedom to Learn, and Anti-Racism in Education

PURPOSE: The resolution states IAOHRA's opposition to censorship legislation and policies that falsely purport to be anti-Critical Race Theory (CRT) that ultimately decrease knowledge and understanding of culturally diverse groups for students.

WHEREAS, the International Association of Official Human Rights Agencies (IAOHRA) is a professional association of state, county, and city governmental human rights commissions in the United States of America and several statutory human rights agencies in Canada;

WHEREAS, IAOHRA's goals are "to foster human and intergroup relations, to enhance human rights practices under law, and to promote civil and human rights around the world;" and,

WHEREAS, IAOHRA believes that education is a fundamental right of all people and that access to quality education is necessary for a just and equitable society and that all persons residing in this country have a right to have access to their history and the Civil Rights Act of 1964 outlawed discrimination based on race, ethnic background or nationality, and gender or gender identity; and

WHEREAS, the U.S. educational system has maintained both oppressive and suppressive education practices through policies that restrict instruction related to accurate historical events and historical truth telling at large in schools; and

WHEREAS, such legislative censorship specifically serves as an indisputable attack on racial reckoning, LGBTQ+ rights, and other forms of liberation before and during the pandemic and propagandizes theory and practice, including, but not limited to, Critical Race Theory (CRT), the 1619 Project, and fundamental language used to describe diverse students, and

WHEREAS, attempts to pass bills outlawing the teaching of CRT in kindergarten through twelfth grade schools is a political wedge issue, intended to mobilize around xenophobia. In reality, CRT is not currently being taught in kindergarten through twelfth grade education, making anti-CRT legislation without merit or substance. Instead of wasting time and energy on frivolous political posturing, lawmakers should pass laws that work to dismantle systemic

racism in education and elsewhere, and

WHEREAS, IAOHRA opposes the legislation proposed in more than 45 states that suppresses compassionate, rigorous, and truthful teaching practices in pre-kindergarten through twelfth grade schools and postsecondary institutions, and believes that all students have the right to learn and grow in an environment that encourages critical thinking and the development of their own views and voice; and

WHEREAS, anti-CRT legislation and policies prohibit teachers, schools, school districts, and other state and/or local government entities from enacting curricula or professional development programs related to topics of diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) and from using selected books and other course materials containing racially diverse and inclusive perspectives; and

WHEREAS, although CRT as it was conceived is not taught in pre-kindergarten through twelfth grade and the term "CRT" has been coopted by those bent on preventing the accurate teaching of American history, specifically the roles that African Americans and people of color, and other minorities, played in that history; and

WHEREAS, IAOHRA supports education that acknowledges collective pasts, sparks curiosity and critical thinking, and prepares all students for the multicultural present and future, by encouraging a curriculum that reflects a true history of the nation and world, centers diverse histories, cultures, families, and communities, and allows students to see themselves reflected in the classroom; and

WHEREAS, IAOHRA stands with educators who teach an inclusive curriculum covering US history while encouraging students to develop their own views and voice, and encourages all educators to review their curriculum to ensure it reflects the diversity of our nation and world; and

WHEREAS, IAOHRA rejects the idea that educational equity is a zero-sum proposition, in which some students may lose out on opportunities to help other students succeed, and believes in the value of culturally responsive education that allows students to understand the world and value their cultural identity; and

WHEREAS, IAOHRA supports safe schools free from discrimination, harassment, bullying, etc., providing all students with a world-class education, designed to support student well-being, growth, and development; and

WHEREAS, persons duly living in the United States have a right to discuss race and equity issues in local governments, schools, libraries, and public events without interference; local

and national government should not have the power to limit the books in libraries for discussion or review in schools or other venues; and schools and libraries should be allowed to teach the history of race relations and engage in discussion on these topics without interference.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that IAOHRA opposes censorship legislation and policies, including but not limited to, legislation and policies that falsely purport to be anti-CRT that ultimately decreases knowledge and understanding of culturally diverse groups for students through developmentally appropriate but comprehensive instruction; prohibits educators from using quality instructional approaches that prepare students for further learning and life; restricts professional development related to topics of diversity in any educational or other municipal space; or stops DEI offices from fulfilling their legal and ethical duties in service to students, families, and communities.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, IAOHRA calls on policymakers, educators, and administrators to prioritize anti-racist education practices, including teaching about the contributions of communities of color, the impact of racism, and bias, and the necessity for ongoing education and training of staff to support these efforts.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that IAOHRA will advocate for federal, state, and local/school board efforts that oppose censorship legislation and policies, including but not limited to, legislation and policies that falsely purport to be anti-CRT, that suppress compassionate, rigorous, and truthful teaching in pre-kindergarten through twelfth grade schools and institutions of higher education and/or through the work of DEI offices.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that IAOHRA affirms its commitment to continue to work towards eliminating the injustices which have historically plagued education and impeded the growth and success of communities of color.

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that IAOHRA shall convey this Resolution to federal, state, and local legislators and school boards, the United States Secretary of Education, and State Heads or Commissioners of Education.

RESOLUTION # 6

INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF OFFICIAL HUMAN RIGHTS AGENCIES

TITLE: Resolution to Support the International Labour Organization's (ILO) Violence and Harassment Convention, NO. 190 (C190)

PURPOSE: The resolution seeks to support the adoption of the ILO's Violence and Harassment Convention, No. 190 (C190) as the first ever legally binding global labor standard to prevent and address all forms of violence and harassment.

WHEREAS, the International Association of Official Human Rights Agencies (IAOHRA) is a professional association of state, county, and city governmental human rights commissions in the United States of America and several statutory human rights agencies in Canada;

WHEREAS, IAOHRA's goals are "to foster human and intergroup relations, to enhance human rights practices under law, and to promote civil and human rights around the world;" and

WHEREAS, IAOHRA has provided leadership in the development and enforcement of statutes and ordinances, on the local, state, and federal level, necessary to safeguard the human and civil rights of all people; and

WHEREAS, gender-based violence and harassment, including sexual harassment (GBVH) is a fundamental violation of human rights;

WHEREAS, GBVH in the world of work includes, but is not limited to, sexual violence in all of its forms, including sexual harassment, stalking, sexual assault and rape, trafficking, coercion, and restrictions on freedom of movement that occur while at work or on the way to and from work;

WHEREAS, GBVH encompasses domestic violence that impacts survivors' work lives, and harassment and violence that occurs within the context of employment committed on or off the job site by non-intimate partner co-workers, managers, clients or patients;

WHEREAS, although GBVH impacts all workers, women suffer at a much higher rate than men, which reflects the fact that GBVH stems from social and cultural gender inequality that values and enforces

traditionally defined masculinity as an expression of power;

WHEREAS, women's socioeconomic status, race, ethnicity, religion, ability, sexuality, gender expression, age and immigration status all may increase the risk that they will be targeted and experience GBVH in their working life.

WHEREAS, many workplaces lack adequate internal policies to address GBVH and even when policies do exist, employees and managers may not be aware of their existence or lack proper training on policy requirements;

WHEREAS, 50% to 80% of women experience sexual harassment at work, only 25% disclose that experience to anyone, and only 5% complain formally. Many survivors do not come forward because they do not think they will be believed, or they fear they will lose their jobs or otherwise face retaliation;

WHEREAS, economic insecurity, particularly precarious employment and low wages, where workers conduct their work in isolation such as hotel room cleaners and domestic workers, and occupational segregation such as in the construction sector are all risk factors for GBVH and workers without stable employment or economic security are less likely to report GBVH for fear of losing their jobs;

WHEREAS, GBVH has an enormous impact on women and the workplace as a whole. Studies and surveys found that: 25% of rape victims lose their job within a year of the assault; 30%-53% of employed victims of intimate partner violence lose their jobs due at least in part to the domestic violence; 44% of employed adults surveyed personally experienced domestic violence's effect in their workplaces; 21% of respondents (men and women) identified themselves as victims of intimate partner violence; and 64% of victims of domestic violence indicated their ability to work was affected by the violence.

WHEREAS, the International Labour Organization's (ILO) Violence and Harassment Convention, No. 190 (C190) is the first ever legally binding global labor standard (once ratified by an ILO member State)) to prevent and address all forms of violence and harassment in the world of work, including GBVH, and was negotiated and adopted in 2019 at the ILO by 187

governments, and their most representative employers' and workers' organizations;

WHEREAS, 25 countries have ratified C190 to date, including Canada, the U.S. has not yet ratified C190;

WHEREAS, C190 recognizes the right of all workers to a world of work free from violence and harassment, including gender-based violence and harassment. Defines "violence and harassment" in the world of work as "a range of unacceptable behaviors and practices, or threats thereof..., and includes gender-based violence and harassment".

WHEREAS, C190 defines gender-based violence and harassment as "violence and harassment directed at persons because of their sex or gender, or affecting persons of a particular sex or gender disproportionately and includes sexual harassment", applies to violence and harassment occurring in the course of, linked with, or arising out of work, and not simply the workplace, recognizes the need to address the root causes of gender-based violence and harassment, including gender stereotypes and norms, protects all workers in the world of work regardless of their contractual status or employment relationship, in the public and private sector and in the formal and informal economy, and expressly recognizes the need to respond to the impacts of domestic violence on workers in the world of work;

WHEREAS, ILO C190 addresses one of the biggest challenges to women everywhere in joining and fully participating in the world of work and acknowledges that gender-based violence and harassment disproportionately affect women and girls, and recognizes the need for an inclusive, integrated, and gender-responsive approach, which tackles underlying causes and risk factors, including gender stereotypes, multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination, and unequal gender-based power relations.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the International Association of Official Human Rights Agencies (IAOHRA) will advocate for federal, state, and local legislation and public policy incorporating the principles of ILO C190 including ratification.