

### 3\_8\_23 DEI

I want to begin with that earliest of labor slogans, after all, we are the people who brought you the weekend, 8 hours of work, 8 hours of rest, 8 hours of what we will.

So this is what we will. I'm... and I am doing what we, the union, will – speaking out against the attack on DEI programs and academic freedom by the State Legislature followed by a roll over on the part of the Board of Regents. That acquiescence to a mean spirited and violent politics at the top needs a clear stop. It's called resistance. It does not exist without courage and commitment and the sense that we are not alone.

Student protest has changed the world. It's been met with violent reaction at times. We can talk about People's Park in Berkeley which I remember, the student uprisings in Paris and Mexico in 68, young people who involved themselves in labor and went into the mines and factories to organize... anywhere there has been progress, students have been involved. That's why academic freedom is important. It's not only an abstract principle of freedom of speech that protects conservatives and progressives alike. It's for action and change – and resistance against those who would hold us back.

We are faced with old and moribund thinking. It's in opposition to positive change. It's in opposition to free thought and exchange of ideas. It's mean and inevitably leads to poverty and bloodshed. It's scapegoating. It's that notion that when someone else receives even a little bit of what they have long deserved, it takes something away from the rest of us – that the hard-fought gains for black people during the mass civil rights movement somehow hurt white people. I can tell you that most white people and certainly white women benefited more from that fight than black people. I was one of them. But the idea of reverse discrimination took hold when Reagan's Justice Department rushed to the aid of white males who claimed discrimination on the basis of race and sex. This current attack on DEI smacks of exactly that kind of thinking.

I'd like to end with that great labor slogan that corrects and states the opposite. It makes our protest real and important. It is the basis for solidarity and the change that benefits the whole society. "An injury to one is an injury to all."