KEY PRIORITY: COMMUNITY OVERSIGHT

CREATION OF A PERMANENT PUBLIC CONSTRUCTION OVERSIGHT COMMISSION

“We’re at the front end of a movement in America. Working class families are going to have to be noticed. Wages and earnings for workers have been stagnant, even though corporate earnings have been going up. Even though the economy in New Orleans is booming, we have some of the highest poverty statistics in that nation. This city has practiced insanity for too long.”

--Commission Co-Chair Oliver Thomas (Aug. 1, 2014)

“When public money is being spent it should benefit the public.”

“I wasn’t there in Greensboro when they sat in to desegregate lunch counters. I see this as the 21st century equivalent—This time we’re going to desegregate the money.”

-- Commissioner Ernest Jones (Aug. 1, 2014)

THE PRINCIPLE

Community involvement, participation, and oversight are critical to address New Orleans’ Black jobs crisis and soaring inequality. Enforceable agreements, monitoring, and oversight, are indispensable to the implementation of community priorities. The Community needs to have a real role in overseeing the implementation of policies and agreements developed to benefit them and that directly affect them.

THE REASONING

Community monitoring through the establishment of a permanent Public Construction Oversight Commission will bring transparency and community voice to public construction. A permanent Public Construction Oversight Commission, a tripartite body composed of representatives appointed by government, the construction industry, and worker and community organizations, would help deal with the crisis by helping to ensure that publicly funded construction projects maximize their impact and that publicly funded jobs are high quality career jobs. The Commission could make recommendations on issues affecting construction workers, including about wages, health and safety, and career ladders.

The Public Construction Oversight Commission should assist in the monitoring and enforcement of policies and agreements regarding the worksite including wages, hiring, training and safety. The Board should play a critical role in not only outreach and training, but also in monitoring and enforcement.