#3 - Proposed Constitutional Amendment: Consolidation of Equity Committees into a Single Social Justice Committee

**Article:** 5

**Section:** E

**Subject:** Consolidation of Equity Committees

**HEU Will:**

Amend the Constitution and Bylaws to consolidate the six existing equity committees into a single Social Justice Committee. This new committee will integrate the mandates, goals, and activities of all equity committees under one unified structure to enhance collaboration, reduce redundancies, and strengthen solidarity within the union.

**Because:**

1. **Unified Vision and Solidarity:**
   * Combining the equity committees into one Social Justice Committee sends a powerful message of solidarity to members and the broader community, demonstrating the union’s unified commitment to equity, diversity, and inclusion.
2. **Increased Efficiency:**
   * The current structure of six separate committees creates overlapping initiatives and inefficiencies. A single committee ensures streamlined decision-making and resource allocation, allowing for more impactful actions.
3. **Alignment with Employer Policies:**
   * Many objectives of the equity committees are already mandated by employers through laws and collective agreements, such as anti-discrimination policies and respectful workplace standards. The union’s role should focus on holding employers accountable rather than duplicating these responsibilities.
4. **Addressing Leadership Exploitation:**
   * Consolidating the equity committees into a single Social Justice Committee will reduce opportunities for misuse of these platforms for political agendas or electioneering by leadership. A unified committee structure enhances transparency and accountability, ensuring its focus remains solely on serving the membership's interests and advancing equity.
5. **Broad-Based Representation:**
   * The Social Justice Committee would represent all equity-seeking groups equally, fostering inclusivity and ensuring diverse voices are heard without creating silos.
6. **Resource Optimization:**
   * Consolidation reduces administrative costs and allows resources to be reallocated to direct member support, advocacy, and education.

**Proposed Language:**

"The Equity Standing Committees will be consolidated into a single Social Justice Committee responsible for promoting equity, diversity, and inclusion within the union. The Social Justice Committee will encompass the goals and mandates of the former equity committees, ensuring representation for all equity-seeking groups under one coordinated structure."

**Supporting Evidence:**

* **Transparency and Accountability:**
  + A single committee minimizes fragmented oversight and political manipulation, focusing resources and efforts on collective membership interests rather than individual agendas. This approach builds trust and integrity within the union.
* **Member Engagement:**
  + The current fragmented structure has discouraged member engagement. A unified committee will empower members and foster greater participation by providing clarity and a centralized approach to equity-related issues.
* **Effective Advocacy:**
  + Consolidating the committees creates a stronger, unified voice to champion social justice and equity internally and externally. This united approach reinforces the union’s influence and credibility when advocating for members’ rights and addressing systemic inequalities.
* **Cost-Effectiveness:**
  + Reducing administrative overhead and duplication of efforts will allow the union to reallocate resources directly to member initiatives, training, and support, ensuring that every dollar benefits those it is meant to serve.
* **Long-Term Relevance:**
  + The Social Justice Committee will have the flexibility to adapt to evolving issues and priorities, ensuring that equity remains central to the union’s mission while addressing contemporary challenges faced by members.

**Key Considerations:**

1. The existing six equity committees include:
   * Ethnic Diversity
   * Indigenous Peoples
   * Pink Triangle
   * Women & Non-Binary
   * People with Disabilities
   * Young Workers
2. The current system duplicates efforts already mandated under employer policies and collective agreements, diluting the union’s capacity to hold employers accountable effectively.
3. Reports from these committees are inconsistent, and their measurable impact is unclear. Centralizing efforts under one Social Justice Committee ensures consistent reporting and a more unified strategy.
4. The union’s preamble emphasizes member protection and advancing equitable treatment. This reform reflects a return to these foundational values by addressing systemic issues directly and efficiently.
5. Legal structures such as the Employment Standards Act and the Human Rights Code already mandate employer accountability for equity. The union’s resources should focus on enforcing these standards rather than duplicating employer obligations.

**Call to Action:**

This amendment unites the voices of equity-seeking groups into a cohesive, powerful force that better reflects the principles of solidarity and progress. Member support is critical to bringing this vision to life and ensuring our union remains a leader in equity and justice. Together, we can transform HEU into a more transparent, efficient, and member-focused organization.