

“Inclusion for Everyone”

2:54 minute IBEW-produced video posted at <http://ibew.org>

Text Transcription by Alice Lockridge

“Hello, I’m Ed Hill, International President of the IBEW, the Brotherhood — and Sisterhood — of the electrical workers here in North America. As IBEW members, we do many different jobs, all of them important and all of them contributing to the great diversity of our union. There’s another job, though, one that I want to talk to you about today. It’s a job that’s just as important.

“As members of the union, it’s also our job to improve the lives of working men and women, and to make sure that *everyone* is treated fairly and equally in the workplace. Being part of the labor movement means each of us needs to work toward a day when *every* worker receives the same amount of respect, opportunity and dignity. That day’s not here yet. Despite the progress that’s been made, we still see cases where an IBEW brother or sister is treated badly for no good reason, other than the fact that they are perceived as somehow different.

“It might be gender, it might be because of race or religion, it might even be because of the job classifications. And when times are tough — and many of our members are feeling the economic pressure — old prejudice can spring back to life. That’s not acceptable. And that’s not the IBEW way. And that’s why the IBEW is dedicating itself to confronting issues of discrimination head-on. It’s why we’re committed to standing firm against outdated and unfair practices of the past. It’s why we’re determined to rid our ranks of the those who choose to treat others unfairly — for whatever reason.

[audiovisual from 2006 IBEW International Convention: “Resolution Number 14, Diversity”]

“The IBEW International convention in 2006 took a firm stand against all forms of discrimination and harassment within the brotherhood. Since that time, the sixteen members of our International Committee on Diversity and Inclusion have worked tirelessly. And our Diversity and Inclusion Training Program is reaching our union leaders at the international, district and local levels.

“Our commitment to workplace equality, though, really starts with each and every one of you. Together, we need to stand firm against discrimination of all kinds, to look out for each other, and to work together to make sure our fellow members are doing the same. That means recognizing when someone isn’t being treated fairly on the job, and having the strength and the courage to point it out. Or, if we can, *do* something about it.

“Each and every one of us is an individual who brings a unique background, skills, and strengths to our brotherhood. By working together we can make sure that these differences don’t weaken us, but only makes us stronger as we move ahead. In this day and age, we need everyone’s contribution to make the union stronger. And we’ll make sure that everyone who carries a membership card in this brotherhood feels at home.”