Whereas, The agriculture industry plays a vital role in society by providing food, fiber for clothing, fuel, renewable resources, land management, wildlife habitat preservation, tourism and recreation opportunities; and

Whereas, The UN estimates that the world population will reach 8.5 billion by 2030, and as high as 9.8 billion by 2050, requiring a 70 percent increase in global food production; and

Whereas, Employment in agricultural and food-related industries supports employment in other industries and is a critical component of the United States economy; and

Whereas, The average American farmer is 57 years old with few young people entering the field; and

Whereas, Farming and the study of agriculture, food, and natural resources is often overlooked as a profession, yet is a STEM career that relies on advanced technology to meet consumer demand and the study of biology and genetics, engineering, physics, chemistry, math, geology/hydrology, and other scientific fields; and

Whereas, Farm to School programs and school gardens support local economic development, provide students with access to healthy food and provide valuable exposure to the farming industry and hands-on lessons in nutrition and agriculture; and

Whereas, There is a shortage of agriculture education teachers; therefore be it

Resolved, That National PTA supports the integration of agriculture education in the K-12 curriculum, hands-on experiences in school gardens and an expansion of career technical education programs in order to support rural workforce development, agriculture innovation and informed personal choices about diet, health and the environment. National PTA supports high school agriculture courses being considered as credits that fulfill the science requirements for graduation; and be it further

...
Resolved, That National PTA supports grant programs, incentives, funding and staffing that encourages schools to procure and serve more locally grown foods that directly support farm to school and school garden programs and provide direct training opportunities for classroom teachers to expand their use of hands-on agriculture in the classroom and school gardens; and be it further

Resolved, That National PTA supports facility standards that include space for a school garden; and be it further

Resolved, That National PTA supports the development of teacher training programs that create a direct education and certification pathway for agriculture education teachers.

RATIONALE
Agriculture plays an essential role in our everyday lives, contributing food, fiber for clothing, fuel and stewardship of the land. Farmers are biologists, chemists, engineers, makers, entrepreneurs, inventors, veterinarians and conservationists. Farming today uses advanced data collection, sensors, automated machines, biomimicry, drones and other sophisticated technologies and applications to improve predictability and increase yield and profits. Unfortunately, the farming profession is often undervalued and dismissed as low-tech or uneducated and most students only have exposure to the profession if they are enrolled in a career technical education program.

It is essential that we separate myth from reality and provide opportunities for students to learn about where their food comes from and provide hands-on learning opportunities that spark interest in agriculture to sustain this important industry and grow our next generation of farmers. At the elementary level, curriculum and work in school gardens is often run with support from the Office of Nutrition Services. Agriculture needs to be intentionally incorporated in the core curriculum standards with professional development opportunities available for classroom teachers. Additionally, degree programs should be structured to support agriculture education students and future agriculture educators.