



Interfaith Worker Justice



1020 West Bryn Mawr, 4th Fl. • Chicago, IL 60660-4627

Phone: (773) 728-8400 • Fax: (773) 728-8409

www.interfaithworkerjustice.org

Recommendations to the Presidential Transition Team on Domestic Priorities

Interfaith Worker Justice (IWJ) is a national organization that mobilizes, educates, and organizes the faith community to improve wages, benefits, and work conditions for low-wage workers. We make the following recommendations to the Obama Administration:

Immediately End Workplace Immigration Raids

Workplace immigration raids are morally reprehensible and are a prime contributor to the climate of fear among many workers, particularly undocumented immigrant workers, that prevents workers from raising complaints about labor abuse and labor law violations. This, in turn, lowers standards for all workers. We urge the administration to immediately halt these raids and instead focus on protecting the rights of all workers.

Enforce Labor Law for All Workers and Stop Wage Theft

The U.S. is experiencing a crisis of wage theft, particularly among low-wage and undocumented workers. Employers may pay less than minimum wage, not pay workers for all hours worked, misclassify workers, not give a last paycheck, and more. The Department of Labor is under-resourced, under-staffed, and has long lacked the will to strongly enforce wage and hour laws. We urge that the incoming Secretary of Labor make ending wage theft a priority and take the following actions:

- Submit an FY2010 budget request to greatly increase Wage and Hour Division funds.
- Quadruple the staff of the Wage and Hour Division over the next 5-6 years.
- Conduct targeted investigations of low-wage industries known to have wage theft.
- Partner with community groups in ending wage theft, much like in community policing.
- Strongly enforce all penalties available under current law, including fines, liquidated damages, and jail for repeat or willful offenders.

Advocate for and Pass the Employee Free Choice Act

As people of faith, we recognize the dignity of all people and all workers. Our religious traditions affirm the right of workers to freely organize themselves to improve their wages, benefits and working conditions and assert the right to a voice on the job. The Employee Free Choice Act would give workers a free choice over whether and how to form a union. We request that (future) White House staff raise this issue with Senators and encourage their support.

Pass a “Good-Jobs” Creation Package

As the administration looks to craft an economic stimulus package, likely to include a large job creation program, we must ensure that these are *good* jobs and that standards for workers are raised, not lowered. We urge that the package include minimum standards to pay living wages and support strong enforcement of all labor laws, including protection of the right to organize.

Ensure a Strong Unemployment Safety Net

We urge you to include in the economic stimulus package currently being developed measures that will ensure a strong unemployment safety net. In the short term this means adequate funds for states' unemployment insurance needs and extension of length of coverage. For the long term, we urge inclusion of the Unemployment Insurance Modernization Act, which would lead to increased coverage of low-wage, non-standard, seasonal, part-time, and other workers.