



Strike Season: Low Wage Workers Rising

By Adam DeRose

Government contract workers call on Obama for Executive Order

Government-contracted workers went on strike four times this summer calling on President Obama to sign an Executive Order requiring government-contracted vendors to pay their workers a living wage. Walking alongside the strikers, IWJ's National Policy Director, the Rev. Michael Livingston, offered prayers and support. Nearly 500 people of faith and IWJ supporters signed the petition calling for the Executive Order. Workers and the Rev. Livingston dropped by the White House to deliver the signatures in September.

President Obama: "never has justice for so many been so easy,"

Livingston said at a meeting with White House staff.

The U.S. government, through federal contracts, grants, loans and concession agreements is the largest low-wage job creator in America. Interfaith Worker Justice and people of faith are calling on the President to stand with working families and guarantee that the government creates good jobs

that provide the means off which a worker and his or her family can live.



Thousands of workers and faith leaders delivered more than 250,000 petitions calling on the President to sign an executive order requiring government-contracted vendors pay a living wage.

Fast food and retail workers call for \$15 wages and the right to form a union

Outside of D.C., workers in fast food joints and retail shops in more than 50 cities joined together for a national day of action on Aug. 30. Workers with the campaign are calling for a \$15 hourly wage and the right to form a union.

People of faith agree, it's time the largest and most profitable corporations in the world treat their workers with dignity and respect. Interfaith Worker Justice-affiliated worker centers and interfaith groups rallied with workers during the day of action and many walked the strikers back to their worksites after the one-day strike.

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Interfaith Worker Justice is blessed to work with one of the most committed and inspiring group of worker advocates who are on the front lines of the nation's growing worker center movement. In cities across the country, they are leading the struggle to end wage theft, increase the minimum wage and promote workplace standards that honor the dignity of workers. In July, they gathered in Chicago for the annual IWJ Worker Center Convening.

Theft by Payroll Card

By Blake Valenta

"Woe to him who builds his house by unrighteousness, and his upper rooms by injustice; who makes his neighbours work for nothing, and does not give them their wages;"

– Jeremiah 22:13

Give workers the wages they are due – unfortunately, some companies are undermining this basic principle through expanded use of debit or payroll cards.

Paid by Debit or Payroll Card?
We want to hear from you!
Contact bvalenta@iwj.org.

Some payroll cards are pre-paid debit cards employers issue out to workers in lieu of traditional paychecks. Far too often workers are forced into these cards without a clear way to opt-out or an explanation of the fees. Only after they're paid do workers discover the hefty fees for withdrawing their wages – at that point, they're already tied to the system.

IWJ staff is currently authoring a report highlighting the dangers of poor regulation around payroll cards and needs your help. In researching this issue IWJ is finding that the terms and conditions are not easily accessible. If you have been given a payroll card or know someone who has, please contact bvalenta@iwj.org.

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Historic Rule Change for Home Care Workers

President Obama and the U.S. Department of Labor announced that basic wage and hour protections would be extended to more than two million home care workers!

More than 1,000 supporters urged the DOL to protect home care workers under the Fair Labor Standards Act. Thanks to pressure from home care workers, worker advocates, faith and community leaders and some of IWJ's awesome affiliates, the President followed through on his promise to look into and change this unjust rule.

When the new rule takes effect on Jan. 1, 2015, workers who care for our sick and elderly loved ones will finally be protected by minimum wage and overtime regulations like they deserve.

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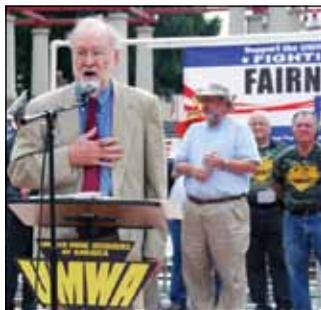
Faith Works is produced by IWJ's Communications Department. For questions, corrections and story suggestions contact Communications Director, Cathy Junia, at cjunia@iwj.org or call 773-728-8400 x40.

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Victory for Mine Workers

With support from the faith community, the United Mine Workers of America reached a global settlement with Peabody



Energy and Patriot Coal that will provide funding of more than \$400 million to cover future health care benefits for retirees affected by the bankruptcy of Patriot Coal. The settlement will be submitted for approval by the bankruptcy court in early November.

"I am very pleased that we have been able to reach this agreement with Peabody and Patriot," said UMWA International President Cecil E. Roberts. "This is a significant amount of money that will help maintain health care for thousands of retirees who earned those benefits though years of labor in America's coal mines. This settlement will also help Patriot emerge from bankruptcy and continue to provide jobs for our members and thousands of others in West Virginia and Kentucky."

Interfaith Worker Justice and members of the Religious Leaders for Coalfield Justice played an active role in supporting the more than 3,000 retired mine workers and their families. More than 300 faith leaders signed a letter urging Patriot Coal, Arch Coal and Peabody Energy to honor their contractual obligations to their current and retired workforce.

Who wants poop in their chicken dinner?

With a guy in a chicken suit in front and center, a coalition of food and worker safety advocates, including Interfaith Worker Justice, rallied outside the White House, Sept. 26, in an effort to stop a new USDA regulation that threatens the safety of consumers and workers alike.

In a colorful protest, the group rolled out names of more than 500,000 people opposed to the new regulation that would replace up to 75 percent of USDA inspectors with factory employees, drastically deregulating food safety.

Reduced federal oversight will substantially raise the danger of fecal contamination, chemical residue and salmonella turning up on meat on American dinner plates – as found



in results of pilot projects on the new rule. Chicken will potentially be exposed to more chemicals in the production process.

Additionally, the industry-friendly rule change would place poultry factory workers at severely increased risk of injury and chemical exposure by increasing production speed by up to 25 percent.

For more information on the campaign, visit www.chickenjustice.org.

JUST Saying

A Message from IWJ Executive Director Kim Bobo

Shared Prosperity & Community Partnerships

"Shared prosperity" and "community partnerships" were two major themes of the AFL-CIO convention in Los Angeles, held Sept. 7-11.

Shared prosperity presents an alternative vision to the failed trickle-down economic model promoted by too many business leaders and politicians. Some of the richest companies in the nation pay poverty wages, offer no health care (or it is too expensive to get while earning poverty wages) and fight workers when they try to organize for a voice. Companies like Walmart and McDonalds try to justify poverty wages by touting their "we offer opportunity" line. Indeed, they do offer opportunity for a few, but the very few. We need opportunity and shared prosperity for all of us, not a tiny few.

Community partnerships between unions, worker centers, faith communities, ethical businesses and others will build the movement for economic change in this nation. How things are is not how they have to be, but we must organize in new and deeper ways to bring about meaningful change. And the forces of greed and wealth concentration are already trying to attack our partnerships. This past summer, "Center for Union Facts," an extremist organization designed to denigrate unions, attacked workers centers and sought to burden them with additional paperwork requirements. These shoestring operations that provide front-line support for workers in low-wage jobs are similar to the Catholic Labor Schools and the Jewish Labor Lyciums of the 1930s to the 1950s. They deserve support and encouragement, not extremist attacks.

This fall, join us in calling for shared prosperity. Participate in actions supporting fast food workers. Plan a Black Friday event (Nov. 29) outside your local Walmart (I'm already planning one near my sister's house where I'll be for Thanksgiving). Support your local worker center or interfaith group (see list on the back) in advocating shared prosperity and building community partnerships.



Thanks for Your Support!

You've kept us on our feet these last few months. Literally.

In September, a group of IWJ staff members and friends ran the Chicago Half Marathon and raised more than \$2,000 for programs that support low-wage workers. Thanks to all our runners – Sung Yeon Choi-Morrow, Adam DeRose, Cathy Junia and Jacob Lesniewski – and to the friends and family who supported them along the way.

We also spent the month of September, particularly Labor Day, lifting up and honoring all the amazing workers who inspire us to carry out IWJ's mission. By participating in our annual Honor a Worker program, IWJ supporters like you helped raise more than \$10,000 to help fund our continued struggle against wage theft and other forms of worker oppression. Thanks so much for your support! See our list of 2013 honorees here: <http://bit.ly/2013honorees>.

To support the work of IWJ, visit <http://bit.ly/donate2iwj>.

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Walmart workers getting ready for Black Friday

On Sept. 6, Walmart workers and thousands of community allies told Walmart managers that retaliation and intimidation was unacceptable! Faith leaders stood with workers at actions all across the country. IWJ affiliates in multiple cities faced arrest in solidarity with Walmart workers. After the huge day of action, faith leaders participated in walk backs to accompany workers back to their Walmart for their shifts. Clergy and community leaders wanted to make sure that Walmart managers and executives were not planning to retaliate against workers... again.

Back in June, IWJ reported when 200 Walmart workers headed to Bentonville, Ark. for a week-long strike. The strikers brought concerns about low pay, poor working conditions and a culture of intimidation and retaliation in stores to Walmart's executives and shareholders. Walmart responded to

the June strike with more retaliation and intimidation, and 60 Walmart workers have faced unlawful retaliation.

Faith leaders and community allies aren't going to let Walmart intimidate workers into silence. Along with workers and other allies, members of congregations throughout the country are adopting Walmart stores in their communities. Be part of the Black Friday action. Visit www.iwj.org to learn more.

Get involved with IWJ's corporate justice campaigns. Sign up to become an e-advocate and receive alerts about these important campaigns!



OUR Walmart members, faith and community allies rallied outside a Chicago Walmart store, demanding an end to retaliation against workers standing up for their rights.

Faith Community Backs Hotel Workers

In the last few years, Interfaith Worker Justice has worked closely with Hyatt workers to raise awareness of health and safety issues at the hotel, especially related to women. When workers called for a global boycott of the hotel chain, faith communities came together to honor the boycott and signed on to letters echoing workers' demand for fair wages, benefits and safe working conditions.

The United Church of Christ, for one, decided not to house delegates to their 2013 General Synod at a Hyatt hotel. The Presbyterian Church (USA) also voiced strong support for Hyatt housekeepers during the global boycott.

Because of the combined actions of workers, faith groups and individuals, on July 1, Hyatt Hotel reached a tentative agreement through which workers would see an increase in benefits by four percent each year. The global boycott was lifted.

However, the struggle for justice at a number of Hyatt properties continues. IWJ commends the workers' leadership and the faith community's continued commitment to supporting workers beyond the global

boycott. For many months, IWJ has worked with religious organizations and denominations to set contracting standards with hotels and event venues.

The Ignatian Solidarity Network, the American Academy of Religion and the Society of Biblical Literature – groups that regularly hold conferences – agreed to include protective language in their contracts. The contract language revision allows them to pull out of contracts with hotels, venues and vendors involved in labor disputes.

People of faith are invited to promote and preserve the rights of hotel workers. As a consumer, you have an opportunity to stand with workers and highlight your preference for fair treatment for hospitality workers. When traveling, make it a habit to check www.hotelworkersrising.org before booking your hotel.

IWJ encourages faith communities to only patronize facilities and venues that recognize their employees' rights. Visit <http://bit.ly/ProtectiveLanguage> for more information on the campaign.

Building Bridges at the AFL-CIO Convention

By Jacob Swenson

In September, the AFL-CIO held its quadrennial convention in Los Angeles. The convention highlighted a renewed emphasis on broadening the labor movement by building strong community-labor partnerships. Kim Bobo spoke (or should we say preached!) on the convention floor about the importance of forging deep relationships between the labor and faith communities based on shared values.

As the AFL-CIO continues to reach out to the faith community, folks at Interfaith Worker Justice are reflecting on how we can reach back. Here are three ways people of faith can engage them:

Reframe the narrative around shared values.

The convention was a reminder that the faith and organized labor communities share core values. IWJ planned an interfaith service on the first day of the convention in which faith leaders read statements of the "golden rule" as found in the world's faith traditions. Throughout the convention, union leaders talked about how our society has lost touch with this fundamental moral principle. Often, they spoke using the powerful religious language heard in houses of worship. Faith and labor voices united can offer an antidote to the "rug-

ged individualism" that dominates contemporary conversation.

Work together to improve communities.

When faith communities partner with local labor unions, the minimum wage can be raised, wage theft ordinances passed, and unemployed workers put back to work. As the AFL-CIO works to deepen its ties to communities, this is the perfect time for people of faith to reach back. If you already know local labor leaders, why not give one a call to meet for coffee? If you already have relationships with labor leaders in your area, this is a great time to start one. Chances are good that one of your fellow congregants is a union member.

Build new Worker Centers.

In too many communities, particularly in so-called "right to work" states, workers are not represented by unions. Without strong unions, communities are looking to create worker centers as another vehicle for helping workers. Check out the IWJ website to find a worker center near you and find out how you can get involved.

IWJ is excited by the new agenda that came out of the AFL-CIO convention and hopes you'll join in forging a deeper partnership between faith and labor.

Become a Worker Justice Congregation!

Has someone from your congregation been a victim of wage theft? Do you know families who struggle to survive on low wages? Does a living wage sound like good policy that your congregation could stand behind? Want to do more, but not quite sure where to start?

Interfaith Worker Justice is strengthening its relationships with congregations by developing the Worker Justice Congregation program for congregations and faith communities just like yours!

As a congregational partner, IWJ will provide you with resources to support your ministry to and with workers. IWJ will keep you connected on information about wage theft, immigration, minimum wage and health and safety campaigns. You will also receive special discounts at respected businesses and services, like Costco, Forest Printing, Just Coffee, and the Syracuse Cultural Workers. E-mail cjunia@iwj.org for more information.

Support IWJ with a gift of stock

Charitable gifts of stock or mutual fund shares are a great way to support workers and at the same time receive a year-end tax break. Securities that have increased in a value and that have been held for at least a year and a day can be deducted as a charitable contribution at full market value. Visit <http://bit.ly/StockGiftIWJ> for more information or e-mail info@iwj.org.





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Look inside and be inspired...



Coast to coast, fast food and retail workers risked their livelihood as they led unprecedented strikes and actions calling for dignity and respect on the job. Go to page 1 to find out how faith communities are supporting them.



Walmart workers are stepping up and making history. On Black Friday, Nov. 29, join workers and allies at actions across the country. See page 3 for more information.



IWJ Affiliates

Arkansas Interfaith Committee for Worker Justice – Little Rock, AR
Clergy and Laity United for Economic Justice (CLUE)—California – Oakland, CA
CLUE—LA – Los Angeles, CA
East Bay Interfaith Committee for Worker Justice – Oakland, CA
Interfaith Committee for Worker Justice in San Diego – San Diego, CA
Interfaith Council on Economics and Justice – San Jose, CA
Sonoma Interfaith Committee for Worker Justice – Santa Rosa, CA
IWJ-Colorado/FRESC for Good Jobs and Strong Communities – Denver, CO
Connecticut Center for a New Economy-Hartford – Hartford, CT
D.C. Jobs with Justice—Interfaith Worker Justice of Greater Washington – Washington, DC
Interfaith Action of Southwest Florida – Immokalee, FL
South Florida Interfaith Worker Justice – Miami, FL
Georgia Poultry Alliance – Atlanta, GA
Interfaith Worker Justice, Atlanta – Atlanta, GA
DuPage Interfaith Worker Justice – Naperville, IL
Arise Chicago – Chicago, IL
Community, Faith and Labor Coalition – Indianapolis, IN
Interfaith Committee on Work & Community – Bloomington, IN
Calumet Project – Hammond, IN

St. Joseph Valley Project – South Bend, IN
Interfaith Worker Justice of Kansas – Wichita, KS
Interfaith Worker Justice—NOLA – New Orleans, LA
Interfaith Worker Justice Southern Maine – Portland, ME
IWJ of Maryland – Baltimore, MD
Massachusetts Interfaith Committee for Worker Justice – Boston, MA
Interfaith Worker Justice—Metro Detroit – Oak Park, MI
Workers Interfaith Network – Minneapolis, MN
Interfaith Worker Justice of Nebraska – Omaha, NE
Interfaith Worker Justice—New Mexico – Santa Fe, NM
Greater New York Labor-Religion Coalition – New York, NY
Capital District Labor-Religion Coalition – Albany, NY
Central New York Labor-Religion Coalition – East Syracuse, NY
Labor-Religion Coalition – Latham, NY
Labor-Religion Coalition of Binghamton – Binghamton, NY
Beloved Community Center – Greensboro, NC
Cincinnati Interfaith Committee on Worker Justice – Cincinnati, OH
Greater Columbus Jobs with Justice – Columbus, OH
Toledo Area Jobs with Justice – Toledo, OH
Central Oklahoma Community Forum – Oklahoma City, OK
Eastern Oklahoma Labor Religion Council – Tulsa, OK

Religious Outreach Committee/Portland Jobs with Justice – Portland, OR
Springfield Solidarity Network/Jobs with Justice – Eugene, OR
Labor-Religion Coalition of Western Pennsylvania – Pittsburgh, PA
Philadelphia Area Jobs with Justice – Philadelphia, PA
Interfaith Worker Justice of East Tennessee – Knoxville, TN
Middle Tennessee Jobs with Justice – Murfreesboro, TN
Workers Interfaith Network – Memphis, TN
O.U.R. Vanderbilt – Nashville, TN
Virginia Interfaith Center for Public Policy – Richmond, VA
Interfaith Coalition for Worker Justice of South Central Wisconsin – Madison, WI

Worker Centers

Arizona Interfaith Alliance for Worker Justice – Phoenix, AZ
Southside Workers Center – Tucson, AZ
Northwest Arkansas Workers Justice Center – Springdale, AR
Pilipino Workers Center – Los Angeles, CA
Young Workers United – San Francisco, CA
South Florida Interfaith Worker Justice – Miami, FL
Economic Justice Coalition – Athens, GA
ARISE Chicago – Chicago, IL
Center for Worker Justice of Eastern Iowa – Coralville, IA
Easter Maine Workers' Center/Food AND Medicine – Brewer, ME

Southern Maine Worker Center – Portland, ME
MassCOSH – Dorchester, MA
Centro de Trabajadores Unidos en la Lucha – Minneapolis, MN
New Labor – New Brunswick, NJ
Tompkins County Workers' Center – Ithaca, NY
Damayan Migrant Workers Center – New York, NY
Restaurant Opportunity Center (ROC) of New York – New York, NY
Workers' Center of Central New York – Syracuse, NY
Western North Carolina Workers' Center – Morganton, NC
Cincinnati Interfaith Workers Center – Cincinnati, OH
Workers' Interfaith Network – Memphis, TN
Workers' Dignity Project – Nashville, TN
Workers' Defense Project/Proyecto Defensa Laboral – Austin, TX
Fe Y Justicia (formerly Houston Interfaith Worker Justice Center) – Houston, TX
Madison Workers' Right Center – Madison, WI
Voces de la Frontera – Milwaukee, WI

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