

**INSIST**

**on love**

**RESIST**

**all hate**


**PERSIST**

**in hope**



[www.iwj.org](http://www.iwj.org)

IWJ 2016 Annual Program Review



“Do not take advantage of foreigners who live among you in your land. Treat them like native-born Israelites, and love them as you love yourself.

Remember that you were once foreigners living in the land of Egypt. I am the Lord your God.”

- Leviticus 19:33-34

# Message from the Executive Director

**This** is not an easy time. And we're not going to win every campaign. There will be painful, difficult losses that will make life more difficult for many working people. As people of faith, we must retain some sense of perspective and remember that each campaign is part of that longer arc of justice in the moral universe that sometimes is difficult to watch bend in our favor in real time. But, we know that we can resist and that when we do, we can win.

That's why I'm excited to share a bit about what's ahead for Interfaith Worker Justice in the coming months and years, as we prepare for a long four years. After a number of conversations with the working people in our network, worker center and faith-labor leadership, the IWJ board and staff, and allies, what follows is our plan to continue to grow the IWJ network.

To do this, we must fortify our core and make IWJ's model more sustainable. That means working with each affiliate in our network to inventory their strengths and figure out the best way to provide support to affiliates based on each organization's particular needs.

It means working with our network steering committee to codify a process for a more formal affiliate membership process and the benefits that come with membership.

It means shoring up our campaign work through affiliate-led working groups that can drive the work forward in stopping wage theft, ensuring safe workplaces, stopping deportations, and protecting the right of working people to organize.

It means talking seriously with our members of Congress and encouraging them to introduce national legislation that will increase pressure on Congressional Republicans and the White House to consider meaningful worker justice policies and bring the conversation about worker justice into the political discourse of the day.

It means regularly bringing together interfaith leaders to support campaigns for worker justice by wielding their own influence to move policy on Capitol Hill.

It means strengthening our relationships with natural allies: unions, unaffiliated worker centers, houses of worship and faith leaders, and other progressive champions.

Together, these represent an ambitious shift for Interfaith Worker Justice. But there has not been a more urgent and dramatic shift to the political landscape in recent history than that which we witnessed on November 8. We must innovate if we are to continue to grow and continue to win real victories that improve the lives of working people.

I look forward to continuing this journey together.





Organizing is going to be more important **NOW** than it's been in decades. Faith leaders, working people, and labor organizers must stand together and work harder than ever before to prevent the rollback of vital worker rights and to fight the persecution of any community, be they undocumented immigrants, people of the Muslim faith, or working people in low-wage jobs. We will defeat hate with love; we will conquer greed with justice.

- Rev. Doug Mork,  
IWJ Board President

# INSIST

**In 2016, the Interfaith Worker Justice affiliate network and allies moved a number of campaigns to improve the lives of working people.**



*photo credit Earl Dotter/Oxfam America*

Throughout the year, worker centers in Arkansas, North Carolina, and Minnesota were – and continue to be – part of a national coalition of worker-led campaigns to bring justice to the poultry processing industry by improving safety on the job and ensuring that working people have the most basic dignities, like the right to use the bathroom.

During the National Wage Theft Day of Action, worker centers nationwide recovered thousands of dollars in stolen wages and exposed unscrupulous employers who have committed wage theft.



*photo courtesy of New Labor*

After exposing modern-day slavery in Florida's tomato fields, the Coalition for Immokalee Workers (CIW) organized a nationwide boycott of Wendy's, the only major fast-food corporation that has not signed on to the Fair Food Program, choosing instead to move its sourcing of tomatoes to Mexico, where it can continue abusing working people with impunity.

*photo courtesy of Coalition of Immokalee Workers*



*photo courtesy of CTUL*

In October 2016, retail janitors who were organizing with the Centro de Trabajadores Unidos en Lucha (CTUL), a Minneapolis-based worker center, won a three-year campaign for the right to collectively bargain for a fair contract for janitors who clean at Target, Macy's, and Best Buy stores.

# The broader labor movement saw significant victories in 2016, as well.

After years of powerful organizing, the Fight For \$15 and its allies can celebrate the 19 states and 22 cities and counties where the minimum wage went up as the clock struck midnight on Jan. 1.



Unions everywhere were relieved when the Supreme Court split over *Friedrichs v. California Teachers Association*, a non-decision that prevented what might have been the start of national “right to work” legislation for working people in the public sector.



While 2017 and beyond will surely be a difficult time, these victories and the organizing that brought such successes are what fuels us as we continue to strive for worker justice.

Indeed, there is much to be hopeful about: a new generation of young activists being called to serve, the dynamic organizing in worker centers, faith-labor coalitions and unions nationwide, and the fact that worker justice issues are consistently supported by a large majority of Americans in every state. Of course we must stay focused on what is moral and just and remember that love and the power of people organizing can overcome even the dark times that are surely ahead.

# RESIST

## National Advocacy Together

IWJ played an instrumental role in drafting the legislation for the Pay Stub Disclosure Act (H.R. 4376/S. 2630), introducing it in the House and Senate earlier in the year, and adding support among legislators. In February 2016, IWJ worker center leaders held a standing room only press briefing on Capitol Hill with Representatives Bobby Scott and Keith Ellison to promote the bill. The companion bill in the Senate, S. 2630, is sponsored by Senator Al Franken. In June 2016, IWJ worker center and faith leaders spent a day lobbying legislators on Capitol Hill, adding more than 20 new co-sponsors.

IWJ was one of the principal organizations to help craft the Workplace Action for a Growing Economy (WAGE) Act in 2016, which would have strengthened protections for workers who want to raise wages and improve workplace conditions.

Working with Senator Patty Murray and Representative Rosa DeLauro, IWJ helped draft the Wage Theft Prevention and Wage Recovery Act, a law that would guarantee workers the right to recover fair recompense for stolen wages and hold employers accountable for paying employees what they are owed. IWJ also pushed for the inclusion of a community education fund, which would create a federal grant program to facilitate partnership between the Department of Labor, community-based organizations, and worker centers across the country to educate workers about the law and enforce it.

Despite the significant challenges we face in passing any federal legislation both before and especially since November 8, IWJ is committed to intensifying our organizing to do whatever we can to move these bills or alternative policy solutions forward and win meaningful victories for working people.



*IWJ affiliates met with Senator Feinstein as part of a lobbying day on Capitol Hill.*

Learn to  
do good;  
seek justice,  
rescue the  
oppressed,  
defend the  
orphan,  
plead for  
the widow.

– Isaiah 1:17



O ye who believe! stand out firmly for justice, as witnesses to Allah, even as against yourselves, or your parents, or your kin, and whether it be (against) rich or poor: for Allah can best protect both. Follow not the lusts (of your hearts), lest ye swerve, and if ye distort (justice) or decline to do justice, verily Allah is well-acquainted with all that ye do.

- Quran 4:135



# PERSIST

## Network Resources and Training

During the 2016 Susan Harwood grant period, Interfaith Worker Justice trained a total of 54 workers and community leaders to be trainers for the worker centers and peer trainers to other workers. Additionally, the workers and worker center employees who participated in a Train-the-Trainer trained an impressive 1,192 workers on topics such as their rights under OSHA and identifying chemical hazards.

In November, IWJ convened representatives from Greater Minnesota Worker Center, Northwest Arkansas

Workers Justice Center, and Western North Carolina Worker Center to design a Women's Committee/ "Comite de mujeres" model that will serve as a safe space for women to share experiences of gender discrimination and sexual harassment. The committees will also be a space for brainstorming and implementing ways to organize, address, and solve the problems women often face on the job.

IWJ has provided grants and technical assistance to affiliates that were part of several campaigns to increase

the minimum wage and win workers' rights for paid sick days. The Center for Worker Justice of Eastern Iowa was a key leader in efforts in Johnson County, Iowa to pass the first local minimum wage ordinance in the state's history. After more than a year of organized action by low-wage workers and faith leaders, the county board voted to raise the minimum wage to \$10.10 an hour over the next three years with an automatic annual cost-of-living adjustment thereafter.



*IWJ Health and Safety Training in Nashville.*

# ...in hope

*The following is an excerpt of a speech by the Rev. Paul Sherry, former-President of the United Church of Christ and Interfaith Worker Justice Board Member. The remarks were delivered at Interfaith Worker Justice's annual Faith Works event in Washington, DC on December 14, 2016.*

Not long after our nation's founding, in 1887, one of the authors of the Federalist Papers, Alexander Hamilton, wrote the following statement as a warning to our fledgling republic. These are his words: "Men of fractious tempers, of local prejudices, or of similar designs, may by intrigue, by corruption, or by other means, first obtain the suffrages, and then betray the interests of the people."

Those are prophetic words. Hamilton knew that of which he wrote. For as he predicted, today men of fractious tempers have indeed betrayed the interests of the people, and they did it, despite the claims of Donald Trump, even without the suffrages of the people, even without the majority vote of the people. We have entered a sorry and sobering and dangerous time.

People are hurting. Our nation is hurting and if in the immediate days ahead the incoming administration has its way, that hurt, that pain, will dramatically increase.

So if you and I are to be faithful to our calling, we dare not allow that to happen.

We need to be united in these days.

Unity in times of trouble brings increased commitment to our cause. Unity in times of trouble brings increased capacity for our cause. And it is increased commitment and increased capacity that we sorely need. So let's do it!

We dare not allow ourselves to despair about the current scene and our prospects for renewal. Rather, we need to live and act in a posture of hope. Hope, not despair, is the harbinger of the justice we seek, for working people, for us all.

As a believer, one of my favorite passages in all of scripture contains these words from the Psalmist:

"God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore, we will not fear, though the earth should change, and the mountains be moved into the sea, though the waters roar and foam, though the mountains shake at the dwelling thereof."

As a nation and a people we are in trouble today. The earth or at least the leadership that today roams the earth has changed for the worse. But God is still our refuge and strength so we will not fear.

That is the hope we need to go from where we are today to where our God would surely have us be. As we live and act in hope, even in these times of trouble, especially in these times of trouble, so shall we be. Amen.



*Rev. Michael Livingston presents Rev. Paul Sherry with the Faith Works Award in December.*

Hope...is the harbinger of the justice we seek...

– Rev. Paul Sherry



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