

Your Faith WORKS



Newsletter of Interfaith Worker Justice

Fall 2016

The Problem with Cheap Chicken

Imagine that you work at a poultry processing plant, standing on your feet for eight hours, making the same five or six cuts per bird to process thousands of chickens in a dark, hot, overcrowded factory. Imagine that every so often, you show up to work only to find that management has increased your quota of chickens to process each day, speeding up your already grueling work and making you even more vulnerable to an accident or chronic injury like arthritis. Finally, imagine that despite these horrific working conditions, you're denied a most basic dignity: the right to use the bathroom.

That's exactly what's happening to many working people in poultry plants across the United States. From Texas to Minnesota to New York, poultry processing plants are frequent offenders of health and safety guidelines, receiving scores of serious violations from OSHA across the industry.

Western North Carolina Worker Center, Northwest Arkansas Worker

Justice Center, and Greater Minnesota Worker Center are part of a national coalition focused on health and safety in the poultry industry and are coordinating worker-led campaigns in their communities to help change health and safety policy at local poultry processing plants and establish a model for improving working conditions in poultry processing plants nationwide.

And real progress is being made. In late September, the traditionally conservative Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals ruled for the workers in *Cazorla v. Koch Foods* in a case involving severe sexual harassment at a poultry plant in Mississippi. The court cited the work of the coalition as evidence to "reject Koch's repeated suggestions that plaintiffs' claims are so outlandish as to be unbelievable. In fact, substantial evidence suggests that serious abuse is all too common in many industries reliant on immigrant workers, including the modern-day poultry industry."

Over the course of the next sev-

eral months, worker-led campaigns in North Carolina, Arkansas, and Minnesota will escalate their campaign work using peaceful protest and direct action to call attention to the deplorable working conditions inside these plants. Connect with IWJ's website and social media channels to stay up to date with the latest news from the field and how you

can support these workers in their fight for justice and dignity at work.

To support the work of IWJ affiliates organizing to improve working conditions in poultry plants, please visit their websites for more information on how to donate or get involved: <http://www.mygmwc.org>, <http://www.wncworkerscenter.org>, <http://nwawjc.org>.



photo credit: Earl Dotter/Oxfam America

Working to End Wage Theft

As the uncertainty around the upcoming presidential election looms over the country, IWJ affiliates continue their tireless struggle overcoming the numerous ways working people can become victims of wage theft.

Over the past few months, IWJ affiliates across the country have been meeting with their closest Community Outreach, Resource, and Planning Specialists (CORPS). A CORP Specialist is a recent addition to the Wage and Hour Division of the US Department of Labor. The CORP Specialists engage communities in dialogue about local industry practices and labor concerns; they also provide training and resources to working people.

The IWJ network hopes to use these relationships to ensure a seat at the table for the strategic planning meetings where the future priorities of their District Offices are determined. Additionally, a closer relationship will help IWJ affiliates



Leaders from across the IWJ network had a chance to speak with Senator Diane Feinstein (D-CA) during our wage theft lobbying day in Washington, DC.

to be more informed throughout the process of helping workers file complaints for wage and hour violations.

Another important tool in building both local and national anti-wage theft campaigns has been the use of online petitions. The website wagetheft.org is making it easy for individuals and organizations to create online petitions as an additional point of pressure on unscrupulous employers.

But the battle doesn't stop there. IWJ is working hard to provide workers with additional tools to fight wage theft by rallying support around two important bills in Congress. The first is The Pay Stub Disclosure Act (HR 4376/S. 2630) which would enact a uniform national pay stub explain-

Continued on p. 2

They Keep Our Lights On – Now They Need Our Help

In August, Interfaith Worker Justice traveled to the epicenter of western coal country in Gillette, Wyoming, to bear witness to the challenges western communities are facing as the coal industry changes. The media has focused on how some CEOs are getting rich at the expense of western communities and the effect of coal production on climate change. Instead, we want to lift up the stories of working people who are struggling to get through this difficult time. We seek to ensure that as the debate over coal and energy policy rages on, the voices of workers and those truly impacted are not lost or forgotten. You can go to www.HelpCoalWorkers.org to learn more about this project and to take action to bring relief to coal communities.



Interfaith
Worker Justice

1020 W. Bryn Mawr Ave., Chicago, IL 60660
(773) 728-8400 • www.iwj.org

Victories and Updates

Here are just a few of the many victories from around the IWJ Network!

Alliance for Fair Food (Immokalee, FL) is organizing a nationwide tour to raise awareness about their boycott of Wendy's and campaign to win justice for farmworkers. www.allianceforfairfood.org

Center for Worker Justice of Eastern Iowa (Iowa City, IA) passed the huge milestone this summer of \$50,000 in recovered wages in its fight against wage theft. www.cwjiaowa.org

After organizing for six years with **Centro de Trabajadores Unidos en la Lucha (Minneapolis, MN)**, retail janitors won a union in the Twin Cities metro area. This is the first time that retail janitors have unionized in any major metropolitan area in the nation. <http://ctul.net>

Cincinnati Interfaith Worker Center (Cincinnati, OH) passed the first local wage theft ordinance in Ohio history. www.cworkers.org

Interfaith Coalition for Worker Justice of South Central Wisconsin (Madison, WI) helped pass an ordinance to raise the minimum wage in Dane County to \$15 an hour for county workers by 2022. <http://workerjustice.org>

Interfaith Committee for Worker Justice in San Diego (San Diego, CA) has played a supporting role and helped coordinate meetings with government officials and community groups about the humanitarian crisis that has emerged with Haitian earthquake survivors. ICWJ is supporting UFCW union recognition efforts at LabCorp, UNAC/UHACP contract negotiations with SHARP Healthcare, and is playing a central role in Fight for \$15 organizing efforts. <http://icwj.org>

Northwest Arkansas Worker's Justice Center (Springdale, AR) published a report on wages and working conditions in poultry plants as part of a

To support the local work of IWJ affiliates around the country, please visit their websites for more information on how to donate or get involved.

campaign to win better wages, rights, and working conditions for workers. <http://nwawjc.org>

South Florida IWJ (Miami, FL) amended Miami-Dade County's Living Wage ordinance to significantly increase healthcare benefits for con-

tract workers. www.sfiwj.org

Worker Justice Project (Brooklyn, NY) released *Standing Up for Dignity*, a report on women day laborers organizing together for better wages and safer working conditions. <https://workersjustice.org>

Affiliate Member Spotlight

IWJ is proud to highlight the amazing work being done by Workers' Center of Central New York worker leader, Crispin Hernandez. He is one of the recipients of the 2016 Joe Hill Award handed out by the Tompkins County Workers' Center and the Midstate Council for Occupational Safety and Health. In his own words,



"My name is Crispin Hernandez. I worked for Marks Farms in Lowville, one of the biggest farms in Upstate NY. I was fired on September 1, 2015 one day after our supervisor, who is the son of the owner, saw me with members of the Workers' Center of Central New York and the Worker Justice Center.

As a dairy farm worker, I worked a shift of 12 hours, six days a week, from six in the evening to six in the morning, or from six in the morning to six at night. The work is hard, fast and constant, and there is pressure to finish it all. Sometimes you cannot take your half-hour break to eat lunch, and if you take a break to drink water or go to the bathroom, you can fall behind. They don't pay us overtime.

There are many work accidents in dairies and many workers have died. When I first started, a cow stepped on my hand. The owner was there and saw my hand was bleeding but didn't care, and did not tell me how to go to the hospital or doctor.

I wanted to organize a workers' committee at the farm but the son of the owner interrupted one of our meetings and even called the police on us to scare us and get the worker center in trouble. I am proud that we all confronted the police and supported each other that day. A

week later two of us were fired but we didn't stop organizing. Since then we are mobilizing workers and allies to protest and have gathered more than 1,000 signatures in support of our struggle. We have met with allies, government representatives and even with the milk cooperative that buys the milk from the farms. Little by little we are making the road to find justice. We will win the protected right to organize for all agricultural workers and will continue to fight for dignity and respect.

I want to tell you that I feel very motivated when I hear that we have your support. I am in this struggle not only for me but for all of us. One alone can't change much, but together we will win. *Sí se puede!*"

In order to support the amazing organizing being done by the Workers' Center of Central New York and the Tompkins County Workers' Center please visit their websites (www.workerscentercny.org and www.tcworkerscenter.org) and donate!

Donor Spotlight

Interfaith Worker Justice depends on the generosity of people like you who believe that all workers deserve to be treated with dignity and respect. To all the students, workers, business owners, faith leaders, community activists, and others who have invested time and resources to help bring our mission to life – thank you so much!

In this issue, we'd like to introduce you to two trailblazing supporters, Rev. George and Kathy Todd.



Rev. George and Kathy Todd have spent the last 50 years serving in innovative urban ministries, such as the East Harlem Protestant Parish, the Presbyterian Church (USA), the World Council of Churches, and other ecumenical agencies here and abroad. They were introduced to the work of Kim Bobo in the 80s, and have followed her and IWJ since.

Both are now retired in New York, but remain committed to supporting the work of IWJ. To learn more about the Todds' work, check out: <http://amzn.to/2dg38Wv>

"Christian life is a call to exposure to what is going on in the world at places of suffering, struggle, and injustice. Exposure leads to a life of risk. To enter into solidarity with those in difficult circumstances means undertaking tasks and actions where one cannot know the outcomes."

– Rev. George Todd (Excerpt from *Exposure and Risk: The Great Coming Church*, co-written with Trey Hammond)

**JOIN the Todds in supporting the work of IWJ.
Donate online at <http://bit.ly/Give4Justice>**

Wage Theft from p. 1

ing how a worker's wages are calculated, whether or not they were paid overtime. The Pay Stub Disclosure Act will give working people the right to inspect their employer's pay records.

The second bill is the Wage Theft Prevention and Wage Recovery Act (HR 4762/S. 2697) which would, among other things, create new civil penalties for employers who engage in wage theft and increase the damages available to working people who experience wage theft or suffer retaliation for filing wage theft complaints.

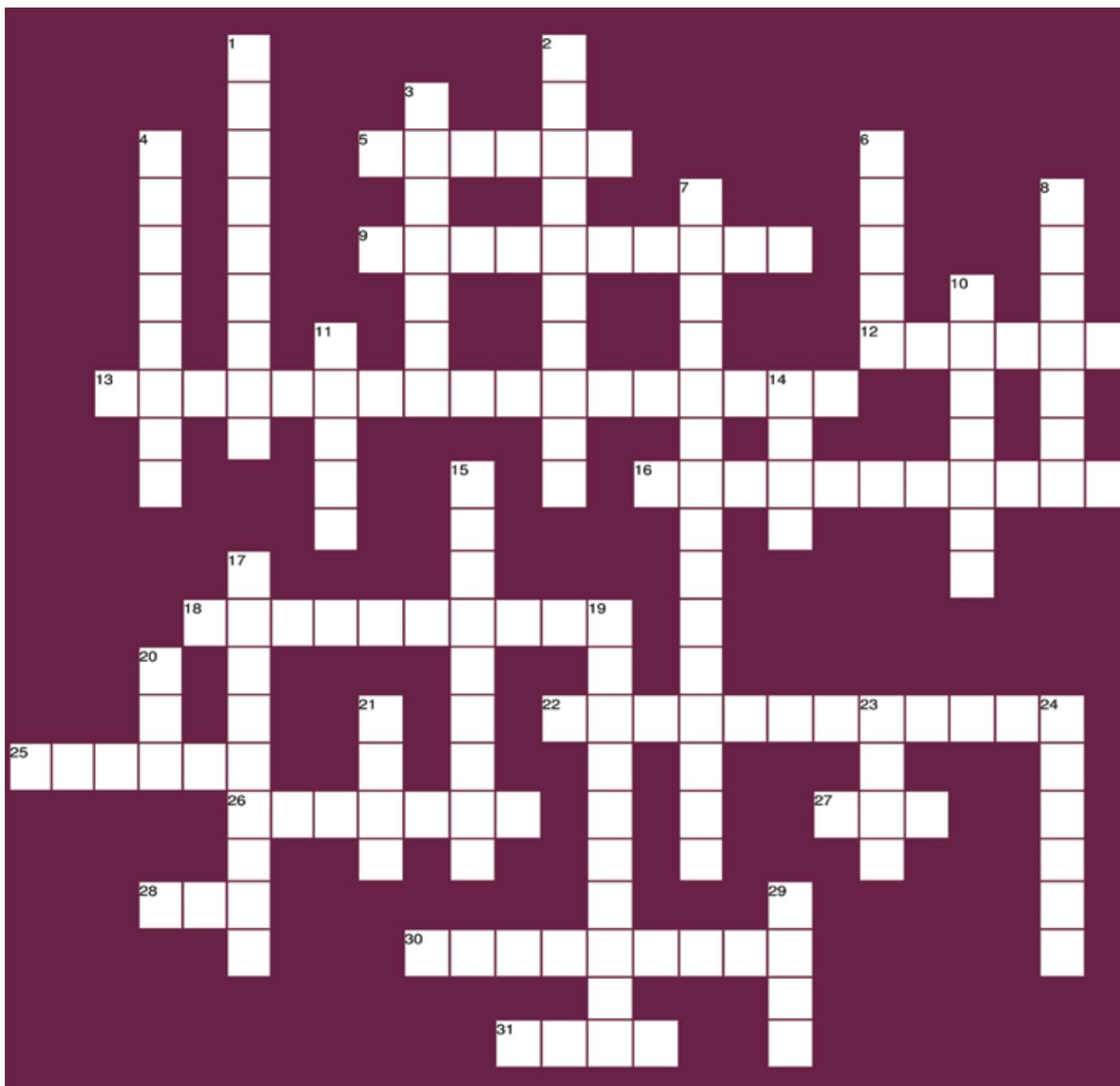
Twice this year, leaders from across the IWJ network participated in lobbying days in Washington, DC

and were able to convince many members of Congress to pledge their support and even, in many cases, to co-sponsor the bills.

IWJ and its affiliates need your help to get these bills passed! We ask that all of you reach out to your members of Congress and ask them to sign these bills into law! To contact your members of Congress, go to <http://bit.ly/PayStubs4All>.

Finally, November 18th is IWJ's Wage Theft Day of Action. Please contact your local IWJ affiliate to learn how you can support their actions. You can find a full list of IWJ network affiliates on our website.

Test your Faith & Labor Knowledge



Across

5. The North Carolina reverend who founded the Moral Mondays movement
9. This Colorado brewery is owned and operated by its workers
12. A founder of United Farm Workers
13. A common type of wage theft
16. A matriarch of the labor movement
18. Workers in this city lose \$26.2 million to wage theft every week
22. Lesotho, Papua New Guinea, and this nation are the only in the world without a national standard for paid parental leave
25. India's festival of lights
26. She was the first woman to serve as U.S. Secretary of Labor
27. This U.S. sports league started its 2012 season in disarray due to a labor dispute
28. The first labor union in the U.S.
30. This monk has been in exile since 1951
31. Historian famous for telling the "People's History of the United States"

For answers go to:
<http://bit.ly/FWAnswers>

Down

1. He wrote "In Dubious Battle," a novel of labor organizing that will soon be released as a feature film
2. This athlete took a stand for racial justice by taking a knee
3. Martyred co-founder the Council of Popular and Indigenous Organizations of Honduras
4. President Obama's executive order extended this to tens of thousands of working people
6. This former United States Secretary of Labor is an outspoken advocate for workers' rights
7. This campaign began in New York City in 2012
8. "All religions believe in _____"
10. This state has the highest percentage of union representation in its workforce
11. This faith that emphasizes the oneness of humanity has a famous temple in suburban Chicago
14. The fed. agency in charge of health and safety
15. Before the Vatican, Pope Francis called this country home
17. One of the high holidays in Judaism

19. Martin Luther King, Jr. was in Memphis to support these striking workers when he was assassinated
20. The largest union in the U.S.
21. A martyr in the campaign to end apartheid in South Africa
23. This president created the United States Department of Labor
24. This iconic folk-singer wrote the song "Solidarity Forever"
29. In Islam, the annual pilgrimage to Mecca

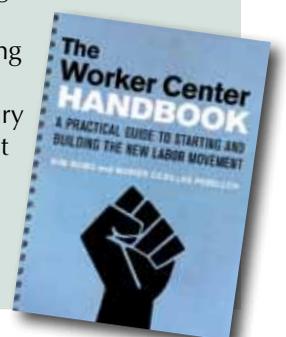
Guess Who Said?



1. But the working guy likes me. When I walk down the street, those cabbies start yelling out their windows.
2. Family, religion, friendship. These are the three demons you must slay if you wish to succeed in business.
3. If you can take advantage of a situation in some way, it's your duty as an American to do it.
4. Many people don't have the ability to be rich because they're too lazy or they don't have the desire or the stick-to-itiveness.
5. It's Friday. How many bald eagles did wind turbines kill today?
6. Oh, I've got to win this one! I bribed everyone in Hollywood.
7. Tiny children are not horses.
8. The watchdog of public safety. Is there any lower form of life?
9. Well, for once, the rich white man is in control.
10. If you can't get rich dealing with politicians, there's something wrong with you.

Comprehensive Worker Center Handbook Published

IWJ Founder Kim Bobo and former IWJ Director of Organizing and current Director of Organizing at New Labor teamed up to write *The Worker Center Handbook: A Practical Guide to Starting and Building the New Labor Movement*. You can search online to buy the book that AFL-CIO President Richard Trumka calls "a must-read for every progressive activist and organizer" and "a blueprint for building a twenty-first-century movement for social and economic justice."





1020 W. Bryn Mawr Ave.
Chicago, IL 60660
(773) 728-8400
www.iwj.org

 /interfaithworkerjustice

 @iwjnational

 /iwjnational

IWJ Board

President: The Rev. Dr. Paul Sherry •
Vice-President: Bishop Howard
Hubbard • Board Development Chair:
Ms. Kathy Saile • Fundraising Chair:
Mr. Jules Bernstein • Communications
Chair: Mr. Naeem Baig • Organizing
Chair: The Rev. Troy Jackson • Finance
Chair: The Rev. Michael Livingston •
Public Policy Chair: The Rev. Dr. Ken
Brooker Langston

Dr. Charles Amjad-Ali • Mr. Patrick
Carolan • Mr. Phil Cubeta • The Rev.
Dr. Lillian Daniel • Imam Taha Has-
sane • Ms. Colleen Kilbride • Mr.
Louis Kimmel • Ms. Susan Leslie •
Dr. Joseph A. McCartin • Mr. Ralph
McCloud • The Rev. Doug Mork •
Mr. David H. Moskowitz • Mr. Todd
O'Malley • The Rev. Frank Raines III •
Dr. Edith Rasell • Mr. Fred Redmond
• Rabbi Elizabeth Richman • Mr. Juan
Ruiz • Mr. Corey Saylor • The Rev. Jim
Sessions • Ms. Marilyn Sneiderman •
Dr. Jerry Taylor • Mr. David Wildman

Special Advisors:

The Rev. Jim Lawson • The Rev. Joseph
Echols Lowery • Rabbi Robert Marx

IWJ Staff

Cathy Junia • Julian Medrano • Doug
Mork • Martha Ojeda • Ian Pajer-Rog-
ers • Anna Rubin • Thom Shellabarger
• Mayumi Swanson • María Torres •
Ryan Wallace • Jana Winch • Allison
Zidek

*For detailed Board and Staff informa-
tion visit: www.iwj.org/about/board or
www.iwj.org/about/staff*

*Faith Works is produced by IWJ's Com-
munications Department. For correc-
tions, questions, and story suggestions
contact Communications Director, Ian
Pajer-Rogers, at ipajer-rogers@iwj.org or
call 773-728-8400 x24.*

New Faces at IWJ

Help us welcome new additions to the IWJ organizing team!

Martha Ojeda worked for 20 years in the maquiladora industry (sweatshops), in the industrialization program of Mexico that became NAFTA. In April of 1994, Martha led the Sony Workers' movement to improve their working conditions. The workers were beaten and brutally repressed by police forces. The Sony workers' case was the first case brought against the government of Mexico under the Side Agreements for Labor Cooperation of NAFTA. Martha has a Law degree from The University of Saltillo, Coahuila and the Centre for University Studies in Monterrey, Nuevo Leon, Mexico and joins IWJ from Fe y Justicia, a worker center based in Houston.

Anna Rubin hails from Pittsburgh and studied Religion with a minor in Judaic Studies at Princeton University. During her time working at the Jewish Council on Urban Affairs, Anna discovered her love of building power in faith communities as she spent a year organizing the Chicagoland Jewish community before coming to IWJ.

María G. Torres is from Cd. Juarez, Mexico and studied Community Leadership and Civic Engagement at Northern Illinois University. Following her passion for organizing for social justice, María joins IWJ from Community Renewal Society in Chicago, where she organized congregations around issues of race and economic justice.

IWJ Affiliate Network

For detailed contact information, please visit www.iwj.org.

Interfaith Groups

Arkansas Interfaith Committee for Worker Justice – Little Rock, AR
Clergy and Laity United for Economic Justice (CLUE)—LA – Los Angeles, CA
East Bay Faith Alliance for a Moral Economy – Oakland, CA
Interfaith Committee for Worker Justice in San Diego – San Diego, CA
Interfaith Council on Economics and Justice – San Jose, CA
IWJ-Colorado/FRESC for Good Jobs and Strong Communities – Denver, CO
La Plata County Thrive! – Durango, CO
D.C. Jobs with Justice – Washington, DC
Alliance for Fair Food – Immokalee, FL
DuPage Interfaith Worker Justice – Naperville, IL
Community, Faith and Labor Coalition – Indianapolis, IN
Interfaith Worker Justice of Kansas – Wichita, KS
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
Interfaith Worker Justice of Rochester – Rochester, MN
Interfaith Worker Justice—New Mexico – Santa Fe, NM
Greater New York Labor-Religion Coalition – New York, NY
Faith for a Fair New York – Latham, NY
Greater Binghamton Labor-Religion Coalition – Vestal, NY
Beloved Community Center – Greensboro, NC
Cincinnati Interfaith Committee on Worker Justice – Cincinnati, OH
Central Oklahoma Community Forum – Oklahoma City, OK
Religious Outreach Committee/Portland Jobs with Justice – Portland, OR
Labor-Religion Coalition of Western Pennsylvania – Pittsburgh, PA
Philadelphia Area Jobs with Justice – Philadelphia, PA
Interfaith Worker Justice of East Tennessee – Knoxville, TN
Interfaith Coalition for Worker Justice of South Central Wisconsin – Madison, WI

Worker Centers

Winning our Wages – Birmingham, AL
Southside Workers Center – Tucson, AZ
Northwest Arkansas Workers' Justice Center – Springdale, AR
Pilipino Workers Center – Los Angeles, CA
South Florida Interfaith Worker Justice* – Miami, FL
Workers Center for Racial Justice – Chicago, IL
Indianapolis Worker Justice Center – Indianapolis, IN
Center for Worker Justice of Eastern Iowa – Iowa City, IA
Sunflower Community Action Worker Justice Center – Wichita, KS
Food AND Medicine/Eastern Maine Worker Center – Brewer, ME
Southern Maine Workers' Center – Portland, ME
MassCOSH – Dorchester, MA
The Micah Center* – Grand Rapids, MI
Centro de Trabajadores Unidos en la Lucha – Minneapolis, MN
Greater Minnesota Worker Center – St. Cloud, MN
New Labor – New Brunswick, NJ
Don Bosco Workers, Inc. – Port Chester, NY
Damayan Migrant Workers Center – New York, NY

Restaurant Opportunity Center (ROC) of New York – New York, NY
Worker Justice Project – Jackson Heights, NY
Tompkins County Workers' Center – Ithaca, NY
Workers' Center of Central New York – Syracuse, NY
Western North Carolina Workers' Center – Marion, 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 Worker Center – Houston, TX
Community to Community Development – Bellingham, WA
Madison Workers' Rights Center – Madison, WI
Voces de la Frontera – Milwaukee, WI

** Both an Interfaith Group and Worker Center*

Support the work of IWJ!

Donate at
<http://bit.ly/FallFW>