

Your

# Faith WORKS



Newsletter of Interfaith Worker Justice

Fall 2017

## Four Stories You May Have Missed

### National Labor Relations Board Will Soon Flip to Republican Control

The National Labor Relations Board (NLRB), the federal agency tasked with enforcing labor laws with respect to working people's right to collective bargaining, will soon flip to Republican control when the Senate approves the president's nominee to fill the second empty NLRB later this fall. The Senate confirmed former GOP House staffer Marvin Kaplan to fill the other empty seat in August.

Republican control of the NLRB will have serious ramifications for working people, unions, and other organizations who advocate and organize on behalf of worker justice issues.

Most immediately worrying for workers centers in the Interfaith Worker Justice network and beyond is the possibility that the newly-aligned NLRB could change the rules about how the federal government defines "union activity." If the NLRB were to rule that worker centers, who advocate and provide recourse for working people, are engaged in union activity, it could threaten their very existence. Many worker centers would not have the financial or staff capacity to navigate Byzantine tax forms, political lobbying, and other legal hurdles that many unions employ entire legal departments to handle.

Worker centers can best

*Continued on p. 2*

## In Defense Of Worker Safety

If one thing is clear from the budget negotiations currently underway in Washington, it is that some of those hardest hit by the proposed cuts will be the nation's most vulnerable and hardest to reach working people. One of many examples of this attack on working people is the gutting of the Susan Harwood Grant program.

Interfaith Worker Justice and our affiliate organizations across the country have for years used the Harwood grants to train tens of thousands of working people to identify and report unsafe working conditions, particularly in hazardous occupations or industries that typi-

cally don't have union representation or regular contact with Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA).

While the Susan Harwood Grants Program budget has already been appropriated for this year, new guidance from the Trump Administration strips away the most vital pieces of the Harwood Grants, including the Capacity Building Grants. This

guidance drastically narrows the types of trainings that can be funded by OSHA even today.

Make no mistake: IWJ will continue to find resources to fulfill our mission and help keep working people safe on the job no matter what. This is not merely a defense of a funding source for IWJ, but a defence of the integrity and the mission of the Department of Labor.



*IWJ affiliates lead an OSHA Health and Safety training in Minnesota.*

## Puzder Withdrawal A Win for Workers

When President Trump nominated Andrew Puzder, CEO of the fast-food empire CKE Restaurants, to lead the Department of Labor, it was an early sign that Trump's campaign promise to be a champion for working people was nothing more than smoke and mirrors.

Puzder has long been a vocal opponent of a living wage and spoken wistfully about robots replacing working people. The advertisements for his restaurants use vivid, sexually explicit imagery that Puzder calls a representation of "all things American" while the rate of sexual harassment in CKE restaurants is far above the industry average.

Weeks of powerful organizing by working people across the coun-



try finally paid off as Andrew Puzder withdrew from consideration for Secretary of Labor less than 24 hours before his first confirmation hearing was scheduled to begin.

After Puzder's withdrawal, the Trump Administration nominated Alexander Acosta to lead the Department of Labor. Mr. Acosta was eventually confirmed.

While there are many deep philosophical disagreements that we have with Mr. Acosta on the role that the federal government and the Department of Labor has in defending the rights of working people, there is no question that Mr. Acosta is far more qualified and far less antagonistic towards working people

than Mr. Puzder would have been.

Acosta has served on the National Labor Relations Board and once argued that the immigration status of a working person did not disqualify them from enjoying the same rights at work as anyone else.

This early victory is a testament to the power of working people organizing in the face of injustice. Andrew Puzder has made millions of dollars on the backs of low-wage and often undocumented working people, all while advocating for a lower minimum wage and replacing workers with robots.

So far, this is an Administration that has proven itself intent on declaring war on working people. But with the victory against Andrew Puzder, we demonstrated that we will not be shut down when we show up.

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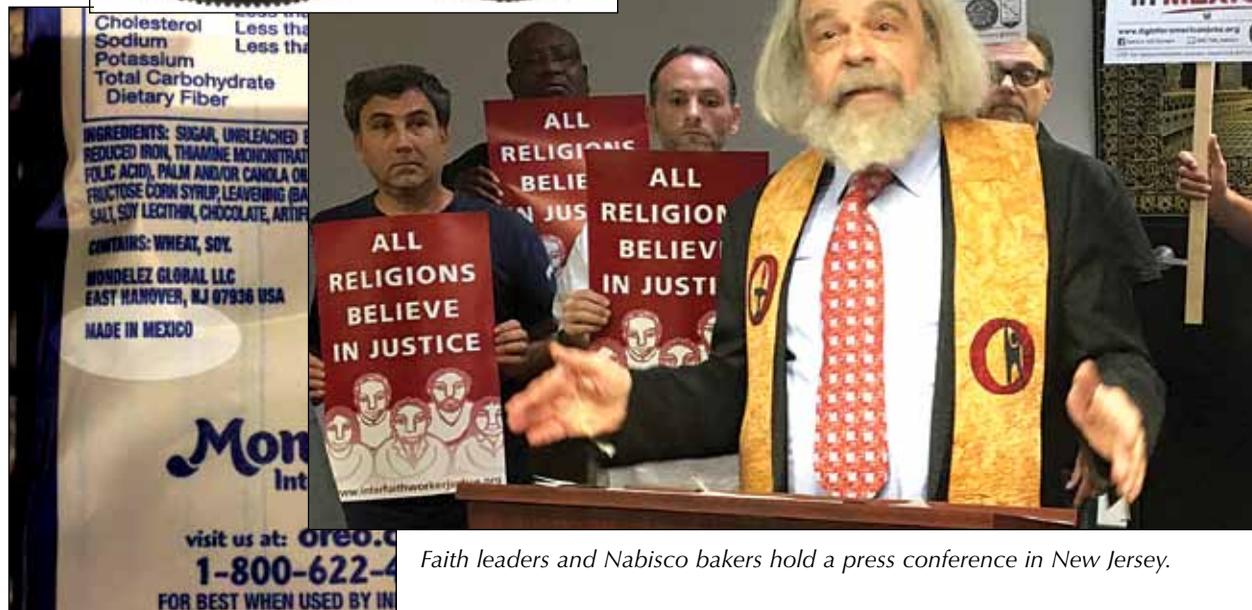
# Check the Label on Those Oreos

Interfaith Worker Justice has teamed up with the Bakery, Confectionary, Tobacco Workers, & Grain Millers union (BCTGM) for a seven-city international investigation into the hiring, firing, and outsourcing practices of Nabisco parent company Mondelez.

In 2016, Mondelez laid off 600 Chicago-based bakers and moved those jobs to Mexico, where workers are paid only about a dollar an hour.

As Mondelez prepares for another round of outsourcing, IWJ will interview the workers in each of seven cities to learn about how layoffs and broken promises by Mondelez hurt working people, their families, and their communities.

You can find video and photos from these events on our social media channels and we will be releasing reports toward the end of the year. In the meantime, don't forget to check the label and boycott Mexican-made Nabisco products!



Faith leaders and Nabisco bakers hold a press conference in New Jersey.

## Four Stories You May Have Missed from p. 1

protect themselves, at this point, by remembering that any type of collective bargaining that they engage in on behalf of a group of working people could be construed as union activity and consulting with lawyers who specialize in labor law to answer any questions.

### Employee Rights Act

With scant media coverage, Congressional Republicans have introduced the Employee Rights Act in both the House and Senate. Both versions have a sizable number of co-sponsors.

If passed, the bill would significantly weaken the ability of labor unions to represent and advocate on behalf of working people in every single industry in the American workforce.

Specifically, the bill would require re-certification of a workplace's union when there is turnover of union workers. It would also prohibit the union from using dues for political purposes without explicit written consent from union members.

"Taken together, the changes would effectively eliminate the presumption under the National Labor Relations Act that a union's interests are the same as that of the workers it represents and instead require labor leaders to expend time and energy proving that to be the case," wrote Sean Higgins for the Washington Examiner.

Interfaith Worker Justice will continue to monitor the progress of this bill and do everything in our power to stop it from becoming law.

### Refugees Reduction

Although it has fallen out of the front-page headlines, refugee resettlement programs remain under attack on multiple fronts from the Trump Administration. As you may remember, the initial attack on refugee resettlement programs arrived as part of Trump's first travel ban. At that point, the Administration was seeking a complete and indefinite ban on all refugees from Syria and a 90-day ban from a number of other predominantly Muslim nations.

Just 24 hours after that initial ban was announced, nationwide protest began at airports to oppose the travel ban and ensure that detained passengers were released to their families. Within days, a number of federal courts had ruled against portions of the travel ban, effectively putting the ban on hold.

But in June, a Supreme Court decision to review the travel ban this coming October left in place a partial ban which bars entry to the United States for anyone except "bona fide" family members of U.S. residents.

Now the Administration has moved to further cut the annual refugee resettlement cap to below 50,000 people – a drop to its lowest level since 1980.

Welcoming our brothers and sisters in need is a cornerstone of realizing justice for all. We must not forget that "the foreigner residing among you must be treated as your native-born. Love them as yourself." (Leviticus 19:34)

### Overtime

One of President Obama's last executive orders during his tenure expanded overtime for four million working people.

Despite heavy resistance from retailers and other low-wage employers, something interesting happened after the rule was announced: some of the biggest corporations and worst offenders of the rights of working people implemented the rule anyway, with Walmart leading the way.

After Election Day, it quickly became clear that this rule was going to be one of many that the Trump

Administration would try to undo. And in September, Trump lived up to that assumption by announcing the cancellation of the rule.

Even though the promise of overtime was cruelly taken from millions of people, it's significant that big retailers would be so quick to implement a rule that benefits workers that they had fought tooth and nail to prevent. It's a good reminder that despite red herring arguments about "economic health" and "corporate bottom lines," policies that benefit working people not only are moral and just, they are also good for business.

## Welcome New Affiliates

### Koreatown Immigrant Workers Alliance (KIWA)

A multi-racial, multi-industry worker center based in Koreatown, Los Angeles, KIWA's mission is to build the power of immigrant workers and residents and to organize a progressive grassroots leadership to transform workplaces and communities, in Koreatown and beyond.

### Immigrant Solidarity DuPage

Their mission is to educate, organize and mobilize Latino Immigrant Workers around their rights and collective struggles in DuPage County. Founded in Glendale Heights, IL at the end of 2007 by members of the Latino community along with faith allies, members of the labor movement and social justice activists.

### Rochester Workers' Center

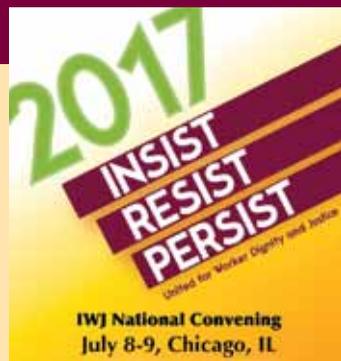
The Rochester Workers' Center builds solidarity and supports action by people of color and workers in non-union industries in upstate New York. They educate and shape community values regarding economic and human rights to create a more just, democratic and gender equal society.

### Brazos Interfaith Immigration Network

In October 2010 a small group of members from a variety of churches in Bryan-College Station, Texas began meeting monthly to share our concerns about issues faced by immigrants in the community, and that is how Brazos was created. Their mission is to promote the human dignity and prosperity for all immigrants.

# 2017 Convening Highlights

In July, we hosted our National Convening in Chicago. More than 70 individuals representing 40+ IWJ affiliates and strategic partners attended. Over the course of two and a half days, the group engaged in meaningful dialogue and made some key decisions about the direction of our organization, including:



- Creating a dues-paying membership structure for IWJ
- Implementing a plan for worker center and faith-labor groups to elect their own representatives to the IWJ Board of Directors
- Electing members to the National Steering Committee and the Re-Granting Committee
- Adopting proposed plans for national campaigns, communications, and Worker Center & Faith-Labor Groups
- Created a Racial Equity Working Group, while also reaffirming the continued work of IWJ's Wage Theft and Poultry Working Groups

With many commitments, we have our work cut out for us. However, the Convening also gave us a renewed sense of energy and some much needed focus to continue the work of justice in these trying times.

Thank you to Southwest Airlines for providing travel vouchers to ensure that every IWJ affiliate had the opportunity to travel to Chicago for the Convening!

## Seminary Summer 2017

In June, we organized our annual Seminary Summer program, hosting eight participants from around the country. The seminarians participated in trainings on a variety of topics from community organizing, to building power, to theories of change.

The students reconvened in August to take part in a day-long closing and reflection session in Washington, D.C. The seminarians had the opportunity to present their work to one another and reflect together on their experiences. This diverse group left having learned the importance of the role of organizing in faith-based social justice advocacy. We are eager to see how they take their learned experiences with them and continue the work and ministry of faith-rooted social justice.

## Donor Spotlight

Maxine Phillips is the current executive editor of Dissent Magazine and has been a donor to Interfaith Worker Justice since 2003. A member of the Faithful Givers Club since 2009, Maxine has since tripled her monthly contribution, becoming a major donor to IWJ in 2017 and responding to the urgent need to defend the rights of workers, particularly immigrants. In such a tumultuous moment in American history, support for our organization is paramount and donors like Maxine make IWJ's work possible.

### Q&A

#### How did you first get involved with IWJ?

I must have heard about its work from friends or gotten a mailing. I've also been involved in religion and labor coalitions in New York.

#### What motivated you to give?

Jules Bernstein, whom I respect very much, supports it and urges his friends to support it.

#### What motivates you to keep supporting worker issues?

The attacks on workers are attacks on our country. Workers create the true wealth of the country, and they do not benefit from it. The gross inequality that exists between those who create wealth through their work and those who profit from it is obscene. Fair pay and decent working conditions should be the floor for all worker rights.



## DACA and Protection for All

With the repeal of DACA, the lives and livelihood of 800,000 young people and their families are suddenly in jeopardy.

For the team at Interfaith Worker Justice (IWJ), the fight for DACA and for protection from the terrors of detention and deportation isn't just the right thing to do. It's personal.

Maria Torres, one of IWJ's talented organizers, also happens to be a DACA recipient.

In a message to IWJ supporters urging them to take action to save DACA, Maria shared some of her experience with the program and her fears about the possibility of repeal:

"DACA is not a permanent solution to the plight of 12 million undocumented immigrants, but in the five years that I have had the protection of DACA, it has been hugely beneficial to my life. I have been able to get a work permit and a Social Security number. This has allowed me to build a credit history and apply to competitive jobs with health care and retirement benefits. As a result, I am now financially independent.

"More importantly, DACA protects me from deportation and from an arrest over a small traffic infraction. Finally, DACA allows me to travel without fear across the country for my job and to visit friends and family.

"This threat is not new; DACA has been in danger for some time. Communities

like mine are used to the constant fear and intimidation. Yet, this time we think the current President might actually follow through and gut this program. He has no plan for the 12 million undocumented immigrants currently in the United States. This is inhumane and immoral."

Interfaith Worker Justice is fully committed to doing whatever it takes to win protection for all undocumented immigrants. Whether pushing for Comprehensive Immigration Reform in Congress, defending DACA from the attacks of this Administration, or providing sanctuary for targeted individuals – we will not sit back and allow this attack on undocumented people go unchallenged.



IWJ National Field Organizer Maria Torres demands protection for all at an immigration rally in Chicago.

Photo by Cecilia Fischer-Benitez

#### What would you tell someone who is thinking about donating to IWJ?

IWJ empowers very vulnerable people. It is not a charity but a partnership.

#### What influences your giving?

My rule of thumb for giving is whether the organization is aiming toward systemic change.

#### How does faith play a role in your life?

When I was young, it led me to try to help those who didn't have as much. As I got older and gained a greater understanding of what was being asked of us, it led me to political work that creates true economic and political democracy.

#### What other issues/causes are you interested in and/or supporting?

I support independent, left-wing media, because even the so-called liberal media are blinded by a belief in the benefits of capitalism. I support Democratic Socialists of America, which works for reforms that will change the system, and the ACLU, which supports civil liberties. In addition, I support my church, which is active in many social change areas as well as providing spiritual sustenance.

#### Why?

We are all connected. Just as an injury to one is an injury to all, so whatever we do to advance the cause of social justice, even if we ourselves are comfortable, is good for society as a whole. We can help individuals and we can help society.



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*The Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings of God be upon him, said,*

*“Your servants/workers are your brothers whom God the most High has placed under your authority. Therefore, a person who has a brother under his authority, should feed him out of that which he eats himself and should dress him with the same kind of clothes which he wears himself; he should not assign work to him which is beyond his capacity, and if you do so, then help him in his work”*

(Bukhari collection, prepared by Hussam Ayloush, Executive Director of the Council on American-Islamic Relations)

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## IWJ Affiliate Network

For detailed contact information, please visit [www.iwj.org](http://www.iwj.org).

Winning our Wages – Birmingham, AL  
Southside Workers Center – Tucson, AZ  
Arkansas Interfaith Committee for Worker Justice – Little Rock, AR  
Northwest Arkansas Workers' Justice Center – Springdale, AR  
Clergy and Laity United for Economic Justice (CLUE) – LA – Los Angeles, CA  
Koreatown Immigrant Workers Alliance (KIWA) – Los Angeles, CA  
Pilipino Workers Center – 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  
South Florida Interfaith Worker Justice – Miami, FL  
Workers Center for Racial Justice – Chicago, IL  
Immigrant Solidarity DuPage – Wheaton, IL

DuPage Interfaith Worker Justice – Naperville, IL  
Indianapolis Worker Justice Center – Indianapolis, IN  
Center for Worker Justice of Eastern Iowa – Iowa City, IA  
Interfaith Worker Justice of Kansas – Wichita, KS  
Sunflower Community Action Worker Justice Center – Wichita, KS  
Food AND Medicine/Eastern Maine Worker Center – Brewer, ME  
Southern Maine Workers' Center – Portland, ME  
IWJ of Maryland – Baltimore, MD  
Massachusetts Interfaith Committee for Worker Justice – Boston, MA  
MassCOSH – Dorchester, MA  
The Micah Center – Grand Rapids, MI  
Interfaith Worker Justice – Metro Detroit – Oak Park, MI  
Centro de Trabajadores Unidos en la Lucha – Minneapolis, MN  
Greater Minnesota Worker Center – St. Cloud, MN  
New Labor – New Brunswick, NJ

Interfaith Worker Justice—New Mexico – Santa Fe, NM  
Tompkins County Workers' Center – Ithaca, NY  
Worker Justice Project – Jackson Heights, NY  
Faith for a Fair New York – Latham, NY  
Greater New York Labor-Religion Coalition – New York, NY  
Damayan Migrant Workers Center – New York, NY  
Restaurant Opportunity Center (ROC) of New York – New York, NY  
Don Bosco Workers, Inc. – Port Chester, NY  
Rochester Workers' Center – Rochester, NY  
Workers' Center of Central New York – Syracuse, NY  
Greater Binghamton Labor-Religion Coalition – Vestal, NY  
Beloved Community Center – Greensboro, NC  
Western North Carolina Workers' Center – Marion, NC  
Cincinnati Interfaith Workers Center – Cincinnati, OH  
Central Oklahoma Community Forum – Oklahoma City, OK  
Springfield Solidarity Network/ Jobs with Justice – Eugene, OR

Religious Outreach Committee/Portland Jobs with Justice – Portland, OR  
Philadelphia Area Jobs with Justice – Philadelphia, PA  
Labor-Religion Coalition of Western Pennsylvania – Pittsburgh, PA  
Interfaith Worker Justice of East Tennessee – Knoxville, TN  
Workers' Interfaith Network/Memphis Workers' Center – Memphis, TN  
Workers' Dignity Project – Nashville, TN  
Workers' Defense Project/Proyecta Defensa Laboral – Austin, TX  
Brazos Interfaith Immigration Network – Bryan, TX  
Fe Y Justicia Worker Center – Houston, TX  
Community to Community Development – Bellingham, WA  
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Madison Workers' Rights Center – Madison, WI  
Voces de la Frontera – Milwaukee, WI

**Southwest**

Special thanks to Southwest Airlines for their ongoing and generous support of Interfaith Worker Justice's mission.