



## Immigration Reform is NOT Optional

The debate around immigration reform can be divisive, controversial and emotional. But if we boil it down to the basics and ask ourselves what we as a nation, gain from:

- uprooting hardworking individuals from their jobs and communities, tearing them away from their families?
- a system that forces millions of workers into an underground economy, making them vulnerable to exploitation, wage theft and obscene underpayment by unscrupulous employers?
- denying millions of workers – who are consumers and taxpayers – an immigration status that could mean higher wages, more taxes and a greater contribution to the economy?

The answer is *nothing*. We gain nothing by maintaining the status quo. If anything, we lose: families are ripped apart, communities disrupted, workplace standards and wages plummet for all workers, and we miss out on a potential billion-dollar revenue source. (Check out the recent report from the Center for American Progress: *The Economic Effects of Granting Legal Status and Citizenship to Undocumented Immigrants*)

The time to overhaul our broken and inhumane immigration system is *now*. As people of faith who recognize and honor the social and economic contributions made by our

immigrant brothers and sisters, we have an opportunity to help make comprehensive immigration reform finally happen.

Over the last few months, IWJ along with the Interfaith Immigration Coalition, Alliance for Citizenship, United Workers Congress, and other allies, has been working to bring together people of faith in support of immigration reform. IWJ affiliates around the country have been busy organizing prayer vigils, leading delegations to their representatives and facilitating immigration reform discussions within congregations and community groups.

It's going to be a very busy summer. We have a small window of opportunity to let our elected officials know that passing real and humane immigration reform is *not optional*. It must be done and it must be done now. So, if we want to win fair and humane immigration reform this time around, we must all pitch in to make it happen! Here's what you can do:

- Start a postcard drive in your congregation: download immigration reform postcards at [www.iwj.org](http://www.iwj.org), collect signatures and mail the cards to your representatives.
- Educate people in your congregation or community group about the importance of immigration reform. Check out IWJ's statement of principles on immigration reform.
- Encourage your congregation to display a "Welcome the Immigrant" banner outside your place of worship. Email [info@iwj.org](mailto:info@iwj.org) for more information.
- Plan to participate in May Day rallies and actions on May 1.
- Organize a prayer vigil. Resources available at [www.iwj.org](http://www.iwj.org).
- Subscribe to IWJ's action alerts and find out when emergency actions, events and delegations are planned in your area.

For questions and additional information, email [info@iwj.org](mailto:info@iwj.org).



Thousands rally for immigration reform. Join us on May 1.

### We've Got the Goods

Thanks to the good work of IWJ board members, interns, faith leaders and allies on the ground, we continue to broaden our resource offerings that highlight the sacred intersection of faith and labor. In the last six months, we've introduced a series of seasonal reflections that we hope you found useful. We've also developed toolkits and guides to help congregations and individuals understand important issues that impact working families. Issues like immigration reform, wage theft and minimum wage. For prayers, bulletin inserts, bible studies, organizing toolkits, visit [www.iwj.org/resources](http://www.iwj.org/resources). If you would like to see a particular resource developed, please email [info@iwj.org](mailto:info@iwj.org).

### Moving Forward to End Wage Theft

Our affiliate network is knee deep in work to end wage theft, pushing for state and local legislation that is tough on employers who steal from their workers.

#### Great News in Chicago!

In January, the City Council in Chicago unanimously passed an anti-wage theft ordinance (one of strongest in the country.) ARISE Chicago, an IWJ affiliate, worked with Alderman Pawar (47th Ward) to develop the ordinance. Chicago is now the largest city in the country with such an ordinance.

The new ordinance could revoke business licenses for employers found guilty of wage theft. Worker advocates say the new ordinance will protect vulnerable workers and promote ethical business practices across the city.

"Now we have to work on enforcement," ARISE organizer Jorge Mujica told IWJ staff after the ordinance passed.


According to a report from the University of Illinois-Chicago's Center for Urban Economic Development, employers steal an estimated \$7.3 million of workers' wages every week in Cook County alone.

Winning campaigns like those in Chicago, Broward and Miami-Dade counties in Florida, and the state of Texas, pave the way for ordinances in other communities that are working toward building awareness and urgency around solving a problem that affects so many people.


#### Working hard to push for strong laws across the country

After spending the year researching data and gathering worker stories, the

*Continued on p. 4*

 /interfaithworkerjustice

 @iwjnational

 /iwjnational

Interfaith  
  
Worker Justice

1020 W. Bryn Mawr Ave., 4th Fl.  
Chicago, IL 60660  
(773) 728-8400 • [www.iwj.org](http://www.iwj.org)

## IWJ Board

President: The Rev. Dr. Paul Sherry  
Vice-President: Ms. Ros Pelles  
Board Development Chair: Ms. Kathy Saile  
Communications Chair: Mr. Naeem Baig  
Finance Chair: Mr. John Howard  
Fundraising Chair: Mr. Jules Bernstein  
Organizing Chair: The Rev. Troy Jackson  
Public Policy Chair: Dr. Edith Rasell

Dr. Charles Amjad-Ali  
Ms. Arlene Holt Baker  
Mr. Steven Birnbaum  
Rabbi Laurie Coskey  
Mr. Tom Costanza  
Mr. Phil Cubeta  
The Rev. Dr. Lillian Daniel  
Imam Taha Hassane  
Mr. John Hill  
The Rev. Daryl Ingram  
Rabbi Jill Jacobs  
The Rev. Chris Johnson  
The Rev. Dr. Ken Brooker Langston  
Ms. Susan Leslie  
The Rev. Dr. Leonard Lovett  
Dr. Joseph A. McCartin  
The Rev. Aaron McEmrys  
Mr. Todd O'Malley  
The Rev. Doug Mork  
Sr. Mary Prinski, OP  
The Rev. Frank Raines III  
Rabbi Elizabeth Richman  
Ms. Elena Segura  
The Rev. Jim Sessions  
The Rev. Bill Somplatsky-Jarman  
The Rev. Bennie Whiten Jr.  
The Rev. David Wildman

### Special Advisors

Bishop Jesse DeWitt\*  
The Rev. Jim Lawson  
The Rev. Joseph Echols Lowery  
Rabbi Robert Marx\*  
\* Former Board President

### Labor Advisory Board

Tim Beaty, Teamsters  
Tom Chabolla, SEIU  
Alan Freeman, IBEW  
James Gibbs, UMWA  
The Rev. Clete Kiley, UNITE HERE  
Charles Lester, ATU  
Esther Lopez, UFCW  
Donna McDaniel, LIUNA  
Rosalyn Pelles, AFL-CIO  
Fred Redmond, United Steelworkers  
Foster Stringer, AFT  
Kenneth Zinn, National Nurses United

For detailed Board and Staff information visit: [www.iwj.org/about/board](http://www.iwj.org/about/board) or [www.iwj.org/about/staff](http://www.iwj.org/about/staff)

*Faith Works* is produced by IWJ's Communications Department. For questions, corrections and story suggestions contact Communications Director, Cathy Junia, at 773-728-8400 x 40 or email [cjunia@iwj.org](mailto:cjunia@iwj.org).

**Stay Updated** – Scan the code below or sign up here <http://bit.ly/iwjupdates>



## Justice for Retired Miners

Interfaith Worker Justice joins faith communities across the country in calling on Patriot Coal executives to protect the healthcare benefits and pensions of retired Peabody Energy union coal miners.

In 2007, Peabody Energy created Patriot Coal to take over most of Peabody's healthcare and pension obligations.

Now, Patriot is seeking to reorganize under Chapter 11 bankruptcy. As a part of their restructuring, leaders from Patriot seek to terminate benefits in the union contract for more than 20,000 retired Peabody mineworkers who never worked a day at Patriot Coal.

"It's awful that these workers might lose their healthcare benefits after working all their life for Peabody," said IWJ's Kim Bobo. "It's really unimaginable the suffering some of these miners would experience without their healthcare."

Mineworkers have one of the

most dangerous jobs in the country, and they rely on the good healthcare benefits in their union contract. Miners like William Rogers, who needs a constant stream of oxygen to survive after contracting black lung working for Peabody, are at risk.

People of faith and labor advocates are organizing to support these workers.

More than 90 faith leaders and people of faith signed an open letter urging the corporation's leaders to protect the pensions and healthcare benefits promised in the Peabody contract.

Over the last couple of months, mineworkers, labor activists and people of faith in St. Louis (where Peabody and Patriot are headquartered) have supported retired miners at actions and marches during the bankruptcy proceedings. Many miners have been arrested at peaceful demonstrations in St. Louis.

Learn more about the Fairness at



*IWJ Executive Director Kim Bobo was arrested, March 19, along with retired and active mineworkers who took over the street outside the St. Louis Federal Courthouse where Patriot's bankruptcy case was being heard.*

Patriot campaign on the web! Sign an open letter to Peabody executives (<http://bit.ly/MinersJustice>) and keep the workers in your prayers.

## Testing...1,2,3

IWJ recently launched a new pilot program, the VITA Wage Theft project. It is a joint initiative with the Center for Economic Progress, which coordinates the Volunteers in Tax Assistance (VITA) program in Chicago, the Illinois Department of Labor, the National Lawyers Guild and Interfaith Worker Justice. Volunteers interview tax filers to identify cases of wage theft and help them file Department of Labor claims or connect them to a lawyer to recover their stolen wages. IWJ hopes to expand the program to the thousands of VITA sites across the nation. To learn more about the program, email [info@iwj.org](mailto:info@iwj.org).



*Volunteers like Nieves Bolanos of Robin Potter & Associates and Gia Arizpe a Kent Law School student interview tax filers.*

## Onward & Upward! Building Power for Today's Workers

The IWJ Worker Center Network is proud to welcome its 27th member, the Center for Worker Justice of Eastern Iowa (CWJEI). CWJEI aims to unite low-wage workers in Eastern Iowa across race and immigration status to achieve social and economic justice through education, organizing, direct services and community alliances. Like a majority of WCN members, CWJEI will work on pushing for better wage and hour enforcement in Iowa. The Center is an offshoot of the Immigrant Voices Project, which brought together area immigrants and activists to address community concerns. To learn more about the WCN, visit [www.iwj.org/worker-center-network](http://www.iwj.org/worker-center-network).



*Center for Worker Justice of Eastern Iowa leaders.*



## Raise your voice for a Living Wage!

IWJ joins faith communities in supporting proposed legislation that would raise the minimum wage to \$10.10 an hour. The bill, introduced by Sen. Tom Harkin (D-Iowa) and Rep. George Miller (D-Calif.) also includes a crucial proposal to index the federal minimum wage according to inflation on a regular basis. This would assure that as the cost of living increases over time, the minimum wage would increase so as to keep pace with those costs. We invite you to join IWJ and its affiliates in pushing for this long-overdue increase in wages. Though \$10.10 falls well below a genuine living wage, it's a step in the right direction, and the indexing provision would be a great victory. To learn more about the minimum wage campaign, visit [www.iwj.org](http://www.iwj.org).

# Dear Reader,

As we go deeper into the campaign for comprehensive immigration reform, I often think about the massive immigration raid that tore the small town of Postville, Iowa apart.

In 2008, nearly 400 workers at Agriprocessors' meatpacking plant were picked up by heavily armed ICE agents, detained in makeshift holding facilities and denied a fair judicial process. It was one of the largest single-worksites raids in history.

But even before the raid, many, if not all, workers and their families were already living on the edge of survival. They were abused, exploited and robbed of their wages by an employer who took advantage of their vulnerability.

What happened in Postville strongly symbolizes the unresolved and interconnected issues of immigration and justice for workers.

Five years after Postville, we now have an incredible opportunity to pass comprehensive immigration reform that protects workers' rights and honors family unity.

We have a real shot at winning meaningful reform this time. BUT every person who stands on the side of justice must first get onboard! **Will you support the work of interfaith worker justice with a gift today?** Donate at <http://bit.ly/InvestInJustice> or use the enclosed envelope to mail in your gift.

As people of faith, we recognize and honor the social and economic contributions made by immigrant workers. When we allow immigrant workers to be exploited, we lower the standards for all workers. When workers and their families are exploited and torn apart, we all suffer as a result.

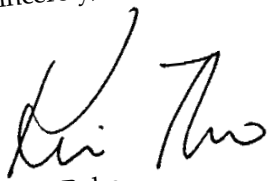
At this point in history, when worker rights and immigrant rights are one and the same, your gift to IWJ is an investment in the future of ALL workers. It's an investment in your future and the future of your family.

2013 is a year of great potential. Aside from the growing momentum behind passing comprehensive immigration reform, we're also seeing strong support for an increase in the federal minimum wage. On the local and state level, IWJ affiliates and allied groups are ratcheting up work around paid sick days and wage theft! (Please take time to read the articles in this issue of *Faith Works* to see how your support impacts the work of IWJ and its affiliate network)

Can we count on your support this year? Use the enclosed envelope or donate online at <http://bit.ly/InvestInJustice>.

Contributions from individuals enable IWJ to win victories for workers and their families.

Sincerely,



Kim Bobo  
Executive Director

P.S. You can have an even bigger impact. Please consider joining our monthly giving program, the Faithful Givers Club! Sign up here <http://bit.ly/InvestInJustice>.

For questions and additional information, please email [info@iwj.org](mailto:info@iwj.org) or contact Cathy Junia at 773-728-8400 ext. 40

Your gift of:	Will help pay for:
\$50	Development and distribution of immigration reform and wage theft resources to 10 congregations
\$150	One hour of online advocacy bringing national support to local fights
\$250	Production of free online resource materials on immigration reform and wage theft prevention for congregations and worker centers.
\$500	Materials to train two seminary, rabbinical student, or undergraduate interns
\$1,000	Issue-specific training sessions for worker justice organizers in 28 states.



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

Say...

We need your help on something.  
Check inside for more details.

Thanks a lot in advance!

Kim

## You Rocked Black Friday!

The discounts were deep as ever; checkout lines, as long as you'd expect for the biggest shopping day of the year; and the droves of shoppers, massive as always. But there was also something starkly different about Black Friday 2012.

Outside more than a thousand Walmart stores across the country, communities of people of faith, workers, students, activists, neighbors gathered in support of striking Walmart store and supply chain workers. That's more than 1,200 actions at Walmart stores in 47 states that YOU and others like you made happen!

IWJ affiliates and supporters led and participated in more than 100 of these actions around the country. We held prayer vigils, delegations to the management and flash mobs to bring attention to the plight of Walmart store and supply chain workers who are demanding better wages and safe working conditions.

Shortly after that Friday, Walmart announced plans to address scheduling issues, giving part-time workers enough hours to make them full-time, and in some stores, provide workers their schedules a week in advance. Those are major victories owed to the courage of Walmart workers and the support of community allies like you.

Organization United for Respect at Walmart (OUR

Walmart) – the organization of Walmart associates – continue to fight for improvements in specific stores around the country. Can they count on you for the long haul? Go to <http://bit.ly/WalmartGroup> to stay involved in the campaign.

Actions are planned throughout the year. We'll keep you posted. One thing's for sure: we'll make Black Friday 2013 even bigger, with actions at every Walmart store in the country. So start looking for a store near you! For more info, contact Sung Yeon Choi-Morrow at [schoi-morrow@iwj.org](mailto:schoi-morrow@iwj.org) or 312.513.2289



Photo credit: Making Change at Walmart

## Wage Theft Campaigns *from p. 1*

**Northwest Arkansas Workers' Justice Center** staff are hopeful two state legislators will reintroduce a strong anti-wage theft bill for the 2013 legislative session.

State Representatives Jon Woods and Greg Leding from Northwest Arkansas are working with the worker center to push the bill that would require employers to pay a penalty to former employees if wages are not paid and that would limit the wage deductions an employer can make without written authorization from the employee. It also requires workers be paid the next regular payday following termination or departure.

**Arizona Interfaith Alliance for Worker Justice** is also working on a wage theft ordinance in Phoenix.

Visit IWJ on the web for more information about wage theft, our affiliates or their local campaigns to stop wage theft in communities across the country.

## 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  
Michigan Organizing Project (Kalamazoo) – Kalamazoo, MI  
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