



March 19, 2025

Re: Support Worker Protections and Help Prevent Wage Theft

To: Honorable Mayor Bass, City Council President Harris-Dawson, and Councilmembers

We are writing to express our strong support for urgent action to combat wage theft and its direct link to homelessness in Los Angeles.

As our city grapples with an escalating homelessness crisis, our communities have once again come under attack by the federal administration's drive to separate families and destabilize our local economy. It is imperative that we prioritize policies that address the root causes of economic instability, including wage theft and lack of worker protections.

Los Angeles is both the "wage theft capital" and the "homelessness capital" of the United States. With more than 46,000 people experiencing homelessness in the city and nearly 76,000 countywide, the crisis continues to deepen. Alarming, between 2020 and 2023, Latino homelessness surged by 32%, a rise that far outpaces the 12% increase for the overall population. This crisis disproportionately affects low-wage Latino workers and other people of color, many of whom are pushed into homelessness due to exploitative labor practices.

Wage theft is not just an economic issue; it is a direct driver of homelessness. Studies show that **88% of workers in Los Angeles County experience labor standards violations**, including unpaid overtime (80%), earning below minimum wage (30%), and being denied meal and rest breaks (80%). The consequences are dire—half of unhoused individuals in Los Angeles were employed within four years of losing their homes, with nearly one in five still working at the time of becoming unhoused. This cycle of economic exploitation must be broken.

We urge you to support and fully fund initiatives that strengthen worker protections, including:

- Expanding the Office of Wage Standards (OWS) to ensure enforcement of all labor law violations, including overtime, rest breaks, meal breaks, and individual liability laws
- Increasing OWS staffing and resources to hold violators accountable
- Establishing a one-stop shop for wage theft claims to streamline justice for workers
- Work with community-based organizations and worker centers to strengthen worker protections

These policy measures are crucial to protecting workers from exploitation and preventing the continued rise of homelessness in our city. As Los Angeles prepares to host major global events such as the 2026 World Cup and the 2028 Olympics, we have an opportunity to lead by example in demonstrating how a city can protect its workers and reduce homelessness through proactive investment in economic justice.

Addressing wage theft is not just about enforcing labor laws—it is about protecting the dignity of our workforce, ensuring economic stability, and creating a sustainable future for all Angelenos. We strongly urge you to take decisive action to address this urgent crisis. We appreciate your leadership and commitment to building a just and equitable Los Angeles.

Thank you for your time and attention to this critical matter. We look forward to your response and the opportunity to support these efforts in any way possible.

Sincerely,



Armando Gudino, Executive Director, Los Angeles Worker Center Network

Supporting organizations:

1. CLEAN Carwash Worker Center
2. Garment Worker Center
3. Koreatown Immigrant Workers Alliance
4. Los Angeles Black Worker Center
5. Pilipino Workers Center
6. Warehouse Worker Resource Center
7. UCLA Labor Center
8. Bet Tzedek Legal Services
9. AAPI Equity Alliance
10. CAIR-LA
11. California Immigrant Policy Center
12. Cambodia Town
13. Catalyst California
14. Chinatown Service Center
15. Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights of Los Angeles
16. Clergy and Laity United for Economic Justice
17. Council of Mexican Federations in North America
18. CSU Northridge Labor Studies Program
19. Ethix Merch
20. Instituto de Educacion Popular del Sur de California (IDEPSCA)
21. Immigrants Are LA
22. Inclusive Action for the City
23. Inland Empire Black Worker Center
24. Latino Media Collaborative
25. Little Tokyo Service Center
26. Long Beach Forward
27. Maintenance Cooperation Trust Fund
28. National Asian Pacific American Families Allied for Substance Awareness and Harm Reduction
29. National Domestic Workers Alliance
30. Pomona Economic Opportunity Center
31. Public Counsel
32. San Diego Black Worker Center

33. South Asian Network
34. Special Services for Groups Weber Community Center
35. Strategic Actions for a Just Economy
36. Thai Community Development Center
37. Workers United, Western State Regional Joint Board

