

Coalition for a Real Minimum-Wage Increase

Asian American Legal Defense & Education Fund, Chinese Staff & Workers Association, Community Development Project – Urban Justice Center, Flushing Workers Center, Hunger Action Network of New York State, MFY Legal Services, National Mobilization Against SweatShops, National Center for Law and Economic Justice

Media Advisory

For Immediate Release: November 12, 2013

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Data Reveals Weak Enforcement in NYS Department of Labor Coalition Demands Governor Cuomo Take Action on Enforcement

Date: **Wednesday, November 13, 2013, 11:30 a.m.**

Location: In front of **NYS Dept. of Labor, 75 Varick St.** (between Canal & Watt) NYC

The Coalition for a Real Minimum-Wage Increase will hold a news conference on Wed. Nov. 13 to release data concerning the handling of wage theft cases by the NYS Department of Labor.

The information was gathered through the filing of a Freedom of Information request after DOL denied that there were 15,000 pending wage theft cases with a 2-year backlog. The information relates to the number of cases filed and pending; the disposition of cases; and the amount of stolen wages recovered.

The news conference will take place in front of the Department of Labor office at 75 Varick St. where many workers file their wage theft complaints. Workers will be present to discuss their complaints.

A recent study by the National Employment Law Project found that a billion dollars is stolen annually from workers just in NYC alone. A report by the Economic Policy Institute last week stated that more than 60 percent of low-wage workers have some pay illegally withheld by their employer each week.

Even when the DOL orders employers to pay money to their employees, because of weaknesses of the law and inadequate resources, the DOL cannot enforce many of its orders nor collect the money from employers who refuse to pay. Instead of allocating more resources, Cuomo's administration announced a new policy to investigate complaints no more than 3 years back from the date they are filed except in egregious cases. The NY Labor Law has a six-year statute of limitations and the Commissioner of Labor is authorized to investigate claims for the full six years.

The Coalition will invite workers with wage-theft problems and pending claims to call: 212-358-0295.

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Coalition endorsers: Brandworkers, Damayan Migrant Workers Association, Domestic Workers United, Flushing Greens, Focus Churches of Albany, Harlem Community Nutrition Services Agency, Greater NY Labor-Religion Coalition, Jews for Racial & Economic Justice, Joy of Resistance, Mount Vernon United Tenants, Multi-Cultural Feminist Radio (WBAL), Judeotutor Services (Rabbi Neal Kaunfer), New Economy Project, Occupy Albany, Pelton + Associates PC, Presbyterian Church U.S.A., Ray Korona Band, St. Luke Lutheran Church, St. Raphael Parish Social Ministry, Sweatshop Free Upper West Side, Systemic Disorder, Trinity Lutheran Church of Manhattan, Walker Memorial Baptist Church, West-Park Presbyterian Church, West Side Campaign Against Hunger, Xavier Mission, 318 Restaurant Workers Union