

Stop Trafficking !

Anti-Human Trafficking Newsletter



Awareness

Advocacy

Action

August 2012 Vol. 10 No. 8

This issue highlights current issues regarding forced labor globally and in the U.S.

Sponsored by the: Sisters of the Divine Savior

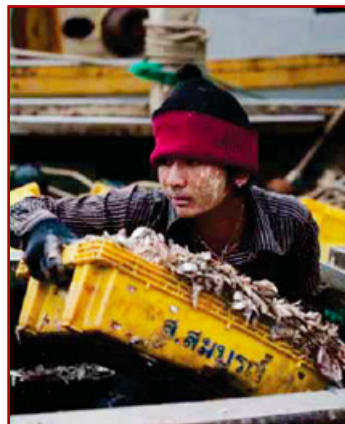
Co-Sponsors

- Adorers of the Blood of Christ
- Benedictine Sisters of Chicago
- Benedictine Sisters of Mount St. Scholastica
- Cenacle Sisters, N. Amer. Prov.
- Congregation of Notre Dame
- Congregation of Sisters of St. Agnes
- Congregation of St. Joseph
- Daughters of Charity, Prov. of St. Louise
- Daughters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul, Prov. of West
- Daughters of the Holy Spirit
- Dominican Sisters of Adrian, MI
- Dominican Sisters of Mission San Jose
- Dominican Sisters of Peace
- Dominican Sisters of San Rafael
- Felician Sisters
- Franciscan Sisters of Peace
- Franciscan Sisters of the Sacred Heart
- Holy Spirit Missionary Sisters
- Holy Union Sisters
- Marianites of Holy Cross
- Missionary Sisters of the Society of Mary
- Our Lady of Victory Missionary Sisters
- Religious of the Sacred Heart of Mary
- Salvatorian Priests and Brothers
- San Jose CA Police Dept. Vice Unit, HT Task Force
- School Sisters of Notre Dame, Shalom North America
- School Sisters of St. Francis, PA
- School Sisters of St. Francis of Christ the King
- Servants of the Holy Heart of Mary, USA Province
- Servants of Mary, Ladysmith, WI
- Sisters of Bon Secours USA
- Sisters of Charity of Halifax
- Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word, Houston
- Sisters of Charity of Nazareth, KY
- Sisters of Christian Charity, Mendham NJ & Wilmette, IL
- Sisters Faithful Companions of Jesus
- Sisters of the Good Shepherd
- Sisters of the Holy Cross
- Sisters of the Holy Family, Fremont, CA
- Sisters of the Holy Family of Nazareth
- Sisters of the Holy Names of Jesus and Mary
- Sisters of the Humility of Mary
- Sisters of Mercy of the Americas
- Sisters of Notre Dame, CA Prov.
- Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur, USA
- Sisters of the Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary, SD
- Sisters of Providence, Mother Joseph Prov.
- Sisters of Providence of St. Vincent de Paul, Canada
- Sisters of St. Francis of Colorado Springs
- Sisters of St. Francis of the Providence of God
- Sisters of St. Francis of Redwood City
- Sisters of St. Francis of Rochester, MN
- Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet, Los Angeles
- Sisters of St. Joseph of Chestnut Hill, PA
- Sisters of St. Joseph of Cluny, Prov. of USA & Canada
- Sisters of St. Joseph of Orange, CA
- Sisters of St. Joseph of Peace
- Sisters of St. Mary of Namur, N. / S. Amer. Prov.s
- Society of the Holy Child Jesus, Amer. Prov.
- Ursuline Sisters of the Roman Union USA

Slave Labor and U.S. Business Thailand

A group of shrimp workers are protesting dismal conditions in the Thai factory, *Phatthana Seafood*, one of several brands under a corporate umbrella called *PTN Group*. *Rubicon*, a major supplier to *Walmart* in the U.S. is a PTN distributor.

Phatthana Seafood is accused of paying low wages to workers, as well as keeping a percentage of these wages against the debt incurred by workers for travel to the factory (a form of "debt bondage"). *Phatthana Seafood* also retains the workers' passports and releases them only for a heavy fee.



2012 TIP Report pg. 28

Sok Sorng traveled from Cambodia to Thailand to work in the large, industrial seafood factory and is now regretting having left home. The 20-year-old was told he "would have the job for two years and would receive living arrangements and a food allowance." But when he arrived, he found that fees, for both living expenses and passports

Thailand cont. pg. 2

Louisiana

As of July 2012 *C.J.'s Seafood* processing company of Breaux Bridge, LA must pay \$250,000 in fines for gross mistreatment of its seasonal immigrant workers. This comes after an investigation by the U.S. Department of Labor for allegations submitted in a *National Guestworker Alliance* (NGA) petition on *Change.org*. More than 148,000 people signed the petition, which sought to pressure *Walmart* to cancel its contract with *C.J. Seafood*, which has a staff of 50-60 comprised mostly of seasonal, migrant workers who qualify for an H-2B guest worker visa. (See 'visa' article, pg. 7)

The petition recounted the experience of a 40-year-old guest worker from Mexico who said she "peels crawfish for *C.J.'s Seafood*", which sells 85% of its products to *Walmart*. "Our boss forces us to work up to 24 hours at a time with no overtime pay. No matter how fast we work, they scream and curse at us to make us work faster. Our supervisor threatens to beat us



Louisiana cont. pg. 2



Awareness

Thailand *cont. from pg. 1*

in the original contracts, had been deducted from workers' salaries. Sorng found he had to work 26 days a month. He got his salary every two weeks, but half was withheld to ensure he did not run away. "Most of the workers wanted to go home. But we are in debt from travel here. We don't know how much we'll pay to get passports and transportation," he said.

All this might explain why Sorng became a spokesperson for the protest. *Phatthana Seafood* uses practices typical for Thailand, but because so much of their product is distributed globally, including to *Walmart*, the protests are significant. Shrimp is America's top-selling seafood and *Walmart* is the U.S.'s biggest grocery retailer. The result is a massive global stream of frozen, cooked shrimp pouring into American households. Once a rare, expensive delicacy, shrimp is now a \$1.99 fast-food menu add-on.

Although there are a few sources of domestic shrimp in the U.S. (the Gulf of Mexico being one of the largest), 90% of the shrimp Americans eat is imported, with most coming from Thailand, Vietnam, and South America. China is also a large producer, but they eat much of what they produce.

Organizers for *Making Change at Walmart*, a project of the *United Food and Commercial Workers International Union*, have been helping the shrimp workers at *Phatthana Seafood* put pressure on *Walmart*. The group recently sent a letter to *Walmart* detailing the abuses in the factory (as well as at a second factory in Thailand that ships over 70% of its canned pineapple product to *Walmart*).

In their letter, the American labor

union references *Walmart's Standards for Suppliers*, which states that "all labor must be voluntary" and "workers must be allowed to maintain control over their identity documents." The confiscation of documents is a violation of Thai law as well as of *Walmart's Standards*. Receiving half the salary promised, without promised lodging and transportation, many workers cannot afford enough to eat.

Walmart recently webcast their sustainability milestones. The company's goals, as it described them, are: "To be supplied 100% by renewable energy; to create zero waste; and to sell products that sustain people and the environment."

Meanwhile, around 300 of the migrant workers at *Phatthana Seafood* must rely on donated rations from an NGO to avoid malnutrition. Sok Sorng told a Thai newspaper, "They need food so much because they have received no money from work."

(<http://grist.org/food/while-walmart-boasts-sustainability-shrimp-factory-workers-protest/>)

Louisiana *cont. from pg. 1*

with a shovel to stop us from taking breaks."

"We live in trailers across from the boss's house, and we're under surveillance all the time. The supervisors come into our trailers without warning, and they threaten to fire us if we leave after 9 p.m."

"The supervisor also locked us in the plant so we couldn't take breaks. One worker called 911. After that the boss rounded us up at 2:30 a.m., closed the door to keep the American employees out, and threatened our families."

"He said, 'As a friend I can be very

good, but you don't want to know me as an enemy. I have contacts with good people and bad people, and I know where all your families live. I can find you no matter where you hide.' We were terrified."

After conducting an investigation on June 13th *Walmart* announced it was "unable to substantiate claims of forced labor or human trafficking" at CJ's. However, the company had not even followed up with the workers who lodged the complaints or with the NGA. The *Worker Rights Consortium* (WRC) then released its own independent report documenting labor violations at CJ's, stating that conditions there rivaled "any sweatshop in China or Bangladesh." *Walmart* launched a second investigation and said it did actually find violations.

The NGA sees these abuses as a systemic problem rather than an isolated event. NGA "formed a national investigative commission of civil and labor rights experts to conduct a full investigation into *Walmart's* failure to enforce its own *Standards for Suppliers*" among U.S. suppliers employing guest workers. In a survey of 18 such suppliers, NGA preliminarily found 12 of them had "622 federal citations for safety, health, wage and hour violations, as well as dozens of federal lawsuits alleging significant violations of civil and labor rights law."

There are reports of many cases revealing the gross discrepancies between *Walmart's* ethical promises and its unethical action throughout its supply chain. *Walmart's* business model inevitably leads to worker abuses, which are much harder to ignore when they occur in the U.S. (<http://www.theind.com/business/10872-walmart-halts-contract-with-cjs-seafood-of-breaux-bridge>)

<http://makingchangeatwalmart.org/2012/07/10/under-pressure-walmart-changes->



Awareness

3 Factory Worker Abuse Needs to Be Addressed

A report in June 2012 from the *Institute for Global Labour and Human Rights* headquartered in Pittsburgh, PA revealed a chilling portrait of sweatshop working conditions within *VTech's* electronics factory in Guangdong, China. The company was shown to be engaging in a sweeping list of labor and human rights violations while manufacturing cordless phones and other low-ticket electronics for US companies like *AT&T*, *Motorola*, and retail giant *Walmart*.

According to the report, the *VTech* factory's 10,000 employees are made to work 12-15 hour days, including mandatory overtime that exceeds China's legal limits by between 237 to 273%. The workers receive substandard wages (about 6.5% of what factory workers earn in the US) and are denied between \$7.3 million and \$12.3 million in rightfully owed health and social security benefits each year.

Stringent rules and squalid working conditions cause around 80% of the factory's workforce to flee annually. Many of those interviewed said that suicides are common. "If things continue to go like this, there will be more jumpers," said one worker in confidence. "Sometimes I want to die,"

another reportedly admitted. "I work like hell every day for such a dull life. I can't find a reason to live. Given that living is too tiring, seeking death might not be a silly thing!"

The Report revealed:

- Assembly line workers must race to complete one operation every 2.25 to 2.8 second—17,600 operations a day and 105,600 operations a week.
- Acting as factory police, security guards often beat the workers.
- Eight workers are housed in each primitive dorm room, sleeping on narrow plywood bunk beds. Workers report, "It's filthy, like living in a pig sty." The workers use small plastic buckets to fetch water to take a sponge bath. Summer temperatures exceed 90 degrees Fahrenheit, leaving the workers dripping in their own sweat all night.
- Workers failing to meet their mandatory production goals are forced to keep working without pay.

VTech is also a major original equipment manufacturer (OEM) for hardware companies like *Sony* and *Philips*, the sole supplier of corded and cordless phones for *Deutsche Telecom* and *Telstra*, and a major supplier for US retailer *Walmart*.

(<http://www.theverge.com/2012/6/25/3115224/report-on-vtech-sweatshop-implicates-at-t-motorola-and-others-in>)

Olympic Brands & Labor Abuse

Bangladesh sweatshops produced sportswear for Olympic sponsors *Adidas*, *Nike* and *Puma*. In an investigation by the British charity 'War on Want' in March 2012, it was seen that these factories abused their workers.

The *Report* stated that two thirds of the workers interviewed, mostly young women, had been beaten, slapped, kicked, pushed, had their hair pulled, or were publicly humiliated by their managers. The workers for all three companies had to work illegally long hours, up to 80 hours per week, for less than the minimum wage. If they tried to defend their legal rights, the women faced cruel punishment, including being forced to undress and stand on a table, being locked in the toilet or not allowed to use the toilets.



At the time a *Nike* spokeswoman said *Nike* would look into allegations. *Adidas*, the official outfitter of the London 2012 Olympics, supplied British team uniforms and the uniforms for the 70,000 volunteers who helped run the Games. *Adidas* said they monitor workplace conditions regularly.

In Bangladesh, 3.5 million workers in 4,825 garment factories produce goods for export to the global market, principally Europe and North America. The Bangladeshi garment industry generates 80% of the country's total export revenue. However, the wealth generated by this sector has led to few improvements in the lives of garment workers, 85% of whom are women. (<http://gantdaily.com/2012/03/05/olympic-brands-accused-of-labor-abuse-scandal/>)





Awareness

Forced Labor of Prisoners

In 1979, Congress created the *Prison Industry Enhancement Certification Program* (PIE) to establish employment opportunities for inmates “that approximate private sector work opportunities”. It was to give prisoners something to do, allow them to contribute to their own upkeep, and give them a better chance to get an actual living wage job upon release. Unfortunately, it has become little more than a profit-making scheme for corporations willing to exploit a captive labor force at the expense of private sector jobs.

The worst abuses of the PIE program occur in the agricultural sector, especially in states where strict immigration laws have led to labor shortages that allow crops to rot in the fields. A state law in AZ requires that all able-bodied inmates must work. Prisoners who do jobs within the institution are paid 10-50 cents an hour. Those working for one of AZ’s Dept. of Corrections (ADC)’s private partners are paid “more than 50 cents an hour”.

Martori Farms is one of the leading suppliers to *Walmart* of agricultural produce. *Walmart’s* website states, “Our relationship with *Martori Farms* is an excellent example of the kind of collaboration we strive for with our

suppliers.” On another part of the website it reads, “Forced or prison labor will not be tolerated by *Walmart*.”

A female prisoner at Arizona’s state prison Perryville unit described her day working as a laborer for *Martori Farms*. “They wake us up between 2:30 and 3 a.m. and kick us out of our housing unit by 3:30 a.m. We get fed at 4 a.m. Our work supervisors show up between 5 a.m. and 8 a.m. Then it’s an hour to a one-and-a-half-hour drive to the job site. Then we work eight hours, regardless of conditions. We work in the fields hoeing weeds and thinning plants. “Currently, we are forced to work in the blazing sun for eight hours. We run out of water several times a day. We run out of sunscreen several times a week. They don’t check medical backgrounds or ages before they pull women for these jobs. Many of us cannot do it! If we stop working and sit on the bus or even just take an unauthorized break, we get a major ticket which takes away our ‘good time’.”

At *Martori Farms* prison work teams were supervised by a foreman and a correctional officer. If a prisoner wanted to opt out, *Martori* let them go. Consequences for the prisoner though became a ‘prison issue’.

When a *National Correctional Industries Association* (NCIA) spokesperson was asked how *Martori Farms* and other private companies get away with what could be described as forced labor, he said the PIE program classifies certain work as a “service” rather than an actual “job”, and therefore is not subject to the 1979 criteria. Hence the backbreaking work of

picking crops in the blistering sun counts as a “service”, so prisoners can be paid even less than the immigrants who have traditionally performed this work.

This loophole came from the *American Legislative Exchange Council* (ALEC), which introduced an expansion of the *Prison Industries Act* back in 1995. ALEC has lobbied since the mid 1990s to “improve and expand federal prison industries”. They also had a hand in drafting SB1070, AZ’s immigration law. As Bob Sloan, an expert in prison labor issues, said, “ALEC has proven expertly capable of devising endless ways to help private corporations benefit from the country’s massive prison population.”

However *Martori Farms* has gone back to using the guest worker program in 2012, as they found that prisoners were not always able to provide workers on call the way they needed. *Martori* said that unlike their immigrant workers, the prison-provided teams had “adjustment issues” with the early starts, heat and hard physical work. Some of them simply “weren’t capable of it”.

For companies that balk at the notion of paying workers a living wage, having a cheap and expansive labor force at their beck and call is a win-win situation. But for the prisoners and for the taxpayers, who subsidize this scheme at the expense of their own jobs and wages, it is a double loss.

(Guardian <https://www.commondreams.org/view/2012/07/06-9>)



Women prisoners march to a bus that will take them to a worksite outside Estrella Jail in Phoenix, AZ. (Photo - Jim Lo Scalzo/EPA)



Awareness

Walmart Supply Chain in California

None of the workers loading and unloading *Walmart* goods at the *NFI Crossdock* warehouse know exactly what is in the layer of black dust that seems to cover almost everything. But they know its effects. Their throats burn and their eyes water. One said, "I blow my nose and blood comes out with the black dust."

NFI Crossdock is part of a vast network of warehouses clustered in the *Inland Empire*, a stretch of the southern California desert at the heart of *Walmart's* American supply chain. The warehouse unloads shipping containers arriving at CA ports and loads them again on trucks taking goods to *Walmart* stores across America. It is backbreaking work, with strict quotas, low wages and few benefits.

In 2007 *Change to Win*, a national coalition of unions with about five million members, founded *Warehouse Workers United* (WWU), an organization advocating for higher wages, an end to temporary employment and affordable health care coverage for *Inland Empire* workers. After more than four years, its campaign failed to create any new union locals among warehouse workers.

In a survey WWU and the Univ. of CA interviewed 101 workers and found that 83 of them said they had suffered a job-related illness. It also found that almost half of workers claimed to have been exposed to chemicals at work. The *Inland Empire's* warehouse workers represent one of the most vulnerable work forces in America: low paid, afraid to speak out, with virtually no political power.

In July WWU lodged an official complaint with CA labor authorities about conditions at *NFI Crossdock*, which is operated by a subsidiary of *National Distribution Centers* of Delaware. The complaint described vital equipment that is often faulty, old or broken, and that poses a serious risk to health. Often lights are broken so they work in the dark. Workers must buy their own safety equipment from a company store. Injuries are common. Managers pressure workers to lift hundreds of boxes an hour. The complaint also detailed the dust, describing workers vomiting and coughing blood.

One 61-year old worker was expected to meet quotas of up to 250 boxes an hour. "It is an impossibility. But they tell you to work harder. They shout at you and harass you. They say, 'If you can't take it, then you know where the door is,'" he said. Supervisors make clear that any failure to meet those quotas, even at the risk of physical injury, could be the loss of a job. Few of those working can risk losing work.

Some workers complained of the mental stress caused by these conditions. "There are times that I can't go straight home because I am so annoyed and aggravated. I just have to stay outside," said one man. Others blamed the pressure for causing injuries, which they say supervisors see as an inconvenience and a threat to slowing the processing of goods. They describe a system run by fear. When another man was injured on the job he was told to finish his quota before seeking medical help. He then had to walk two miles to a clinic, but found it shut by the time he arrived. He returned to work and only then was sent to a 24-hour clinic where he was diagnosed with a sprained back, neck and shoulder.

Another worker was ordered to falsify employees' time sheets to cheat them out of getting the minimum wage. The purpose was to cover up the widespread practice of paying far below the legal minimum, which is \$8 an hour

in CA. Workers sometimes received as little as \$3 or \$4 an hour.

While much attention has focused on abuses at outsourced Chinese supply chains, some experts believe *Walmart's* U.S.-based supply chain is built on a similar model. As in China, the supply chain is marked by layers upon layers of subcontracting. So, while every single box packed and unpacked at *NFI Crossdock* is destined for *Walmart*, the warehouse is owned, run and staffed by many other companies. The model has been dubbed "insourcing", defined by ruthless cost cutting as each layer of subcontracting seeks to eke out a profit.



Over the last 10 years the warehouse industry has boomed in the *Inland Empire*. About 110,000 low-wage warehouse workers are now employed there, the vast majority of whom are Hispanics. Half of these are immigrants. The huge warehouses supply other major firms, such as *K-Mart*, *Home Depot*, *Toyota*, *Apple*, *Gerber*, *Target* and *Polo*. But *Walmart* sets the model for the others by its sheer size.

Warehouse workers in the *Inland Empire*, as well as in the next two biggest distribution hubs, Chicago and central New Jersey, are cogs in a system in which big retailers are separated from the workers, and shielded from legal exposure, by layers of intermediary companies.

The *Inland Empire* warehouse workers' suit doesn't name *Walmart* as a defendant, even though the case is based on practices at three warehouses run exclusively for *Walmart*. Instead, the litigation is against *Schneider National Inc.*, a company with annual revenue of more than \$3 billion and



Awareness

Warehouse Empire

cont. from pg. 5

operator of three warehouses. The suit also names *Impact Logistics*, a national company that loads and unloads merchandise bound for retailers, and *Premier Warehousing Services*, both of which employ workers at *Schneider*.

The suit, filed in October, claims that the companies used an opaque 'piece rate' pay system based on the number and type of semi-truck containers emptied or loaded, which left workers uncertain about what they were owed and kept their pay below the legal minimum.

The case investigated by CA labor officials led to proposed fines of close to \$1.4 million. According to court documents and interviews with workers:

- Crew leaders were under orders at some warehouses to force workers to sign blank time sheets, a tactic that made it easier to cheat them out of their rightful pay.
- Workers often were paid only for the time they spent loading and unloading trucks, not for time spent sweeping warehouses, labeling and restacking boxes, or waiting to find out if they would be assigned work.
- High heat in the warehouses and up to 125F in the containers, along with constant pressure for speed, created safety problems. The CA Division of Occupational Safety and Health, or Cal/OSHA, in January 2012 accused four warehouses of more than 60 workplace safety violations and sought \$256,445 in penalties.
- Many workers, classified as temporaries despite years of service, said they were threatened with being blackballed and never being hired again if they raised questions about their pay

or took part in protest or unionizing efforts.

- Workers also were forced to pay \$1 per week to rent a shirt with a company logo, and required to show up every day, only to be sent home some days for lack of work.

Among other problems, Cal/OSHA cited failure to provide protection for men working at elevated heights; running machinery without safety guards and leaving boxes "precariously stacked," where they could tumble down on employees below. They also neglected to deal with stifling 90-degree indoor temperatures.

When one worker became overwhelmed by the heat, he asked one of his bosses for a ride to a hospital, but she refused. At that point his son, a worker at a nearby warehouse, took him to a hospital, where records show that he was admitted for dehydration and heat exposure. "These people don't care about the welfare of their workers," he said. "What they did is just wrong." The staffing company is appealing.

Still in its early stages, the suit already has won the workers a court order requiring the companies to provide properly itemized wage statements, and the employees have since been switched back to an hourly pay system.

However, the defendant companies continue to dispute the suit's contentions. *Schneider* said it is not responsible for the wages of workers involved in the suit. The company denied that it replaced employees earning hourly wages of \$12 to \$17 by bringing in contractors that paid their workers less than the minimum wage.

Premier said it properly compensated employees, but declined to answer questions and stopped serving as a staffing company for the warehouses. *Impact* stated "erroneous payment of any wage was due to inadvertence, mistake or negligence" and was "not willful or intentional." They switched

from piece rate compensation back to hourly pay "to have no appearance of impropriety."

But an employee recounted that he was underpaid by *Impact* and protested to his boss. "He always promised to look into it but my pay was never corrected, not even once. When I would repeat my complaints, he would tell me, 'I have a pile of job applications on my desk more than a foot high, if you don't like this job, you can go home.'" As a result of being shortchanged, he sometimes struggled to pay for basic necessities for his wife and two children. He was directed "to record work time that was far less, sometimes less than half, of the time we actually spent working."

Another employee, who had worked for *Premier*, said in a court declaration that his manager told him two years ago he would earn more when the company switched to a 'piece rate' system. Instead, the pay got lower. When it came time to fill out time sheets, "We were directed simply to sign our names on blank forms maintained by the supervisors. We did not write in the time we arrived at work or the time we finished."

Based on the inspections, state authorities proposed fines against *Impact* and *Premier* of more than \$1.1 million. They accused both companies of failing to provide properly itemized wage statements, leaving workers unaware of what they were being paid for their piecework. "Employers cannot simply make up a piece rate and change it at their whim," authorities warned.

One worker at a *Schneider* plant, which, like the *NFI Crossdock* supplied only *Walmart*, worked 362 days in a year, for 16 hours a day, with no overtime and no lunch breaks. *Schneider* denied the allegations, saying it complies with labor regulations. "Walmart uses these companies as a buffer to negate any responsibility for what happens in their workplaces," said Prof. Juan de Lara, from the Univ. of Southern CA. In fact, critics

Warehouse Empire cont. pg. 8



Advocacy

Walmart: Economy by the Numbers

(Source: <http://makingchangeatwalmart.org/factsheet/>)

Walmart is powerful.

- Walmart's rank as employer of retail workers and rank in size of private U.S. employers. **Number 1**
- Walmart's 2010 revenue as the number one Fortune 100 company. **\$408.2 billion**

Collective worth of the **6 Walton heirs** to the Walmart fortune. **>\$100 billion**

America pays the price.

- Number of U.S. jobs lost from 2001-2006 as a result of Walmart's imports from China. **196,000**
- Conservative estimate of percentage of Walmart's share of U.S. Trade Deficit with China. **11%**
- Cost to Massachusetts for Walmart associates to use publicly subsidized health care in 2009. **\$8.8 million**
- Cost to nation if public safety net use by Walmart associates in Massachusetts is adjusted nationwide. **\$1 billion**

Walmart associates pay the price.

- Average annual salary of a Walmart sales associate. **\$15,500**
- Average hourly wage of a Walmart sales associate. **\$8.81**
- Additional cost per shopping trip for a Walmart customer if the company offered a minimum wage of \$12 an hour. **46¢**

"It is sad that powerful corporations like AT&T, Motorola and Walmart have not lifted a finger to demand that even China's weak labor laws be respected."

Charles Kernaghan, Director, *Institute for Global Labour & Human Rights*

"Walmart's suppliers run out of places to squeeze out the costs and they are left with the workers." Catherine Ruckelshaus, co-author of the *National Employment Law Project Report, 'Chain of Greed'*.



NFI Crossdock - Ontario, CA.
Part of Walmart's American supply chain.
Photo-Robert Yager, Guardian

We can make it better.

When UFCW locals and members, Walmart associates, elected officials, religious leaders, small business owners and community allies **join together as one**, we can make change at Walmart and make change in our communities.

"The same way Walmart drives down standards, they can also make this a better industry. The warehouse industry could actually form part of a US economic recovery if wages were higher. They don't have to be bad jobs. They can support a decent middle-class lifestyle."

Prof. de Lara, Univ. Southern CA

"When companies force suppliers to cut costs, corners will be cut and workers will be abused. Congress and the Department of Labor need to make sure that sprawling supply chains and profits are not built upon the systematic erosion of workplace conditions and laborers' rights." N.Y. Times Editorial (<http://www.nytimes.com/2012/07/09/opinion/forced-labor-on-american-shores.html?ref=walmartstoresinc>)

Visas for Seasonal Workers

The H-2B program grants visas to low-skilled seasonal workers in industries that supposedly cannot find enough Americans to do the job. The program has been cited for wage abuses, fraud and involuntary servitude, and investigated by the *Government Accountability Office*.

New rules protecting workers' rights were supposed to have taken effect in April 2012, but were blocked after business owners sued the Department of Labor (DOL). A group of senators from both parties voted to deny funding to the DOL so it could not enforce the rules.

Under the rules, employers would be barred from confiscating immigration documents and blacklisting workers who complained about working conditions and consulted with unions. Employers would have to try harder to hire Americans and cover migrants' transportation costs and visa fees. Though the new rules do not go far enough (they should allow workers to change jobs if employers abuse them), they are a crucial step forward. (Excerpted: <http://www.nytimes.com/2012/07/09/opinion/forced-labor-on-american-shores.html>)



Advocacy

Warehouse Empire

cont. from pg. 6

say, *Walmart's* business strategy is based on inflicting relentless cost cutting on suppliers. It builds its supply chain with a "plus one" bargaining strategy, which requires all suppliers and contractors to reduce their price or increase their speed each and every year they work with *Walmart*. Court documents filed as a result of the *Schneider* suit showed *Walmart* set productivity standards and, if warehouse worker productivity declined, cut compensation to *Schneider*.

Union officials say warehouse employers have shifted from permanent workers to temporary employees largely to make people so fearful of losing their jobs that they won't risk being identified as union activists. The industry, however, counters that it uses temps simply because the flexibility helps employers deal with busy and slow periods without resorting to layoffs. Recently, supervisors at *NFI Crossdock* handed many workers a leaflet, which warned against supporting the formation of a union. "Don't sign away your rights," it claimed. (<http://www.fairwarning.org/2012/03/lawsuit-investigations-cite-abuse-of-workers-in-warehouse-empire/> <http://www.guardian.co.uk/business/2012/jul/25/walmart-supply-chain-warehouses>)

Speak on Behalf of Foreign Workers!

Tell *AT&T*, *Motorola*, *Walmart*, *Sony*, *Philips* and *Deutsche Telekom* to stop profiting from the repression and denial of internationally recognized worker rights standards at the *VTech* sweatshop in China. Bring *VTech* into compliance with at least China's minimal labor laws.



Send a letter.

Go to: <http://www.globallabourrights.org/reports?id=0649>



Speak to Walmart on behalf of all employees!

Walmart Corporate Headquarters

702 Southwest 8th Street
Bentonville, Arkansas, 72716

- S. Robson Walton, Chairman Board of Directors
- Rollin Ford, Exec. VP & Chief Admin. Officer
- Charles M. Holley, Jr., Exec. VP & Chief Financial Officer

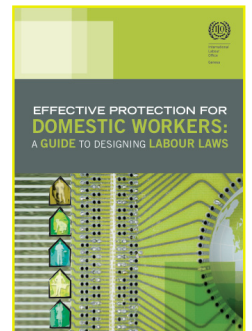
Ways to Protect Domestic Workers

The *International Labour Organization* (ILO) has published a document entitled, 'Effective Protection for Domestic Workers: A Guide for Designing Labour Laws'. The *Guide* is a practical tool for those involved in national legislative processes and in the design of labour laws, including government officials and representatives of workers' and employers' organizations.

At the 100th *International Labour Conference* in June 2011, the ILO adopted *Convention No. 189* and *Recommendation No. 201* on decent work for domestic workers.

Because domestic workers are often excluded from the protection of labour laws or are treated less favourably than other wage workers, implementing the basic principles embodied in *Convention No. 189* calls for an assessment and strengthening of national labor laws. The *Guide* provides specific guidelines and complements these with examples drawn from a wide range of existing national labor laws concerning domestic workers. **Uruguay is the first country to ratify ILO Conv. 189.**

The *Guide* discusses alternative approaches to regulating domestic work, the nature and characteristics of domestic work, the forms of employment relationships that may exist, and their implications for regulation. Subsequent chapters focus on substantive areas of regulation, namely formalizing the employment relationship, working time, remuneration, fundamental principles and rights at work, protection from abuse and harassment, and protection of migrant domestic workers and child domestic workers. (http://www.ilo.org/travail/areasofwork/domestic-workers/WCMS_173365/lang-en/index.htm)





Action

U.S.-Owned Factory Conditions 'Like a Prison'

In 2010 five executives at *Jabil Circuit*, a manufacturer of electronic circuit boards, paid themselves \$27.7 million, almost as much as the corporation's entire \$28.1 million research and development budget. *Jabil's* CEO got \$9.8 million. Executive compensation has skyrocketed over 400% since 2006. The reported 3rd quarter net revenue in 2012 was \$4.25 billion.

Meanwhile the *Jabil Circuit* factory in Guangzhou, China has over 6,000 workers, many of them illegal temporary workers. They work 84 hours a week, are paid as little as 93 cents an hour, and are stripped of their rights.

According to the Philadelphia-based *National Labor Committee's* 2010 Report, the factory is run like a minimum security prison.

These workers produce hi-tech products for companies such as *Samsung, Whirlpool, HP, Emerson, Cannon, Xerox, Siemens, Intel, GE, and Philips.*

Read the Report at:

<http://www.globallabourrights.org/admin/reports/files/Jabil-China-Report.pdf>

Read the Report!

The *Institute for Global Labour and Human Rights' Report* contains candid photos from inside the *VTech* factory.
<http://www.globallabourrights.org/press?id=0426>

**Toll-Free 24/7 Hotline
National Human Trafficking
Resource Center
1.888.3737.888**

Informative Web Sites: (Each contains information related to human trafficking)

U.N. List of Labor Organizations
<http://www.unglobalcompact.org/ParticipantsAndStakeholders/labour.html>

International Labour Organization
<http://www.ilo.org/global/lang-en/index.htm>

Fair Labor Association
<http://www.fairlabor.org/>

Making Change at Walmart
<http://makingchangeatwalmart.org/>

500,000 Workers Strike

In June 2012, thousands of workers in an industrial zone on the outskirts of Dhaka, Bangladesh demanded an increase in their wages. At first, the workers walked out of 100 garment factories. Later all 350 factories in the area were shut down, with 500,000 workers locked out. Police fired rubber bullets at the striking workers, turned powerful water cannons on them and charged the workers, beating them with clubs.



The president of the *Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association* (BGMEA), said it was the "factory owners who were being victimized in some conspiracy." He said the workers do not need a wage increase, that there is "no logic for increasing the wages of the workers."

Working 12 to 16-hour shifts, six and seven days a week, the Bangladeshi women are among the hardest working in the world, but also the poorest. In July 2010, the government and the BGMEA established a minimum wage of just 21 cents an hour, which was a far cry from the 43 cents an hour the workers needed. Over the last two years, steady inflation has weakened the purchasing power of the taka (Bangladesh's currency) by over 30%. The 21-cent-an-hour minimum wage of 2010 is worth just 14.7 cents today.

The workers are demanding a 30% wage increase, which would raise their wage by 6.3 cents, bringing the new minimum wage to 27.3 cents an hour.

Sign the petition.

http://salsa.democracyinaction.org/o/677/p/dia/action/public/?action_KEY=10916

Ask Wal-Mart to Help!

There is no garment corporation in the world that could not easily afford to pay at least 27.3 cents an hour as a minimum wage!

Stop Trafficking! is dedicated exclusively to fostering an exchange of information among religious congregations, their friends and collaborating organizations, working to eliminate all forms of trafficking of human beings.

Use the following web address to access back issues of *Stop Trafficking!* <http://www.stopenslavement.org/archives.htm>

To contribute information, or make requests to be on the mailing list, please contact: jeansds2010@yahoo.com
Editing and Layout: *Jean Schaffer, SDS*