



## 25 Years After FMLA, It's Time For Paid Leave

Twenty-five years ago, the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) was signed into law by President Bill Clinton. After years of organizing, millions of working people had finally won the right to take time to nurture their newborns, to care for ailing family members, and to care for their own health without the fear of losing their jobs. Passing the FMLA was a powerful step forward for millions of working people.

A quarter of a century later, the FMLA remains the only federal standard for sick and parental leave. This policy paralysis has exposed the limitations of the FMLA and the fact that many of the most vulnerable workers have been excluded from its benefits. Many IWJ affiliates have worked tirelessly to expand workplace protections such as paid leave and paid sick days in their cities and states, but millions of working people remain vulnerable to losing their jobs when they must take time off.

The movement for Paid Sick Leave should take a lead from IWJ affiliates who have successfully won policy change at the state and local levels and mirror those strategies to expand common sense protections to working people nationwide, including:

- Increased access to protected leave for the most vulnerable workers
- Provide paid leave benefits so individuals will not have to choose between caring for themselves and their loved ones and being able to pay

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## A Big Win For Poultry Workers

The abuses in poultry processing plants across the country are rife. The combination of lax regulation and the industry's penchant for hiring undocumented workers create an environment where working people are either unaware or too afraid to seek recourse when they have been the victim of abuses. These abuses range from illegal line speeds that force workers to suffer through serious injuries that frequently cause lifelong disability and chronic pain to indignities like the denial of bathroom or water breaks, even for pregnant or sick workers.

Interfaith Worker Justice has long been part of a national coalition effort to end the suffering in poultry plants across the country. And we've seen real results.

But in the context of the Trump Administration's war on workers, poultry corporations are going all in to try to normalize these abuses as just another cost of doing business by lobbying the federal government to codify these abuses into accepted law.

In December, IWJ affiliates, staff, and coalition leaders met with The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) officials to urge them to reject a National Chicken Council proposal to wholly eliminate the line speed regulations. We presented the officials with hundreds of petitions

signed by poultry workers in addition to the more than 100,000 public comments submitted in opposition to the industry proposal.

Less than a month after our visit, USDA rejected the National Chicken Council petition.

"We applaud the USDA decision to stop the petition of increasing the line speed in poultry processing plants," said Magaly Licolli, Executive Director of the Northwest Arkansas Workers' Justice Center, an IWJ affiliate and key member of the poultry coalition. "This is a huge victory for thousands of poultry workers who risk their health and safety as

they process chickens at high speeds. However, we will keep fighting to ensure poultry companies don't get away with continue petitioning line speed waivers for individual processing plants."

So even as we celebrate the decision by USDA to reject the industry's push to deregulate, we know that there is much work ahead for IWJ, our affiliates, and our allies – stay tuned for how you can help support our coalition campaign to slow the breakneck speed and inhumane conditions that working people endure in so many poultry processing plants nationwide.



*Caption*

## Protection for All Immigrants

The Trump Administration has declared war on immigrants, refugees, and other undocumented people in the United States. They can do so because of our broken immigration laws and enforcement rooted in white supremacy, xenophobia, and racism.

We are committed to Protection For All immigrants – not just DREAMers or those who fit the narrative of merit-based immigration that is antithetical to the welcoming traditions of our nation. Our work for Protection For All includes DREAMers. It includes their parents and loved ones. It includes more than

300,000 Temporary Protected Status (TPS) recipients.

This focus on "ideal" or "good" immigrants has erased the experiences of the rest of the immigrant population and ignores the complexity of immigration as a multi-dimensional issue.

While these lives and livelihoods are being threatened, the invisibility of these stories make it even more difficult to raise awareness about the plight of all undocumented people and their families.

The reality is that without an overhaul of immigration law that protects all and ensures the dignity

of all the members of our communities, there will continue to be mass deportations and constant attacks on our families.

Now is the time to act. We need to decenter the DREAMer narrative and refocus efforts to include all the marginalized, immigrant communities that are being left out of the conversation. Most importantly, we must demand legislative action that ensures Protection For All in our immigrant and refugee communities.

Interfaith Worker Justice will continue to do whatever we can to advocate for and win Protection For All undocumented people.

## Growing Hope

Has there ever been a more challenging and difficult year for dignity and justice in recent years than 2017? Between a torrent of horrific new laws that could easily bring about the type of suffering and inequality that working people have not experienced since the Great Depression and a glut of rollbacks to what many of us thought were immovable progressive victories, this past year has taught us that there is no such thing as a permanent victory and that we can never take for granted the depth of the greed and selfishness that so dominates public policy in the age of Trump.

Yet, even as we face one of the most discouraging political landscapes in generations, there is reason to be more hopeful now than ever before.

The vigorous response to the worst of the policy prescriptions coming out of the White House and Congress over the past year gives us hope. From the Women's March, to the airport protests of the Muslim ban, to the peace and love-filled protests responding to Charlottesville, to the youth rising up to demand safe schools and gun control, this has been a year of enthusiastic activism unmatched in decades.

As this energy continues to grow, we must channel grassroots activism into focused organizing to elect true champions for working people and to move those in office to enact meaningful legislation that will have a deep and positive impact in the lives of working people everywhere.

So while it has been a disappointing year in many ways, full of bad news and soul-searching about the best way to resist, it turns out that the answer to making real progress was with us all along: It is US.

We are who we have been waiting for. We must continue to forge ahead together. And through each other, we can build power and reset our country on a better track towards fulfilling the welcoming and generous promises of the American dream.

## Contributing to the Resistance

In addition to the powerful work of our affiliates across the country, Interfaith Worker Justice has played an increasingly active role under the broad banner of Resistance by signing onto a variety of coalition campaigns, open letters, and lobbying efforts to stem the destructive policies of this Administration.

The detailed list is too long to include in this newsletter, but here's a condensed review of how IWJ has contributed to the Resistance nationally by joining campaigns working to:

- Defend the rights and dignity of undocumented people in the United States by pushing for Protection For All in more than 50 different actions and through affiliate participation in the Sanctuary movement
- Oppose the Administration's Muslim travel ban and uplifting the humanity of all people of faith
- Stop the repeal of and to improve on the Affordable Care Act so that every person has access to quality health care
- Formulate a national policy to stop workplace harassment
- Defeat the Republican tax bill and call out the President's draconian budget proposal
- Protect working people's health and safety by pushing back on a number of proposed de-regulations and budget cuts to the Department of Labor and OSHA
- Advocate for pay equity, fair scheduling, and paid family leave
- Lobby to prevent policy changes that hurt working people including opposing the cancellation of overtime expansion, drug testing for unemployment insurance recipients, forced tip pooling, the rollback of the fiduciary rule for financial advisors, and forced arbitration.
- Fight for the rights of working people internationally including in Mexico, Thailand, Guatemala, China, Colombia, and more

## The Results Are In: Oreo Outsourcing's Devastating Impacts

After a four-month international investigation, Interfaith Worker Justice released the report *Breaking Faith: Outsourcing and the Damage Done to our Communities*. In the Gompers Room at AFL-CIO headquarters in Washington, DC and alongside Congressman John Lewis and Bakery, Confectionery, Tobacco Workers and Grain Millers (BCTGM) International Union President David B. Durkee, Nabisco bakers shared the devastating impact that outsourcing of their good-paying jobs to Mexico has wrought in their communities while IWJ faith leaders offered testimony about the Nabisco's moral responsibility to treat all working people in its employ with dignity and respect.

We followed the report release by ensuring that the corporate executives in charge of the Oreo brand saw our work. Just after the new year, each Mondeléz (Nabisco's parent corporation) executive received at their homes a package including the *Breaking Faith* report and letters from faith leaders and members of Congress urging the mega-corporation to stop outsourcing American jobs to Mexico to avoid paying a living wage.

The letter, signed by 35 faith and labor leaders who comprise the Interfaith Worker Justice board of directors, urges Mondeléz to "recognize the moral urgency in respecting your workers on both sides of the border by paying a living wage and ensuring stability of employment as an alternative, values-driven strategy that will at once bolster your bottom line, retain the loyalty of your consumers, and ensure a healthy return for Mondeléz investors while redefining your brand as one committed to worker

justice and corporate stewardship."

After attending the report release in December, Congressman John Lewis and four other members of Congress composed a letter to United States Trade Representative Robert E. Lighthizer using Mondeléz's outsourcing to illustrate the need to ensure that trade agreements like NAFTA include "strong, enforceable labor standards that raise wages in Mexico and reduce incentives for offshoring; encourage domestic investment; and support well-paying American jobs."

"Companies like Mondeléz must understand that treating its workers with dignity and respect while paying a living wage is both the right thing to do and a savvy business strategy," said Doug Mork, president of the Interfaith Worker Justice board of directors.

"Time and again, we see companies that commit to corporate responsibility and worker justice thrive in terms of positive brand association and increased consumer loyalty. We will continue to organize to win good, family-sustaining jobs on both sides of the border that are good for workers and good for business."



Caption

# Honoring Champions of Worker Justice

In December, we held our annual awards event in Washington, DC. This year's event brought together affiliates, advocates, and allies to celebrate and pay tribute to honorees with a deep and demonstrated commitment to the dignity of working people everywhere. Our 2017 honorees have dedicated their work to improving the lives of working people and their families through relentless organizing and a clear vision for what a more just world looks like.

Sarita Gupta is the Executive Director at Jobs With Justice, a thirty-year-old national affiliate network dedicated to workers' rights and ensuring corporate responsibility. She is also co-director at Caring Across Generations, a joint venture of Jobs With Justice and the National Domestic Workers Alliance devoted to providing quality care for older Americans and dignity at work for their caregivers.

Ms. Gupta has a long history of leadership in the progressive movement, dating back to her work advocating for low-income students and students of color at her alma mater, Mt. Holyoke College. Ms. Gupta is a key voice in the labor and justice movement, frequently appearing to comment on a variety of cable and network news channels as well as regularly publishing in national



newspapers and journals to disseminate and reinforce a values-based vision of worker justice issues.

David B. Durkee is the International President of The Bakery, Confectionery, Tobacco Workers and Grain Millers International Union, a 130-year-old union affiliated in the United States with the AFL-CIO. Mr. Durkee has been with the union since 1973 when he worked at an Indiana bakery and joined Local 280. Over the years, Mr. Durkee served in a variety of leadership capacities in both BCTGM and AFL-CIO before being named International President of BCTGM in 2012.

In addition to Ms. Gupta and Mr. Durkee, the event also honored two working people from our affiliate network who have taken the lessons learned from their experience advocating for their own rights to become



powerful community organizers ready to campaign for the dignity and justice for all the working people in their respective industries.

Crispin Hernandez was fired from his job as a dairy farmer when he spoke out against the long hours, lack of breaks, and frequent accidents. Featured in *The New York Times* last year for his work cam-

paigning for farmworker justice, Crispin is a leader with the Workers' Center of Central New York.

Maria Perez worked in a variety of industries in Northwest Arkansas and after volunteering with the Northwest Arkansas Workers' Justice Center, she discovered that the abuses she saw at nearly every job she had worked were something that working people could challenge and change. She has since lobbied in Washington, DC for better conditions in poultry processing plants and is a co-facilitator of health and safety trainings offered by the worker center.

It was a true honor to be in the presence of these champions for worker justice and to celebrate their work. IWJ owes much gratitude to the AFL-CIO for hosting our event, to our honorees, to all the event sponsors and attendees, and to our excellent event coordinator, Juliene Heaney.

## Paid Leave from p. 1

- their bills, including part-time and self-employed workers
- Expand the definition of 'family' to reflect the reality and diversity of the real world
  - Provide paid sick days to improve health in the workplace, health in the home, and economic security while recovering from illness

These are not novel approaches. Most nations around the world already secure these protections for their citizens. Countless studies show the benefits of these protections not only for the family and the community but also for businesses. We won't win an expanded federal leave policy overnight and victory will require tireless work from worker centers, faith leaders, working people, unions, and all advocates for worker justice.

## Donor Spotlight

**Chris Swanson, Faithful Giver since 2012.**

**Tell us about yourself and to what extent our mission reflects your personal beliefs?**

I am the director of the study abroad program at a mid-size Catholic university in the southwest suburbs of Chicago. I have always gravitated toward institutions with a strong sense of mission and social justice to help the underserved in the community, and IWJ fits that description well.

**Tell us how you first got involved with Interfaith Worker Justice. What motivates you to stay involved?**

I have been fortunate to know a number of people who have either worked or continue to work at IWJ. Thanks to my relationships with them, I became familiar with IWJ's mission and the important work that they do.

The issues surrounding workers' rights and justice is a constant struggle. IWJ's hard work in providing a voice and platform for improving the conditions of all workers provides me with the motivation that I need to stay involved and informed.

**You have generously helped us over the years to create a place where everyone has dignity and safety at work. Can you tell us how you started becoming involved?**

I started out by volunteering my time at IWJ helping out with various projects. I wanted to provide a more significant and sustained support of the organization, so I began to donate occasionally as well. The Faithful Givers program made it even easier for me to do that



and I was happy to increase my monthly amount recently knowing that it is going to a good cause.

**Of the programs your gifts help support, which are the most compelling to you?**

I think the programs surrounding wage theft and immigration are most important to me personally. I am lucky to work with people from a wide range of faiths and cultures around the world on a daily basis as part of my job. The unfair treatment and depiction of immigrants and workers, especially in today's political climate, is appalling to me and goes against the way I was raised. No one should have to live in the shadows or be denied a fair wage for a day's work, regardless of their ethnic, racial, or religious background.

**As you consider your giving and volunteering, is there a common thread in the issues that are important to you?**

A common thread for me when giving and volunteering is whether it is something that addresses issues close to my heart, keeps me informed about those issues, and provides for the common good of my community, either locally or globally. IWJ meets all of those criteria, which is why I donate my money and time to the organization.

**Monthly giving is easy! To learn more, please contact Barbara Lacker-Ware at [blacker-ware@iwj.org](mailto:blacker-ware@iwj.org) or visit [www.iwj.org](http://www.iwj.org).**

## Partner with IWJ by Joining the Faithful Givers Club

By donating to IWJ on monthly basis, you provide a base of dependable financial support that allows us to help workers and to promote a faithful vision where all workers lead dignified lives as a result of their labor.



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**Southwest**

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

Faith Works is produced by IWJ's Communications Department. For corrections, questions, and story suggestions contact Communications Director, Ian Pajer-Rogers, at [ipajer-rogers@iwj.org](mailto:ipajer-rogers@iwj.org) or call 773-728-8400 x24.