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Date of publication: October 13, 2011

Source: Press Release

Author: Raise the Bar, Hershey

Popular campaign on Change.org demands Hershey commit to buying fair trade cocoa by Halloween; video highlights Hershey's "child labor chocolate"

WASHINGTON, DC – More than 20,000 consumers [1] have joined a popular campaign [1] on Change.org calling on Hershey to commit to buying cocoa produced without child labor, forced labor, or trafficked labor in time for Halloween.

Raise the Bar, Hershey!, a coalition of organizations fighting ongoing labor abuses such as child slavery and child labor in the cocoa industry, is leading the campaign on Change.org [1] following what they say is Hershey's continued refusal to commit to purchasing fair trade cocoa for its chocolate candies.

"A decade ago, Hershey signed an agreement to help fight child slavery and other abuses in the cocoa industry," said Elizabeth O'Connell, a member of the Raise the Bar, Hershey! coalition. "Yet it has done far less than other chocolate companies to address these abuses. This Halloween, thousands of consumers are telling Hershey they're fed up with cocoa tainted by the abuse of children."

News of the online petition campaign [1]'s success is likely to increase pressure on Hershey. In addition to the petition [1], Raise the Bar, Hershey! is planning a call-in day, a fair trade Halloween costume contest, and rallies at Hershey stores in New York, Chicago, and Niagara Falls. The coalition has also produced a mock-commercial in an attempt to reveal the labor exploitation behind the Hershey chocolate many 'trick-or-treaters' will receive this Halloween.

"What the consumers and advocates behind Raise the Bar, Hershey! have accomplished [1] is remarkable," said Amanda Kloer, Director of Organizing for Change.org, the world's fastest-growing platform for social change. "With limited resources but strategic planning and execution, they've recruited more than 20,000 supporters, developed a hard-hitting video, and launched a social media campaign. Change.org is about empowering anyone, anywhere to demand action on the issues that matter to them, and it has been incredible to watch this timely campaign [1] take off."

The online petition campaign [1] has been covered by major news outlets across the country, including CNN, New York Daily News, and PC World. Raise the Bar, Hershey! says they are hoping to get a response from the company before Halloween.

Contact information for petition signers in your area can be arranged upon request:

Amanda Kloer

Director of Organizing, Change.org(404) 451-6580 amanda@change.org [2]

Live signature totals from Raise the Bar Hershey campaign:

<http://www.change.org/petitions/hershey-raise-the-bar> [1]

Journalists interested in contacting Hershey's public relations staff should try:

Andy McCormick, Vice President, Public Affairs

+1 717-534-5739

amccormick@hersheys.com [3]

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The Raise the Bar, Hershey! Coalition is led by the following organizations:

GREEN AMERICA is the nation's leading green economy organization. Founded in 1982, Green America (formerly Co-op America) provides the economic strategies, organizing power and practical tools for businesses and individuals to solve today's social and environmental problems. www.GreenAmerica.org [5]

GLOBAL EXCHANGE is a membership-based international human rights organization dedicated to promoting social, economic and environmental justice around the world. www.GlobalExchange.org [6]

INTERNATIONAL LABOR RIGHTS FORUM is an advocacy organization dedicated to achieving just and humane treatment for workers worldwide. www.LaborRights.org [7]

For more information on Change.org, please visit:

<http://www.change.org/about> [8]

Change.org is the world's fastest-growing platform for social change — growing by more than 400,000 new members a month, and empowering millions of people to start, join, and win campaigns for social change in their community, city and country.



