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# Governor Prohibits Contracts with Sweatshops

**Date of publication:** October 16, 2008

For Immediate Release  
October 16, 2008

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## Groups Praise Move, Look Ahead to Policy Enforcement

Companies engaged in sweatshop violations may not do business with the State of Ohio, according to an Executive Order signed today by Governor Ted Strickland. The signing comes after the SweatFree Ohio Campaign, an alliance of 30 religious, labor, student, human rights and community groups around the state, called on Governor Strickland to end tax dollar support for sweatshops by joining with other state and local governments to enforce sweatshop-free procurement policies.

On July 1 the campaign released *Subsidizing Sweatshops*, a first-of-its-kind report that revealed severe human rights violations in factories that produce uniforms and other apparel for U.S. state and local governments. Ohio responded by contacting vendors named in the report, stating a commitment to humane working conditions.

“This is a great initial step on the road to a more humane economy, especially important in today’s difficult financial situation. We commend Governor Strickland, and we look forward to working with the Governor and his administration to craft a strong, enforceable policy that will bring real results for workers in Ohio and elsewhere,” said Victoria Kaplan, Midwest regional organizer for SweatFree Communities. “We have learned through many years of experience that no state can successfully realize its commitment to end public purchasing from sweatshops without a large-scale cooperative effort. We look forward to the State of Ohio joining the Sweatfree Consortium to ensure that business practices and working conditions are in fact improving.”

The Sweatfree Consortium is a collaborative effort of U.S. government entities committed to enforcing sweatfree codes of conduct for government suppliers through independent factory monitoring, problem remediation, and the development of an approved list of vendors and factories that maintain a commitment to ethical business practices. Lucas County, Ohio, has already signed up to participate in the Sweatfree Consortium.

“Fighting the proliferation of sweatshop conditions is a fundamental human rights issue,” Governor Strickland said in a press statement released today by his office. “And this is clearly an issue that affects Ohio workers. We need to make crystal clear that companies can’t simply ship jobs overseas so they can cut corners on environmental and health safety standards.”

Executive Order 2008 – 21S states that “Production of Goods in Sweatshops Has Become an Increasingly

Widespread Problem” and that violators of the order may be subject to contract termination. “When goods are manufactured and supplied by companies that do not comply with laws regarding acceptable employment conditions, the integrity of the competitive process is undermined and basic human rights to which workers are entitled are eroded,” the Executive Order continues. With this Executive Order, Ohio becomes the eighth state in the country to commit to ending purchasing from sweatshops.

The full text of Executive Order 2008 – 21S and an accompanying press release from the Governor’s office are available at: <http://www.governor.ohio.gov/News/PressReleases/2008/October2008/News101608/tabid/871/Default.aspx> <sup>[1]</sup>

Learn more about the SweatFree Ohio Campaign at:

<http://www.sweatfree.org/ohio> <sup>[2]</sup>

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**Source URL:** <http://www.laborrights.org/creating-a-sweatfree-world/responsible-govt-purchasing/news/news/governor-prohibits-contracts-with-s>

**Links:**

[1] <http://www.governor.ohio.gov/News/PressReleases/2008/October2008/News101608/tabid/871/Default.aspx>

[2] <http://www.sweatfree.org/ohio>