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Newsletter #9

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Join SweatFree Communities!

Do you want to join SweatFree Communities? Now you can! If your group is interested in or already is campaigning for sweatfree procurement, we invite you to consider becoming a SweatFree Communities Campaign Affiliate. If your non-profit organization believes that we need to build a strong and unified movement for worker rights in the United States and overseas, we invite you to consider becoming a SweatFree Communities Partner. The goal is to build a strong, unified, and visible sweatfree movement with the resources to match the potential of the strategy. [Please consider joining now - click here to learn more.](#)

Campaign for a State and Local Government Sweatfree Coalition

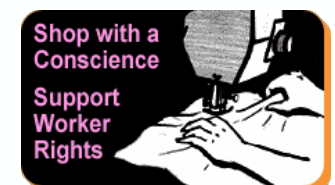
Today our tax dollars subsidize worker abuse when our cities and states buy apparel and other products. But now we have a vital window of opportunity to create an enormous market for worker justice and shift some of the unconscionable profits of transnational apparel companies to the workers who make the products they sell. Act now to help create worker-friendly rules for the global economy!

Three ways to take action - click on the links below:

- * [Ask your mayor and governor to join the coalition.](#)
- * [Endorse the campaign.](#) Help us build a long list of endorsing organizations and businesses to demonstrate the strength of the movement.
- * Spread the word!

Campaign Updates

Berkeley, California: On May 17th, the Berkeley Commission on Labor passed the Resolution for a Sweatfree Berkeley, that included a provision for enforcement funding of up to \$60,000, and referred the ordinance to the budget process. [Learn more](#)



[about the campaign](#) and [read speaker testimonies](#).

Brattleboro Union High School, Vermont: On May 15, at a meeting with over 100 sweatfree supporters, Brattleboro school board pledged to adopt a sweatfree code of conduct and affiliate with the WRC for independent monitoring of apparel factories supplying Brattleboro Union High School. The principal has sent the affiliation letter to the WRC. The code of conduct is yet to be finalized.

Milwaukee, Wisconsin: The Milwaukee Clean Clothes Campaign has identified several contractors that do not meet the City of Milwaukee's non-poverty wage requirement. The problem is that the City itself is not holding these companies accountable for violating the sweatfree Code of Conduct. Instead of comparing the wages disclosed by companies to wages listed in the SweatFree Communities [non-poverty wage table](#) – a table which is based on the City of Milwaukee's own non-poverty wage formula – the City insists on using a United States Department of Labor (DOL) table of prevailing or average wages to determine compliance with the sweatfree ordinance. Well, as we know prevailing wages are far from non-poverty wages. For example, in Bangladesh the DOL wage is \$0.18 - \$0.21/hour. Our non-poverty wage table calculation is still very conservative: \$0.46/hr (with extra for health benefits). The Milwaukee Clean Clothes Campaign is a sweatfree campaign pioneer, doing us all a favor hammering out this issue with the City. For more information, [contact the campaign](#).

Oak Park and River Forest High School, Illinois: After several years of education, organizing, and meetings with the board of education, students at Oak Park and River Forest High School got their school to affiliate with the Worker Rights Consortium (WRC). Students raised money for the first year of affiliation fees from a student band benefit concert called "Rock for Rights" and Students Against Sweatshops t-shirt sales. To learn more, [email the campaign](#).

Pittsburgh: The Pittsburgh Anti-Sweatshop Community Alliance (PASCA) is in the final phases of preparing for protests at baseball's All Star Game to be held in Pittsburgh on July 11. PASCA is urging the Pittsburgh Pirates to express support for an "academic standard" of sweatshop accountability to attendees at the All Star Game. The standard includes full public disclosure of factory locations where any Pirates' logo apparel is made, independent monitoring, and support for workers to improve conditions in sweatshops. [Read PASCA's letter to the Pittsburgh Pirates](#). For more information, [contact the campaign](#).

Troy, New York: The New York Labor-Religion Coalition reports that the Troy Teacher's Association has passed a resolution urging the Board of Education to create a Sweatfree Purchasing Advisory Committee consisting of students, faculty, and community members. The resolution notes that such an advisory committee is "an effective mechanism to implement sweatfree purchasing while enhancing grassroots student-community participation." [See full text of the resolution](#).

Elsewhere: The movement is growing! At the time of writing, organizers in Austin, Texas; Duluth, Minnesota; Missoula, Montana; and Portland, Oregon, are beginning to build sweatfree coalitions. A sweatfree bill is making its way through the Baltimore City Council. Stay tuned for updates. [Contact us](#) if you want more information on any of these campaigns.

Report from SweatFree Communities International Conference 2006

The conference gathered around 150 participants from a variety of backgrounds, movements, and organizations. Sweatfree campaigns, fair trade organizations, sweatfree producers and distributors, unions, and worker advocacy organizations from the United States, Canada, Europe, Latin America, the Caribbean, and China came together for education, networking, and strategizing. As one participant observed:

"We see the strong connections between the American textile worker struggling to hold onto a job with dignity and the worker who gets paid just pennies an hour struggling to survive. The belief in the inherent worth and dignity of human life is what brings us together."

We hope the conference strengthened this sense of unity, and that many participants left feeling "that the anti-sweatshop movement is stronger than it's been in a long time," as another participant said afterwards.

[Click here](#) to download the 74-page pdf-format report from the conference.

Global Exchange, an international non-profit human rights organization, is looking for a full-time organizer to continue their work building a network of sweat-free communities on the west coast and participating nationally in anti-sweatshop and fair trade movements. More information and job description.

Thank You, Funders

We have just embarked on a new fiscal year, so we would like to give our heartfelt appreciation to everyone who helped SweatFree Communities grow this past year. Whether you made an individual or an organizational contribution, we could not do this work without you. We hope you will continue to support us this year as we take on even bigger and more exciting challenges.

A special acknowledgment to foundations that are supporting SweatFree Communities (listed alphabetically): Arca Foundation; General Service Foundation; Haymarket People's Fund; Presbyterian Hunger Program, Presbyterian Church (USA); Tides Foundation; Unitarian Universalist Funding Program; and Woodbury Fund.