

N E W S R E L E A S E

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California Labor Commissioner Announces Statewide “Wage Theft is a Crime” Campaign

Sacramento—California Labor Commissioner Julie A. Su announces the start of a statewide, multilingual campaign about wage theft to educate workers and employers about labor standards such as minimum wage, overtime, and meal and rest break requirements. The campaign features outreach to community-based organizations as well as a combination of print, radio and online media in order to reach a broad range of low-wage workers.

“The mission of the Department of Industrial Relations is to protect all workers with comprehensive labor laws and proactive enforcement throughout the state,” said Christine Baker, Department of Industrial Relations’ (DIR’s) Director. “This campaign increases familiarity with workers’ rights and employers’ responsibilities, and supports our efforts to level the playing field for law-abiding businesses.”

Featuring the slogan “Wage Theft is a Crime,” the campaign messages illustrate how workers in low-wage industries including agriculture, garment, construction and hospitality are impacted by wage theft. A campaign-specific website in English (www.WageTheftIsACrime.com) and Spanish (www.RoboDeSueldoEsUnCrimen.com) provides details on how to identify and report wage theft, retaliation and other labor law violations to the 18 Labor Commissioner’s offices located across the state.

In keeping with the campaign’s focus on California’s immigrant communities, messaging is tailored to best communicate with the ethnic groups in each region. While English and Spanish advertisements and radio spots are slated to run state-wide, print ads in the Bay Area will be published in Chinese, Vietnamese, Hmong and Tagalog in order to communicate with Asian immigrant groups.

“Immigrant workers in low-wage industries are especially vulnerable to wage theft, but may not be aware of their rights, may fear retaliation, or may mistakenly believe that they are not protected,” said Labor Commissioner Julie A. Su. “Another barrier is lack of trust in government or understanding of how the Labor Commissioner’s office can help. This campaign aims directly at these barriers by dispelling myths and educating workers on how to fight wage theft.”

The “Wage Theft is a Crime” public awareness campaign complements increased enforcement actions by the Labor Commissioner over the past three years that focus on the workers most at risk of experiencing wage theft. The Labor Commissioner’s targeted enforcement efforts have resulted in record-high amounts of minimum and overtime wages found owing to California workers and monetary penalties for illegal business practices. In addition, the Labor Commissioner’s efforts have protected law-abiding businesses from unfair competition by employers committing wage theft.

Funding for the outreach campaign is mandated by the legislature and does not come from the State’s general fund. Under California Labor Code §2698, a portion of money received from lawsuits filed due to a violations of the State’s labor laws is earmarked for educating employers and employees about their rights and responsibilities.

The Labor Commissioner’s office, also known as the Division of Labor Standards Enforcement, is a division of DIR. Among its wide-ranging enforcement responsibilities, staff inspect workplaces for wage and hour violations, adjudicate wage claims, enforce prevailing wage rates and apprenticeship standards in public works projects, investigate retaliation complaints, issue licenses and registrations for businesses and educate the public on labor laws.

Information on California labor laws is available on DIR’s [website](#) as well as on our [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) pages. Employees with work-related questions or complaints may call the toll-free California Workers’ Information Line at (866) 924-9757 for recorded information, in English and Spanish.

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