

N E W S R E L E A S E

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Workplace Justice Summit Brings Together Stakeholders to Celebrate Progress in Labor Law Enforcement and to Bolster Collaboration

Los Angeles—California Labor Commissioner Julie A. Su, the Department of Industrial Relations (DIR), the California Commission on the Status of Women and Girls and other community sponsors including Asian Americans Advancing Justice - Los Angeles today hosted the Workplace Justice Summit to focus on enforcing workplace protections. The summit at Loyola Law School brought together government leaders, workers' rights advocates, employer organizations, prosecutors and law enforcement to increase collaboration in efforts to fight wage theft and other workplace abuses.

"This year is the 20th anniversary of the freedom of the heroic Thai garment workers who were trafficked into the U.S. and forced to work behind barbed wire and under armed guard in El Monte," said Labor Commissioner Su. "The purpose of the Summit is to honor our commitment to those workers and increase our effectiveness to ensure the horror of El Monte is never repeated."

Su honored the Thai garment workers at a special reception the preceding evening.

The Labor Commissioner has had a record-breaking four years in enforcing labor laws. Since 2012, hearing awards in Berman wage claims have been at a record high. Total wages and civil penalties assessed in citations have been more than \$70 million a year each year from 2012 to 2014, compared to \$25.4 million in 2010. Under Labor Commissioner Su, public works enforcement has also been at all-time highs of \$25.2 million in 2012, \$40.2 million in 2013 and \$30.4 million in 2014, compared to less than \$25 million every year in the decade prior.

Today's summit focused on strategies to fight workplace abuses, including wage theft, discrimination and the gender pay disparity, human trafficking, workplace violence and retaliation. District attorneys who have partnered with the Labor Commissioner's Office provided training on how to prosecute wage theft cases.

"This summit will help make workplace justice a reality for even more California workers," said Christine Baker, Director of the Department of Industrial Relations (DIR).

The Labor Commissioner's Office, officially known as the Division of Labor Standards Enforcement (DLSE), is a division of DIR.

"Fair pay, economic justice and a level playing field for businesses require creative solutions and collaboration with advocates, workers, prosecutors and employers," said David M. Lanier, Secretary of the California Labor and Workforce Development Agency.

Governor Brown earlier this month signed new laws to require that women are paid the same as men for similar work, to provide back wages and properly pay thousands of piece rate workers for rest breaks, and to give new tools to the Labor Commissioner in her efforts to enforce wage judgments and combat wage theft.

Among its wide-ranging enforcement responsibilities, the [Labor Commissioner's Office](#) inspects workplaces for wage and hour violations, adjudicates wage claims, enforces prevailing wage rates and apprenticeship standards in public works projects, investigates retaliation complaints, issues licenses and registrations for businesses and educates the public on labor laws.

The [Wage Theft is a Crime](#) public awareness campaign, launched last year by DIR and the Labor Commissioner's Office, has helped inform workers of their rights. The campaign includes multilingual print and outdoor advertising and radio commercials on ethnic stations in English, Spanish, Chinese, Vietnamese, Hmong and Tagalog.

Employees with work-related questions or complaints may contact DIR's Call Center in English or Spanish at 844-LABOR-DIR (844-522-6734). The California Workers' Information line at 866-924-9757 also offers recorded information in English and Spanish on a variety of work-related topics.

Members of the press may contact Erika Monterroza or Peter Melton at (510) 286-1161, and are encouraged to [subscribe to get email alerts](#) on DIR's press releases or other departmental updates.

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The [California Department of Industrial Relations](#), established in 1927, protects and improves the health, safety, and economic well-being of over 18 million wage earners, and helps their employers comply with state labor laws. DIR is housed within the [Labor & Workforce Development Agency](#). For general inquiries, contact DIR's Communications Call Center at 844-LABOR-DIR (844-522-6734) for help in locating the appropriate [division or program](#) in our department.