



SweatFree Communities

A National Network of Anti-Sweatshop Organizations

State and Local Government Sweatfree Consortium

Ending Taxpayer Support for Sweatshops

This is the human reality of the global apparel industry: Young women and children work long hours under harsh conditions for poverty wages. Women are fired if they become pregnant. Workers' health, safety and human rights are ignored.

Our tax dollars pay for human rights abuses when our cities and states buy uniforms and other products.

- In 2006, a horrific factory fire in Bangladesh claimed the lives of an estimated 300 trapped garment workers, mostly teenage girls. The factory supplied a major state government contractor in the United States.
- In 2007, former employees of a Massachusetts company making gear for the U.S. military brought a lawsuit against their employer, seeking money owed to 500 workers cheated of overtime pay. The immigrant workers faced conditions similar to those in New England mills over a century ago.



Photo by Cassandra Vinograd
A former Bangladesh garment worker stands together with a current garment worker from New York City observing the memorial for Triangle Shirtwaist Factory workers in Manhattan's Lower East Side where 146 garment workers died in a factory fire on March 25, 1911.

These are not rare cases of worker abuse and human rights violations. In fact, sweatshops are the norm in an industry that thrives on cutting costs without considering the consequences.

A Government Consortium for Worker Rights

SweatFree Communities is a U.S. national network of anti-sweatshop organizations that recognize the potential in humane government purchasing for building a system of fair trade and creating positive alternatives to global sweatshops. In communities across the United States people are campaigning for their schools, cities, counties, and states to purchase "sweatfree" products. These sweatfree campaigns create hundred million dollar markets for humane working conditions.

There's power in numbers. ... if we team up with other states we'll have even more influence in the global marketplace. Workers around the world deserve any influence or leverage we can bring to the table.
— Governor John E. Baldacci, Maine

We have a moral obligation to ensure [the sweatshop] practice is not rewarded through state contracts and taxpayer dollars. ... By using our combined state procurement power, we can impart real change.
— Governor Edward G. Rendell, Pennsylvania

Local sweatfree campaigns are working to create the **State and Local Government Sweatfree Consortium**. The Consortium will pool resources of public entities to investigate working conditions in factories that make uniforms and other products for public employees. Cities and states will hold vendors to the same standards, use the same independent monitor for enforcement, and create a market large enough to persuade companies to deal responsibly and ethically with their suppliers and workers.

info@sweatfree.org

www.sweatfree.org

How to Join the Sweatfree Consortium

Affiliation with the State and Local Government Sweatfree Consortium is open to all states, cities, counties, local government agencies, and school districts in the United States that purchase apparel.

Public institutions may choose to become provisionary members before becoming full members. To become a provisionary Consortium member, the appropriate public official must sign a resolution, expressing support for the Consortium principles. To be a full Consortium member, public institutions must pay affiliation dues and meet other requirements, including:

- Adopting the Consortium code of conduct or equivalent.
- Requiring vendors to publicly disclose the names and locations of all supplier factories.
- Committing to fair purchasing practices and requiring vendors and manufacturers to engage in fair purchasing with their suppliers.

Independent Monitoring

The Consortium will contract with a factory monitor to investigate working conditions at supplier factories and coordinate efforts to remedy worker rights violations where necessary. This monitor must be independent of the industry; it may not obtain revenue from any vendor, manufacturer, contractor, or subcontractor, or be owned or controlled by any such entity. The monitor will work in partnership with organizations in the country of manufacturing that are committed to the human rights and basic needs of workers.

Campaign Leaders

The Consortium, with SweatFree Communities as the coordinator, is led by an interim steering committee consisting of government representatives from Maine, New York, Pennsylvania, Los Angeles, San Francisco, and Los Angeles Unified School District, as well as worker rights advocates. The steering committee makes provisional policy decisions and develops outreach goals and strategies. A nationwide grassroots campaign is building broad community-based sweatfree coalitions, educating the public, and persuading elected officials to support the Consortium.

Take Action!

We will launch the Consortium when public entities purchasing a combined \$100 million in apparel have joined. With enough economic power to effectively enforce sweatfree purchasing policies we can provide effective solidarity with workers and help to humanize conditions in the apparel industry and other industries that supply public employees and their employers. People from all walks of life can get involved and help launch the Consortium. Ultimately, state and local governments will do the right thing only if enough people insist on it.

Here are three ways you can take action right now:

- Contact your governor and mayor and urge them to join the State and Local Government Sweatfree Consortium. Find out how at sweatfree.org/sweatfreeconsortium.
- Donate to support the campaign at sweatfree.org/donate.
- Endorse the campaign at sweatfree.org/endorse.

Contact us to start a campaign in your community or for more information:

140 Pine Street, #10 Florence, MA 01062 | 413-586-0974 | organize@sweatfree.org

info@sweatfree.org

www.sweatfree.org

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Building SweatFree Communities

SweatFree Communities promotes the collective bargaining power of both workers in sweatshops and communities of consumers. We believe that there is power in numbers, and that when we are united we can do more than any one of us can alone.

Successful sweatfree purchasing campaigns depend on community organizing that brings people together and builds power for people on a local level to make decisions about how their taxes and consumer money should be spent.

Most clothing and footwear sold in this country are made under highly abusive conditions - in factories that can only be described as "sweatshops." Workers in these factories earn poverty wages for long hours of work while being denied the right to freely form or join unions. Apparel workers in the U.S. also face sweatshop conditions, as do workers in an increasing number of manufacturing and service industries and farm fields. In recent years, students, faith-based communities, trade unionists and others have worked to clean up these industries, often partnering with the sweatshop workers themselves. As part of this effort, anti-sweatshop groups have begun working to persuade local retailers, religious congregations, cities, counties, states and school districts to adopt sweatfree purchasing policies - an approach similar to United Students Against Sweatshops' work on college campuses.

A number of local and national anti-sweatshop organizations have established a new national network - SweatFree Communities - to promote local sweatfree purchasing campaigns and to link them with efforts against local and global sweatshops. SweatFree Communities buy sweatfree and are sweatfree.

SweatFree Communities broadens the anti-sweatshop movement. It allows local activists to control the shape and timing of their own organizing efforts, which is important for building and maintaining local anti-sweatshop activism. As a local issue, a campaign offers possibilities for greater press coverage and public education than most leafleting-at-the-mall type actions. And because most localities include multiple entities that purchase apparel goods - for example, a city, its suburbs, its county, the school district(s), the state - and may house many places where workers endure sweatshop conditions, one successful campaign can provide momentum for another.

SweatFree Communities has been successfully organizing sweatfree initiatives across the country since its inception. Currently staffing is provided by Bjorn Claeson, and Liana Foxvog. Our primary functions are to serve as a point of communication and information among groups working on local-focused sweatfree initiatives, and to assist groups interested in starting such campaigns in their local areas. To get further information or to join the network, contact Bjorn Claeson [bjorn@sweatfree.org 207-262-7277] or

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Liana Foxgvog [liana@sweatfree.org 413-586-0974].

[Minneapolis School Board Goes Sweat Free!](#) (Dec 2, 2002)

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SweatFree Communities:

U.S. network for local action against sweatshops

SweatFree Communities is a national network of activists in the U.S. who are working in their own communities to pass initiatives against sweatshops. As part of this effort, local groups across the country are persuading religious congregations, school districts, and city, county, and state governments to adopt sweatfree purchasing policies - an approach similar to United Students Against Sweatshops' work on college campuses.

SweatFree Communities

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CAMPAIGNS TO GROW ON

SweatFree Communities initiatives build and grow local anti-sweatshop activism because they allow local activists to control the shape and timing of their efforts. This activism can then expand over time because most communities include multiple entities that purchase apparel goods - a city, its suburbs, its county, the school district, the state, religious institutions, etc. - and may also house workplaces where members of the community endure sweatshop conditions. One successful campaign can provide momentum for another.

BUILDING A NETWORK

Local and statewide groups in Minnesota, Maine, New York, Wisconsin, Ohio, and Washington are the driving force behind this new network. Many of them have already had some success with anti-sweatshop work in their schools, counties, cities, states, and more. These groups have asked Campaign for Labor Rights to help coordinate the emergence of SweatFree Communities on a national level and to reach out to local activists who are doing (or are interested in doing) similar work in their communities.

Our network has grown to over 30 local groups. These groups are sharing information, resolution language, strategy, and resources through a series of conference calls and an email listserve. We have also created a thirty page "how to" packet and tool kit to help new groups get started on initiatives in their own communities.

GET INVOLVED

If you would like to become involved in this effort, go to the SweatFree Communities web site.

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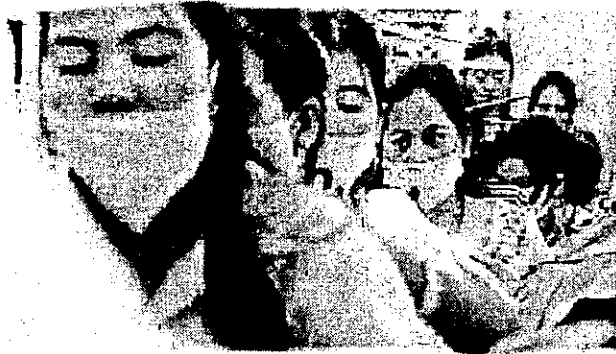
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Sweatfree Communities



Do you know where garments paid for with your tax dollars were made?

Global Exchange has joined a national "Sweatfree" campaign, an effort to ensure that the clothes, uniforms, and other products bought by our cities and states are not made in sweatshops. The goal of the campaign is to guarantee that we as taxpayers are not complicit in factory abuses by allowing our tax dollars to underwrite worker exploitation.

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Join the Sweatfree Movement that's sweeping the Northwest

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Tools and Ideas to help you promote sweatfree communities locally.

[Background](#)

Read more about the Sweatfree Movement, its accomplishments and its goals.

[Resources](#)

GX and SweatFree Communities have developed a comprehensive toolkit so you can launch a successful sweatfree campaign in your community.

[Links](#)

Find out about other organizations that are working to end sweatshop labor.

[News Updates](#)

News articles about the sweatshop scourge and what people are doing to put an end to worker abuses.

For more information sweatfree@globalexchange.org

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