



Legislation Text

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061576
SUBSTITUTE 1

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Substitute resolution supporting passage of federal anti-sweatshop legislation.

In June, 2006, the “Decent Working Conditions and Fair Competition Act” was introduced by United States Senator Byron Dorgan (ND), Senate Bill 3485, and a companion bill, House Resolution 5635, was introduced by Representative Sherrod Brown (OH), which would ban the importation or sale of products made in factories under sweatshop conditions and enable retailers and investors to file civil actions against manufacturers for violations of the act.

For purposes of the bill, “sweatshop conditions” violate the core International Labor Organization’s labor rights standards of no child labor, no forced labor, freedom of association, right to organize and bargain collectively and to decent working conditions. The import ban deals only with goods that can be proven to have been made with sweatshop labor and is not a ban of products based on the country of origin.

This resolution supports passage of the Decent Working Conditions and Fair Competition Act, conditioned upon amending the current legislation so that any bill that is passed by Congress is at least equivalent to policies already enacted by the City of Milwaukee, including requiring all retailers and vendors to disclose names and addresses of factories where the products they sell are made, and including a non-poverty wage requirement. It also expresses the finding of the Common Council that any federal anti-sweatshop legislation should extend the right to file civil actions beyond retailers and investors, so that employees, unions and human rights groups may also bring actions against manufacturers, and should include language which directs companies to improve conditions upon determination of a workplace violation, rather than moving to another location.

Whereas, In the global marketplace violations of workers’ rights are widespread, and when minimum standards for workers’ and human rights are not maintained, both American workers and workers abroad are negatively impacted; and

Whereas, The Common Council finds that minimum standards for workers’ and human rights should be extended to all persons, but recognizes that municipal governments have neither the resources nor the authority required to prevent these abuses, and thus a federal policy must be formulated and enforced; and

Whereas, In June, 2006, the “Decent Working Conditions and Fair Competition Act” was introduced by Senator Byron Dorgan (ND), Senate Bill 3485, and a companion bill, House Resolution 5635, was introduced by Representative Sherrod Brown (OH), which proposes to ban the importation or sale of products made in factories under sweatshop conditions; and

Whereas, Passage of this anti-sweatshop legislation will hold corporations legally accountable to

respect workers and human rights by prohibiting the import, sale or export of sweatshop goods in the United States made under conditions which violate the core International Labor Organization's labor rights standards of no child labor, no forced labor, freedom of association, right to organize and bargain collectively and to decent working conditions; and

Whereas, However, acknowledging that federal legislation is necessary for effectively reducing workers' and human rights abuses, the Common Council also finds that existing City of Milwaukee policy is more stringent with regard to many provisions of the proposed federal legislation, and any bill that is passed by Congress should be at least equivalent to policies already enacted by the City of Milwaukee; and

Whereas, Any federal legislation that implements a federal anti-sweatshop policy should require all retailers and vendors to disclose names and addresses of factories where the products they sell are made, and include a non-poverty wage requirement; and

Whereas, In addition, the Common Council finds that the right to file civil actions should not be limited to retailers and investors, but that employees, unions and human rights groups should also be enabled to bring action against manufacturers since they have the closest knowledge of infractions, and that any federal legislation should include language which directs companies to improve conditions upon determination of a workplace violation, rather than moving to another location; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, By the Common Council of the City of Milwaukee, that the Common Council supports passage of the "Decent Working Conditions and Fair Competition Act," conditioned upon amending the current legislation to require all retailers and vendors to disclose names and addresses of factories where the products they sell are made, and include a non-poverty wage requirement; enabling employees, unions and human rights groups to bring action against manufacturers; and including language which directs companies to improve conditions upon determination of a workplace violation, rather than moving to another location; and, be it

Further Resolved, That a copy of this resolution shall be forwarded to Wisconsin's United States Congressional delegation.

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LCS
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