

July 14, 2023

President Joe Biden
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Biden,

On behalf of the undersigned organizations, we write today to express our grave concern about Texas HB-2127, which will eliminate fundamental labor and housing protections for workers and families, including many workplace protections that prevent injury and death of immigrant essential workers. Specifically, we request your Administration and federal agencies' immediate attention and engagement to prevent the abuse, exploitation, and workers deaths that will result.

As you know, HB-2127 is a newly enacted state law (to take effect on September 1, 2023) that eliminates localities' authority to enact local ordinances to protect fundamental workplace, housing, and environmental rights. The impact is extreme and far-reaching, but most notably today is the impact it will have on workers who will be left to the whims of abusive employers or dangerous job conditions.

HB-2127 represents an abdication of Texas state government's responsibility to ensure the well-being of workers and families. And more, it is actively eliminating life-saving safeguards that exist in key industries. As Texas confronts record heat, with reports of workers dying on the job from heat stroke, the Texas government has deliberately chosen to remove the few protections that exist to prevent injury and death related to high temperatures on the job. These protections exist to prevent injury and death related to heat, but also from unsafe workplaces, toxic chemicals, and other harmful job risks.

In the past two weeks, a dozen people have died from the extreme heat in Texas. One construction worker in Fort Bend, Texas, collapsed at his jobsite and died from the extreme heat. **These deaths are preventable, and yet Gov. Abbott has chosen to remove what little protections exist.**

Today it is clear that the Texas legislature and Governor Greg Abbott have zero interest in preserving and protecting safeguards for workers. Greg Abbott signed the law in the same week that another worker died in 115 degree heat in North Texas. Greg Abbott's office is safe and air conditioned, but he knows it is hot outside. He clearly is aware of the dangerous work conditions in various industries in Texas, from heat and other unsafe conditions, he is aware of the critical need for these protections, he chose to eliminate them.

Where the state government has chosen to abandon workers facing rampant abuse and life-threatening work conditions, the US federal government cannot stand by.

For undocumented workers and families across Texas who have been categorically demonized, targeted and racially profiled by the Texas state government, there is already a severe crisis of workers rights and free speech. We know that unscrupulous employers can use workers' immigration status to retaliate, to threaten, to silence their voices. We also know that the US Departments of Labor and Homeland Security have tools to engage in Texas to protect immigrant workers and families.

That is why today we ASK that President Biden:

1. Send OSHA enforcement teams to conduct random, proactive safety and health inspections at workplaces across Texas, targeting industries such as construction where vulnerable workers are most likely to suffer due to the lack of protections caused by HB-2127
2. Make a personal visit to Houston, to encourage workers to come forward to denounce abusive employers and to assure undocumented workers that they will receive federal government protections if they do come forward
3. Review all allocations of ICE enforcement and infrastructure funding going to Texas government and law enforcement, such as the \$3.3 billion just announced by the Department of Commerce on June 26th, 2023, and take measures to ensure that federal funds are not used by Texas to target immigrant workers or to fund exploitative and abusive workplaces

Mr President: HB-2127 represents a crisis for undocumented workers that undermines workplace protections for all workers, citizen and non-citizen alike. When one worker is injured or dies on the job, that affects all of us. One fallen worker is one too many. And we must take action to prevent any more injuries and deaths. That is why today, we write to sound the alarm about this situation for workers and families, and call on the Biden Administration to engage in Texas and to ensure that workers are protected in this moment of crisis.

Signed,

CRECEN
Fe y Justicia (Faith and Justice) Worker Center
Living Hope Wheelchair Association
IUPAT DC10
IBEW Local 520
Equal Justice Center
Espinass Collective
LULAC Council 4721
SOMOS TEJAS
Centro De Derechos Laborales
National Employment Law Project (NELP)
Pomona Economic Opportunity Center

Workers Defense Project (Proyecto de Defensa Laboral)
Gulf Coast LCLAA
National Day Laborer Organizing Network (NDLON)
UNITE HERE Local 23
AVOW Texas
All Love
Alianza Americas
Workers Justice Alliance
Serving Others' Needs
Trabajadores Unidos de Washington, DC