



The Honorable Barack Obama  
President of the United States of America  
1600 Pennsylvania Ave, NW  
Washington DC, 20500

The Honorable Thomas E. Perez  
Secretary of the United States Department of Labor  
200 Constitution Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20210

Dear President Obama and Secretary Perez:

We, the undersigned, are the worker leaders of Good Jobs Nation who represent thousands of low-wage federal contract workers from over fifty private companies who do business with the U.S. Government in Washington D.C.

We serve everyone from the ordinary Americans who visit our capital to high-ranking government officials and military personnel. The U.S. Government depends on our work to keep federal buildings and property open and operating. We mop floors, empty trash cans, greet tourists, prune bushes and mow lawns, cook and serve meals, and even shuttle officials to and from meetings. Our work generates revenue for taxpayers and profits for our employers.

In return, we received only poverty wages, zero job benefits, disrespect and neglect.

Over the past year, we organized hundreds of other low-wage federal contract workers to fight for living wages, benefits and the right to collectively bargain. We went on strike seven times at landmark federal buildings like the Pentagon, the Smithsonian Museums, Union Station, the Old Post Office and the Ronald Reagan Building.

We went on strike not just for ourselves, but for the vast army of low-wage workers across the nation whose private employers are subsidized by taxpayer dollars. These firms range from major fast-food corporations that receive concessions to operate inside federal buildings to companies that get contracts to make gear for our troops. A recent Demos report revealed that all together the U.S. Government creates two million jobs in the private sector, making it America's leading low-wage job creator.

You listened to us and used the State of the Union Address to announce an Executive Order to raise the minimum wage on new federal contracts and concessions to \$10.10 per hour. We applaud this act of leadership.

**But we hope that your minimum wage executive order is only the first step you will take to help low-wage federal contractors before you leave the Oval Office.**

In addition to poverty pay that makes supporting a family extremely difficult, we lack affordable health benefits as well as the paid time off necessary to care for our children. We are also routinely given too few hours to make ends meet, and unpredictable scheduling practices make it virtually impossible for us to maintain stable child care or go to school. This not only harms ourselves but the family members who depend on us.

Workers on most federal service contracts are legally entitled to \$3.81 per hour in health and pension benefits, two weeks of paid leave a year and public holidays, but we have been excluded.

We are also unprotected from the unjust and illegal treatment to which we are subjected every day – pregnancy and disability discrimination, workplace injury, racial harassment, arbitrary scheduling, and rampant, systematic wage theft.

**That is why we are coming together to form a Union to keep fighting for just treatment and decent pay.** We are calling on our employers to bargain with us to discuss our wages and working conditions on behalf of our members.

**But we need your help, Mr. President.** The federal agencies that depend on our labor stand by while the private businesses they contract with exploit and mistreat us. In response, the only way we can make our voices heard is to strike and protest, disrupting normal business operations. This is in no one's interests, least of all the American people and the federal agencies involved.

**Instead, we call upon you to direct the federal agencies that contract with our employers – the Department of Defense, the Department of Transportation, the Smithsonian Institution, and the General Services Administration – to require their contractors to bargain with us over fair wages and working conditions in return for our commitment not to strike.**

**By doing so, you can show millions of low-wage federal contract workers – as well as the Wal-Mart and fast-food workers who have also taken to the streets – that the President of the United States truly believes workers deserve a seat at the negotiating table and should not have to keep striking to get into the middle class.**

Sincerely,

The Worker Leaders of Good Jobs Nation



**National Air & Space  
Museum, National Zoo:  
Smithsonian Institution**

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