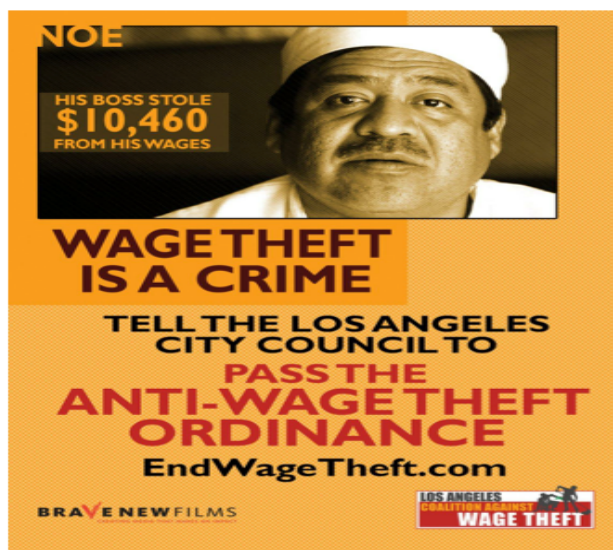


END WAGE THEFT CAMPAIGN

A NEW MEDIA CAMPAIGN TO END WAGE THEFT IN LOS ANGELES



A SPECIAL REPORT from BRAVE NEW FILMS
JULY 2014

Robert Greenwald, President
Jim Miller, Executive Director

BRAVE NEW FILMS
CREATING MEDIA THAT MAKES AN IMPACT

End Wage Theft Campaign

Wage theft is a crime, but we don't treat it like one.

Summary of Campaign

Wage theft occurs when employers cut costs by stealing from employees. It can occur when a restaurant manager schedules an employee for 9AM, but does not have them clock in until 10AM, or when employees clock out before they begin cleaning up for the day. Construction workers' invoices are underpaid, meal and rest breaks violated. Whenever work goes uncompensated, that is theft. For low-income workers, people of color, and LA's large immigrant populations, wage theft happens disproportionately. And the bureaucratic process that is in place to regulate employees often hampers the reclamation processes for lost wages.

At Brave New Films, much of our work focuses on the ways powerful people profit from exploiting non-powerful people. We have long recognized our unique responsibility as a leader in the production and distribution of communications campaigns and social network media to address social justice issues. We are proud to present a special report detailing the outcomes of our recent partnership with the Los Angeles Coalition to End Wage Theft to produce our End Wage Theft campaign. The campaign utilized new media, public education, strategic pressurization, and partnerships to bring wage theft back to the voting docket in Los Angeles.

Supported by grants from the Ford Foundation and the California Wellness Foundation, the campaign objectives for this project were to:

- 1) *Work with community-based, local organizations to reach low-wage and immigrant workers to provide training resources on stolen and lost wages.*
- 2) *Raise public awareness through our members, email blasts, social media, and the outreach of our partners.*
- 3) *Impact the local media and major state-wide markets, including special language media, to drive employer compliance and agency enforcement.*
- 4) *Educate Los Angeles councilmembers.*



Evaluation is a key component of our work. We measure the impact of our education, outreach, and organizing efforts with qualitative and quantitative metrics and indicators of success.

We track our online views of shareable graphics and videos, webpage and blog links to our videos, social media traffic including impressions, reach and comments, earned mainstream media coverage, and the outcomes of our calls to action. This report outlines the activities and outcomes of this campaign.

Production Activities

In early 2014, Brave New Films' Shorts and Campaigns Departments met with representatives from the Los Angeles Coalition to End Wage Theft to outline the parameters of our partnership. Together, we would raise public, worker, and policymaker awareness on the topic of stolen wages in Los Angeles, the largest city in which wage theft occurs. We achieved this through the (1) production of an online public education video campaign that featured key workers and profiles in critical swing districts, (2) the amplification of this campaign through messaging in mainstream media outlets and the blogosphere, (3) hosting a publicized media conference with partners and policymakers, and (4) the production of an internal, educational video available in English, Spanish, Korean, and Chinese (readable for both Mandarin and Cantonese speakers) for workers who are likely to experience wage theft by employers.

Through our partnership, two separate videos were produced in multiple languages. The first one served as an external, educational video that would be used to educate the public of LA and would be distributed as such. During production, we made the strategic decision to distribute the campaign video and messages (graphics with text) through Brave New Films' online communications—several Facebook platforms, Twitter, and our website. It would also be distributed through our email lists as well as through the lists of partners. The second video was an internal video that would educate workers in industries where wage theft occurs so that they know the resources available to them and the procedures to take when they experience this type of stealing. This video was made available to the Coalition so they may distribute it strategically.

Production Outcomes

We launched End Wage Theft on June 24, 2014 with the following video:



Video: Wage Theft is a Crime

URL:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SBSLF6Inb-k>

Description: This video profiles victims of wage theft in Los Angeles and exposes the lived realities of lost wages and its consequences. It also demonstrates the economic impact to Los Angeles, as \$26.2 million are stolen from workers every single week. The video encourages viewers to sign the petition to get an anti-wage theft ordinance passed in the LA council.

In addition to the public awareness video, BNF also completed production of a 4-minute educational video for the LA Coalition Against Wage Theft to use specifically in their outreach to workers in the service industries. There are four different versions of this video, in English, Spanish, Korean, and Chinese. It is being used as a training tool with workers as the target audience. The Coalition is utilizing the video for workers to understand the resources and procedures to take when experiencing stolen wages by employers.

According to the Economic Policy Institute, the total amount stolen from workers far eclipses the total amount from all bank, gas station and convenience store robberies. LA is the capital of Wage Theft in the U.S. where over \$1 billion are stolen every year and less than 1 out of 5 employees receives restored wages.



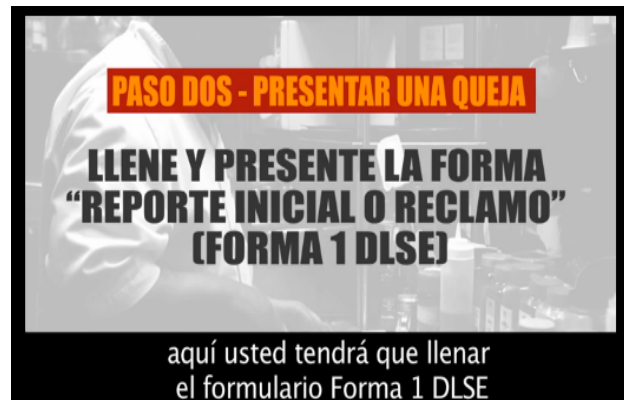
Video: Wage Theft Resource Video

Description: This is a multi-lingual training video for workers on what to do if they become victims of wage theft. Features subtitles for Spanish, Korean, and Chinese workers, as populations of color and immigrant communities are most affected in Los Angeles, CA.

Inspiring Activism

The overall goal of End Wage Theft was to inspire activism and raise awareness about the realities of many service industries and stolen wages. We do this by amplifying the issue through strategic productions and media distribution. However, successful communication outcomes can no longer be measured simply by landing a single story in a major news source. For our stories to have meaningful impact, they must be distributed by a coalition of media sources, non-profit groups, issue- or community-based partners, and issue blogs that can adopt and promote our campaign causes.

For this reason, our distribution strategy aims to incorporate community engagement through info-activism and culture shifting within media coverage by an issue by



targeting mainstream sources, community outlets, social media, and stakeholder blogs. This wide-scale distribution allows us to attack an issue from a variety of angles, using online crowd-building tactics, so that we can engage wider audiences and promote pressurization to policymakers and game changers. Additionally, we need on-the-ground partners to develop and organize events with us that promote our cause.

Distribution Strategy and Outcomes

Our efforts to promote activism and culture-shifting are accounted for using metrics that evaluate interactivity and engagement of our targeted audience(s) in our suggested methods of activism and efforts to shift attention of media outlets to our campaign issues.

Engagement and Activism

- ✓ Numbers of views of our videos and other content
- ✓ Numbers of ‘likes’/’shares’ a video receives
- ✓ Number of hits and impressions on websites and social media platforms
- ✓ Number of people who undertake the actions we propose, like petitions, phone calls, and video forwarding
- ✓ Outcome of political action

Culture Shifting

- ✓ Number of media mentions that use one of the core messages on the issue
- ✓ Number of editorials and op-eds pushing for reform
- ✓ Size of audiences (viewers, listeners, readers)
- ✓ Number of stories focusing on the issue in local outlets

One of the most strategic efforts we made for the project was to distribute the End Wage Theft video through local partners in an agreement made before the production of the video. Most often, we make videos and then we coopt partners to republic on their blogs, websites, and email list serves. But because the video was a localized effort, BNF thought it prudent to solidify working agreements with the Coalition as that allows us a much more cohesive plan of action, increasingly sophisticated access to individual contacts, larger outreach through shared networks, broader audiences in prominent media, and higher pressure points to policymakers. This structural plan allows us to reach audiences with more issue-specific and geographic-focused information and messaging. Social news, networks, and targeted content and issues are supplanting email as a traditional form of online mobilization. This communications renaissance permits new innovations in aggregation and distribution. It also facilitates integrated social network platforms to provide a dramatically useful tool within today’s news ecosystem of websites, Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and Tumblr.

News Media Outcomes

- ✓ 25 outlets attended conference
- ✓ 28 press articles, mentions
- ✓ 7 non-English speaking media outlets
- ✓ BNF flyers for event were used as visuals in articles
- ✓ 1,111,067,367 individuals reached

On our own side, we continually connect our social media posts, email links, and website clicks to the videos and encouraged viewers to like, share, and comment. This mode of

interactivity permits us to build upon existing online models and create personalized user experiences, with messages being sent to individuals from within their own peer-to-peer networks. Slowly, the traditional methods for organizing are being replaced by online communication and engagement tools. These very tools are now giving way to social approaches. This peer-to-peer, person-to-person level of viral communications campaigning is where Brave New Films' distribution and engagement has proven most impactful.

Creating Real Change

Of course, another advantage to working with community partners is the ability to engage in traditional activism and have physical bodies represent the voiceless. The day we released the video, we also held a press conference with our partners to discuss wage theft and demand that the LA city council take steps to address the issue. We had over 25 press outlets attend the conference that pressured the city on the Cedillo-Koretz anti-wage ordinance. On Tuesday, July 1st, the Los Angeles City Council voted 13 – 0 to approve the proposal from Cedillo and Koretz to revive earlier attempts to enforce laws against wage theft. Now, the City Attorney's office will work with policy, the UCLA Downtown Labor Center, and the National Day Laborer Organization Network to come up with an ordinance to "criminalize the practice of wage theft in the city...and increase tracking and enforcement of wage theft." Once the City Attorney's office finalizes the ordinance, it will go back to the City Council members for a vote. This is real change that we can see as politicians and administrators actively move in a direction what we propose.



Partnerships and Strategy

BNF specializes in video production and distribution. But our efforts will be severely limited without the guidance, help, and resources of partners. We are grateful to the LA Coalition Against Wage Theft and its members. In particular, we worked closely with Restaurant Opportunities Center in Los Angeles which served as a member of the steering committee, helped organize the press conference, helped with casting for our video, and was the main liaison for BNF and the Coalition. Additionally, they kept us up to speed on the campaign and turned out members to our conference. We also worked with the following:

- ✓ Koreatown Immigrant Workers Alliance (KIWA)
- ✓ CLEAN Carwash Campaign
- ✓ UCLA Labor Center
- ✓ 9 to 5

- ✓ Central American Resource Center (CARECEN)
- ✓ Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights of LA (CHIRLA)
- ✓ Garment Worker Center (GWC)
- ✓ National Day Laborer Organizing Network (NDLON)
- ✓ SEIU United Service Workers West
- ✓ United Food and Commercial Workers 770

Our work with partners is incredibly beneficial and we strive to create opportunities to do so. Not only do they help inform us with research, but they connect us to the real people we need to share stories.

“The campaign video that BNF made, featuring wage theft stories of workers from the coalition, has been a powerful tool in both press coverage as well as to educate and agitate workers. For example, one television clip directly featured the video. I have used the video with new members as a concise, visually engaging and easy to understand tool explain the campaign. The BNF team was receptive and flexible to work with. They incorporated feedback from coalition partners, followed up on requests and completed work I'm a timely manner.”

- Sophia Cheng, Policy and Research Coordinator, ROCLA

END WAGE THEFT CAMPAIGN

ADDENDUM: Press and Media Coverage

1. “LA Councilmen make renewed push against wage theft” by Emily Aplert Reyes for the *Los Angeles Times*: <http://lat.ms/1nI1hEy>
2. “Los Angeles Leads US in wage theft” by Ross Frasier for *PRESS TV*: <http://bit.ly/1nI1E22>
3. “Council to Consider Criminalizing Wage Theft” by Howard Fine for *LA Business Journal*: <http://bit.ly/1nI1W9d>
4. “LA City Council wants to regulate wage theft” by Alice Walton for KPCC (Southern California Public Radio): <http://bit.ly/1nI2nQJ>
5. “L.A. Employers Are Keeping Your Cash, City Leaders Say” by Dennis Romero for *LA Weekly*: <http://bit.ly/1nI2WtK>
6. “Members of Rockwell City to denounce the employer withheld wages” for *China Press News* by Hui A (translated in English from Chinese): <http://bit.ly/1nI3no3>
7. “City Ordinance Cracks on Wage Theft” by Bradford Betz for *KPFK*: <http://bit.ly/1nI5KqP>
8. “Los Angeles: Where Your Boss is Most Likely to Steal Your Pay” for Oxminity: <http://bit.ly/1iHjk1A>
9. “Los Angeles: Where your Boss is Mostly Likely to Steal your Pay” for *Huffington Post*: <http://huff.to/UMRhTH> (posted on the front page of the Huffington Post)
10. “Los Angeles: Wage theft Capital of the USA” for *FireDogLake*: <http://bit.ly/UMSaLS>
11. “Concejales de L.A. Presentan mocion contra robo de salarios a trabajadores” by Yurina Melara for *La Opinion*: <http://bit.ly/1qQb6Xm>
12. “Councilmen Koretz, Cedillo target wage theft in L.A.” by a staffer at the *Park Labrea News Beverly Press*: <http://bit.ly/1qQd8a0>
13. “City Council Declares Wage Theft Crisis in L.A.” by staff writer for *City News Service*: <http://bit.ly/1qQdHk3>
14. “Los Angeles: The Wage Theft Capitol of the U.S” by Jordan Melograna reposted by *City Watch*: <http://bit.ly/1qQeT73>
15. “L.A. City Council introduces Legislation to Eliminate Wage Theft” by Matthew Tinoco for *Neon Tommy*: <http://bit.ly/1qQflwK>
16. “Workers Resist Scofflaw Employers in Wage Theft Capital of the U.S.” for Truthout.org: <http://bit.ly/VSYeTS> (posted on front-page of truth out and featured in weekly newsletter)
17. “Los Angeles to Move Forward with Wage Theft Ordinance” by Parimal Rohit for *West Side Today*: <http://bit.ly/1r0um4Q>
18. “Los Angeles to pursue wage-theft measure” by Rick Orlov for *Los Angeles Daily News*: <http://bit.ly/1r0uzEY>
19. “L.A. Council to fight theft of wages” by staff writer for the *Los Angeles Register*: <http://bit.ly/1r0uFg6>
20. “City Attorney's office Instructed to Target Wage Theft” by staff writer for the *Post-Periodical for Western San Fernando Valley News*: <http://bit.ly/1r0uPUI>

21. “City Council to Go After Companies, Bosses who Cheat Their Employees” by Penny Arevalo for the *Pacific Palisades Patch*: <http://bit.ly/1r0v8ih>
22. “Los Angeles: Where Your Boss is Most Likely to Steal You Pay” by Jordan Melograna for *The Daily Digest* (repost of Huffington Post article): <http://bit.ly/1r0vCF7>
23. “Employee Pay Cut by Denied Overtime, Deductions for Equipment” appeared on *All Things Considered* on June 29th, 2014 on NPR: <http://n.pr/1qpik1a>
24. “Los Angeles, the Nation's most serious labor squeeze” (translated from Chinese to English) by Goa Zi for the *World Journal*: <http://bit.ly/1qpiQvY> (features picture of two women holding BNF flyer)
25. “Members of Rockwell City Council to denounce the employer withheld wages” (translated from Chinese to English) by Hui a for *US China Press*: <http://bit.ly/1nI3no3>
26. “Los Angeles, the Nation's most serious crush labor” (translated from Chinese to English) by staff writer for *USA Life Online*: <http://bit.ly/1qpkvle>
27. “Wage Theft” by a staff writer for the *San Fernando Valley Sun*: <http://bit.ly/1qpm9n4>
28. Telemundo appearance on Wage theft by UCLA Labor Center's Janna Shadduck-Hernandez



FRIDAY, 25 JULY 2014 / TRUTH-OUT.ORG

How Public Pressure Got Two Mothers Out of Jail

Crowdfunding and social media campaigns were important in gaining the temporary freedom of two mothers. But they are not substitutes for abolishing the

Next Steps for Regional

Our next step is to commission a study of the people can

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Workers Resist Scofflaw Employers in Wage Theft Capital of the US

Wednesday, 02 July 2014 09:43

By Jordan Melograna, Truthout | News Analysis

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Through public actions, many workers are fighting back such as Heriberto Zamora, pictured here. His unpaid overtime wage claims are public and have empowered him to speak publicly about wage theft issues, a widespread and often neglected problem in Los Angeles. (Photo: Charlie Kaijo / Flickr)

A hundred years ago, labor leaders fought for all the protections we know and rely on today in the workplace - safe conditions, the 8-hour workday, overtime pay and the ban on children in factories. These are rules so obvious today that it seems fantastical that people once had to march in the streets to get them. Yet, today, something even more fundamental is under attack. **Workers are seeing their wages stolen** by their bosses, with little recourse to do anything about it.

Over two-thirds of workers experienced wage theft each week in major US cities. Employers alter timecards, violate break periods, fail to pay overtime rates or simply fail to pay their employees at all. It's bad enough that wages for the bottom

TruthOut. June 2014.

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Los Angeles to pursue wage-theft measure

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By [Rick Orlov](#), Los Angeles Daily News

POSTED: 07/01/14, 3:33 PM PDT

UPDATED: 3 WEEKS, 2 DAYS AGO

0 COMMENTS

Told that Los Angeles is the country's wage-theft capital, the City Council revived a proposal to strengthen enforcement against employers who withhold pay.

In a 13-0 vote, the council asked the City Attorney's Office to draft the measure that would allow workers to file a criminal complaint against employers who fail to pay all wages due.

"It exists where employers do not pay overtime or a minimum wage," Councilman Paul Koretz said. "It happens where people might be paid but then are forced to work off the clock with no pay.

"For some industries, this is a business model where they don't pay their workers. And even if the workers do go to court, very little of what they are owed is paid."

Officials with the Coalition to End Wage Theft estimates some \$26 million a week racks up in stolen wages in a city with more than 750,000

Los Angeles Daily News, June 2014


L.A. councilmen make renewed push against wage theft





Handyman Axel Paredes chants during a press conference by the Los Angeles Coalition Against Wage Theft on the steps of Los Angeles City Hall on Tuesday in Los Angeles. The coalition held the news conference to announce a City Council motion aimed at criminalizing wage theft. (Gary Friedman / Los Angeles Times)

By **EMILY ALPERT REYES**
contact the reporter

SHARELINES

-
-  Two L.A. City Council members seek city ordinance to criminalize wage theft

 -  L.A. City Councilman Paul Koretz says businesses "usually get away with" stiffing workers of their wages

 -  L.A. "is really the wage-theft capital of the country," a UCLA Labor Center rep says
-

JUNE 24, 2014, 2:14 PM

Two Los Angeles City Council members began a push Tuesday for a new city ordinance that would crack down on businesses that cheat workers of their pay.

"If you steal from a store, you go to jail," said Councilman Paul Koretz, who was joined by Councilman Gil Cedillo in moving to draft a proposal. "But employers who cheat their

Los Angeles Times. June 2014.

Concejales de L.A. presentan moción contra robo de salarios a trabajadores

Los Ángeles es la ciudad en Estados Unidos en donde los empleadores más abusan de sus empleados al no pagarles las horas completas que trabajan

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Propuesta contra robos de salarios a trabajadores inmigrantes

Foto: Ciro César/La Opinión

Por: [Yurina Melara](#)

PUBLICADO: JUN, 24, 2014 5:42 PM EST

Acompañados de decenas de trabajadores que han sido víctimas de robo de su sueldo por parte de sus empleadores, los **concejales Paul Koretz y Gil Cedillo** introdujeron una moción al Concejo Municipal que **criminalizaría esta práctica** en la ciudad.

La Opinion. June 2014.

Politics

LA City Council wants to regulate wage theft

by [Alice Walton](#) June 24 2014

ARE



Two Los Angeles city councilmen want employers to face criminal penalties when they withhold wages owed to their employees.

Councilmen Paul Koretz and Gil Cedillo introduced a motion Tuesday that asks the City Attorney's Office and the LAPD to work with the National Day Laborer Organizing Network and UCLA Downtown Labor Center to craft a city law against "wage theft." Organizers describe "wage theft" as violating minimum wage and overtime laws and forcing employees to work off the clock.

"It is urgent that the city of Los Angeles do something about this very debilitating and devastating problem that afflicts so many hard-working people," Koretz said at a news conference outside City Hall.

The councilmen's motion asks the City Attorney's Office to criminalize the practice, though there were no details available on whether employers would be punished with fines or jail time.

It was not immediately known which Los Angeles City Council committee would discuss the issue, nor was a timeline given for drafting the city law. A similar motion was introduced by Koretz and then-Councilman Richard Alarcon in 2009.

89.3 KPCC. June 2014.



Los Angeles City Councilmen Gil Cedillo and Paul Koretz introduced a motion Tuesday that would go after employers who withhold wages from their employees. [ALICE WALTON/KPCC](#)

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Council to Consider Criminalizing Wage Theft

By **HOWARD FINE**
Tuesday, June 24, 2014

Two Los Angeles city councilmen on Tuesday called for a crackdown on employers who do not pay their workers the proper amount of wages.

The motion put forward by Councilmen Gilbert Cedillo and Paul Koretz would criminalize penalties for employers found guilty of cheating workers out of pay, commonly referred to as wage theft.

Currently, state and federal agencies have the power to levy fines against violators and order restitution. The Cedillo-Koretz motion would allow cases to be referred to the City Attorney for prosecution on misdemeanor charges; if found guilty, the violator could face stiff fines and up to six months in jail.

A coalition of unions, workers' rights advocates and progressive groups sponsored the motion. They point to studies saying that up to 80 percent of low-wage workers in Los Angeles do not receive all the pay they should. One study indicated that more than 60 percent of garment workers do not receive the state-mandated minimum wage.

"Los Angeles has the highest rate of wage theft in the country – nearly 80 percent of low-wage workers in L.A. experience wage theft," Koretz said. "This is a major problem for Los Angeles workers."

Koretz co-authored a nearly identical motion five years ago. Current City Attorney Mike Feuer said during his campaign last year that he would make this issue a priority.

Other major cities, including Chicago, Houston, San Francisco and Seattle, already have criminalized wage theft. Locally, the city of Long Beach is weighing a similar proposal.




LA Business Journal. June 2014.

End Wage Theft could not have been possible without our funders at the Ford Foundation and the California Wellness Foundation. We also owe a large debt to our partners formed through the Los Angeles Coalition Against Wage Theft. We are grateful for the support of all involved parties.

Brave New Films is a 501(c)(3) non-profit company. Our mission is to champion social justice issues by using a model of media, education, and grassroots volunteer involvement that inspires, empowers, motivates, and teaches civic participation and makes a difference.



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