Litigation Updates

Judge Certifies 50,000-60,000 Class in Forced Labor Case Against GEO

For the first time in history, a federal court allowed a class of immigrant detainees to jointly proceed with forced labor claims against the country’s second-largest private prison provider. Judge Kane in the District of Colorado certified a class of between 50,000 and 60,000 current and former immigrant detainees held at GEO’s Aurora, Colorado detention facility since 2004. These individuals, some of whom were found to legally reside in the country after months in detention, allege that they were forced to clean the detention center without pay and under threat of solitary confinement. This practice allowed GEO to reduce labor costs at the Aurora facility, where it employs just one custodian to maintain a detention center that houses up to 1,500 people at a time. Towards Justice represents the plaintiffs with co-counsel at the Meyer Law Office, P.C., The Kelman Buescher Firm, Milstein Law Office, and The Law Office of R. Andrew Free.


Towards Justice Clients Challenge Anti-Competitive Conduct at CKE

With Towards Justice as counsel, current and former employees of Carl’s Jr. restaurants filed a lawsuit in California State Court alleging that Carl’s Jr. and its parent company CKE have engaged in a conspiracy to suppress the wages and working conditions of the restaurant-based managers who run hundreds of Carl’s Jr. restaurants across the state. Plaintiffs allege that defendants illegally colluded to restrain trade by agreeing not to hire certain employees from one another. This “no hire” agreement prevents employees from seeking higher wages and better working conditions at competing Carl’s Jr. restaurants, and allows defendants to pay less and treat employees worse without worrying that employees will leave. Plaintiffs request damages to compensate for wage suppression and ask the court to enjoin this illegal restraint on trade. Towards Justice represents the plaintiffs in collaboration with co-counsel at Tostrud Law Group, P.C., and Cuneo Gilbert &LaDuca, LLP.

Read more about the case in the LA Times, Courthouse News, and Consumer Affairs.

Access to Justice Updates

New and Improved: www.PayWagesNow.com
Our Access to Justice program continues to serve hundreds of workers every year and it is now easier than ever to reach the Towards Justice team. Workers can quickly and easily contact our team through PayWagesNow.com, which directs workers to our website. The catchy website name should be easy to remember and we ask for community support in sharing this website and spreading the word! Thank you!

2017 Access to Justice by the Numbers:
Workers reported...

- 50% being paid hourly
- 66% working over 12 hours in a day
- 70% are Spanish speakers
- 70% working over 40 hours in a week
- 75% not being paid over-time for their work
- 90% are working at the same job where they experienced wage theft

Train the Trainer
In February, Towards Justice piloted its Train the Trainer program and trained six community members on our "Know Your Rights" presentation. These trained community members will attend community events and raise awareness of the wage theft epidemic. As a small organization trainers will exponentially help Towards Justice expand access to justice, outreach and education to communities.

Bilingual Legal Intake Volunteers
Towards Justice has five amazing new bilingual legal intake volunteers for winter 2017. Our intake volunteers are a vital piece to our Access to Justice program. Thank you for supporting our work and the working families we serve.

Just Wages Navigators
Our Navigator program is approaching its 1 Year Anniversary! Since its inception we have trained over 50 Navigators and supported 61 workers. Approximately 50% of our trained Navigators are University of Colorado - Denver students. This is thanks to a partnership with Professor Dr. Sarah Horton and her Migrant Health and Globalization class.

- **Aurora Welcome Center** - Towards Justice presented a Know Your Rights training at the Community Conversation Event.
- **St. Mary's Academy** - Towards Justice MSW Associates presented Dignity for All: Combating Wage Theft at the 16th Annual Cultural Diversity Celebration
- **Yale Law School Pro Bono Network** - Three Yale law students are providing Towards Justice with legal research support on topics ranging from state wage and hour law to unique civil racketeering and attorney ethics issues.
Spotlight - Collaborating Attorney Penn Dodson

Penn has supported numerous workers in Colorado and is passionate about helping workers receive the just compensation to which they are entitled. She is a proud co-founder of the innovative workers’ rights law firm AndersonDodson, P.C. Penn has been a Collaborating Attorney with Towards Justice for two years. In 2017, Penn has already accepted 7 referral cases!

After growing up in Arkansas, Penn graduated magna cum laude from Dartmouth College in New Hampshire with a double major. She received her J.D. from the University of California, Hastings College of the Law in San Francisco. Since then she has practiced employment law on behalf of employees for almost the entirety of her career. Penn has been practicing law since 2003, and has represented clients in wage cases primarily in Colorado, Georgia, and New York, with a few others in Connecticut, New Jersey, and Florida. Eager to collaborate and exchange tips and ideas, Penn can be reached at penn@andersondodson.com or 212-961-7639.

UPCOMING EVENTS

- HIREDenver: Know Your Rights Presentation - March 17 @ 9:30am
- Wage Justice Day: 6 Free CLE’s - April 7 All Day RSVP Here
- Western Slope Outreach Trip - April 17-20

Support Our Work & the Working Families We Serve

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