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Newsletter #16

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Shop with a Conscience

Do you know anyone who sells sweatfree apparel?

If you do, you can now invite them to be listed in this year's [Shop with a Conscience](#) Consumer Guide. A joint production by SweatFree Communities, Sweatshop Watch, and International Labor Rights Forum, the guide features clothing produced by democratic and independent worker associations where workers have an effective, collective voice in determining their wages and working conditions. This year we have updated the [sweatfree criteria](#) and the [application](#). Deadline for applications is **Friday, September 21, 2007**.

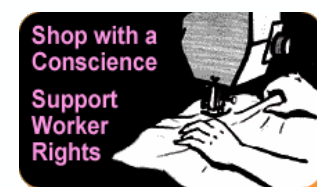
Campaign News

Austin, Texas: On June 21, the Austin City Council unanimously passed a sweatfree procurement ordinance. The effort was led by the campaign to [Make Texas Sweat Free](#), a project of the Texas Fair Trade Coalition endorsed by 23 organizations. [Here is an op-ed](#) published in the Austin-American Statesman about the victory. Now the campaign is bringing the initiative to Travis County and expects a vote this fall.

Berkeley, California: On July 19, Berkeley's city council unanimously passed a resolution joining the [State and Local Government Sweatfree Consortium](#) and providing \$25,000 in start-up funds for the Consortium. Activists are now working with the city to finalize the language of the proposed sweatfree procurement ordinance. [Read more...](#)

Maine and New York: Activists in Maine and New York are currently circulating sign-on letters to their governors, urging them to take further steps to promote the State and Local Government Sweatfree Consortium. Sign-on letters are an easy and effective organizing tool that you might be able to use in your state as well. Contact info@sweatfree.org for a sample letter to your governor or mayor, or check our [online resources](#).

Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania: The Controller of the City of Pittsburgh has found that the City is not in compliance with its



sweatfree procurement ordinance adopted in 1997. While all City service and commodity contractors certify that "nothing has come to [their] attention" indicating that the goods were "provided under sweatshop conditions," this anti-sweatshop certification "does not ensure that the products purchased by the City are sweatfree," writes the Controller in a performance audit presented to the Mayor and City Council on July 10, 2007. "The most effective way to ensure that purchases are sweatfree," the Controller found, "is to have independent monitoring of the conditions of production." The Controller made five recommendations to ensure more effective policy enforcement, including requiring contractors to disclose factory locations and wage information.

The Pittsburgh Anti-Sweatshop Community Alliance (PASCA) applauded the report and plans to work with the City to implement the Controller's recommendations. Read the [summary of the audit](#).

Portland, Oregon: Portland's Sweatfree Procurement Resolution unanimously passed on August 29. 130 sweatfree supporters including union representatives, community members, and a former sweatshop worker crowded City Hall to testify in support of the Resolution. The initiative was led by the [Portland Sweatfree Campaign](#), a coalition of 45 organizations.

Ed Hall, Vice President of Portland Firefighters Association Local 43, wrote in [his op-ed](#) published in the Portland Tribune: *"As a firefighter for the city of Portland, I took an oath to protect citizens from fires and disasters. When I put my uniform on in the morning and start my tour of duty, I want to be assured that my pants and shirt were not made under unsafe working conditions. I want to know that the company that makes the uniform I wear with pride supports the same values the firefighters union does, for fair wages and decent working conditions."*

San Francisco, California: The City of San Francisco, which adopted the toughest sweatfree procurement law on record late in 2005, has now agreed to make the largest financial contribution thus far to the State and Local Government Sweatfree Consortium. The pending \$40,000 contribution will help SweatFree Communities develop the nascent organization and increase its membership, giving cities like San Francisco access to enforcement tools with real teeth. Yet, San Francisco's implementation of its own groundbreaking ordinance is currently steeped in controversy.

While city officials insist that they are committed to advancing the most aggressive sweatfree procurement ordinance in the country, activists wonder why the city then is granting several apparent multi-year contract waivers to apparel suppliers. The crux of the issue is what to do when – as appears to be the case - no vendor is 100% compliant with the city's information disclosure requirements and labor standards as embodied in the code of conduct. Can the city award contracts to the "most compliant" suppliers, while requesting that they work to achieve full compliance over a reasonable period of time? Or must the city treat the most compliant suppliers like anyone else and award the contract to the low bidder? While city officials and activists agree that the city's ordinance should be amended to forestall similar conundrums in the future, they are not in agreement on what to do in the interim period or how long this interim should be.

For the sake of the entire sweatfree movement, in which the

City of San Francisco has played an invaluable leadership role, we hope that the city continues to tell suppliers in no uncertain terms that sweatshop products are not acceptable. At the same time, the very controversy in San Francisco points toward the real culprit: the industry. Why is it so difficult to find even a single apparel company that can comply with the very basic labor standards, such as payment of non-poverty wages, in San Francisco's code of conduct? Can there be a clearer signal to us all that the global apparel industry is in dire need of reform?

[Click here](#) to read an article published by the San Francisco Bay Guardian on this issue.

New Resources

SweatFree Communities has released a revised and updated Model Sweatfree Procurement Policy. This newest version includes enforcement provisions for public entities that join the State and Local Government Sweatfree Consortium. Download a copy: [PDF](#) | [Word Document](#)

Another new document is "Why the Consortium is Good for Business," a resource for sweatfree campaigns to use in conversations with vendors and with city officials. [Download it here.](#)

Sweatfree Campaigns in the News

SweatFree Communities maintains a [collection of the latest news](#) about sweatfree campaign efforts in the US. Recent stories include:

- Don McIntosh, Northwest Labor Press -- September 7: [Portland pledges to buy no sweat apparel](#)
- Richard Jones, El Hispanic news -- September 6: [Sweat-free measure passes without breaking a sweat / La medida sobre no hacer negocios con empresas donde explotan a los trabajadores paso sin una gota de sudor](#)
- Rich Lord, Pittsburgh Post-Gazette -- July 14: [City's policy on sweatshops called failure by controller](#)
- Jim Hightower, Flagstaff Live -- July 12: [Sweatfree communities: Supporting ethical labor practices](#)

Take Action: Tell Disney to End Sweatshops in China

Hong Kong -based Students and Scholars against Corporate Misbehavior (SACOM) has recently released a report on the conditions of a Disney supplier in China. Please sign the [online global petition](#) asking Disney to:

- 1) ensure all Disney suppliers comply with Chinese labor laws;
- 2) give every Chinese worker at every Disney supplier a written labor contract and a copy of Disney's Code of Conduct in Chinese;
- 3) collaborate with independent NGOs to provide workers at all Disney suppliers with labor rights training; and
- 4) respect workers' rights to bargain collectively by facilitating the formation of mechanisms of worker representation at all Disney suppliers.

The report and more information is available on [SACOM's website](#).