

Please Co-Sponsor Rep. Dorcena Forry's and Sen. Jack Hart's Temporary Worker's Right to Know Bill

To co-sponsor the House bill, please email Robert.Cahill@state.ma.us

To co-sponsor the Senate bill, please email Nathan.Pham@state.ma.us or Meagan.Maloy@state.ma.us

"I had to quit my job because the conditions were so dangerous," said "Richard" who worked for two days for a temporary agency in Boston. When Richard went to pick up his check, the owner of the agency told him his paycheck had a number of deductions including for the payment of safety equipment he had used on the job and meals he had never eaten. "I knew about MassCOSH, so I could take action against my employer. But so many of my friends and former co-workers don't get any information from their employer about what they're entitled to. We need to have a law that will make sure our rights are not violated."

Background: The American dream tells all of us to work hard and play by the rules so we can support ourselves and our families. Yet thousands of Massachusetts workers employed by temp agencies are being denied their basic rights and the promise of the American dream. They are sent off to work without any idea of where they are going, the type of work they will be required to do, their rate of pay – even the name of their employer, who is often referred to by a nickname. Although they work hard and long, these workers often fail to receive their earned wages or are injured without compensation at hazardous worksites.

Who is affected: Close to a 100,000 workers in Massachusetts are employed by temporary agencies; a quarter of these workers are "on-call" or day laborers. Since temporary jobs are largely low-wage and characterized by high turnover, these workers constitute some of the most economically and physically vulnerable members of the workforce. Even though many are primary breadwinners for their families, workers in temporary jobs are also more likely to be paid poverty-level wages than workers in permanent jobs: workers employed through temporary agencies were more than three times as likely to have annual family incomes below \$15,000 as standard full-time workers of similar age, occupation, educational attainment, and geographic region of residence. One in five workers in a temporary job is in the bottom 10% of wage earners, and workers employed through temporary agencies are more than seven times as likely as permanent workers to lack health insurance.

Current law: A temporary agency does not have to reveal to workers where they are being taken to work, the types of duties the workers will be performing, how long they are going to work, or how much they will be paid. Temporary agencies (which hire workers and send them to worksites) are exempt from all of the licensing requirements of employment agencies (which charge a fee to help workers find jobs) and are not subject to any regulatory oversight. Consequently, this neglect of the rights of workers directly causes increased employer abuse and exploitation, including non payment of wages, illegal fees, and hazardous working conditions.

The Temp Worker Right to Know Bill: A Simple Form Can Make A Big Difference!

The Temp Workers' Right to Know Bill would require that a temporary agency give a worker basic information about the job they are being hired for in the language which the temporary agency usually communicates with the worker. This information includes rate of pay, hazardous conditions, and what fees are legal. All this information could be contained in a simple form. The requirements would be enforced by the Division of Occupational Safety. The bill exempts higher wage jobs as well as professional, scientific or technical services.

Endorsing organizations: Massachusetts AFL-CIO, Massachusetts Coalition for Occupational Safety and Health (MassCOSH), Centro Presente, CEDC Southeastern Mass, Central Mass. AFL-CIO, Chelsea Collaborative, Greater Boston Central Labor Council, Mass Global Action, Merrimack Valley Central Labor Council, New England Regional Carpenters Council, Painters and Allied Trades District Council 35, North Shore Labor Council, and Western MassCOSH, and more. **For further information, please contact:** Tim Sullivan, Mass. AFL-CIO, 781/324-8250; Isabel Lopez, MassCOSH, 617/825-7233; Gladys Vega, Chelsea Collaborative, 617/889-6080; or Sherley Cruz/Monica Halas/Elizabeth Toulan, Greater Boston Legal Services, 617/371-1234.