

Good morning Honorable Commissioners of Cook County.

My name is Stacey Flint. I stand before you today as a representative of the Jewish Council on Urban Affairs and a homeowner from the 9th district of Cook County.

I am here in support of the passage of the Anti-Wage Theft Ordinance.

Jewish values teach us: "Do not oppress or rob your neighbor; specifically, you are not to keep back the wages of a hired worker all night until morning." In addition we are taught, "On his day you should give his wages, the sun should not set on it, because he is a poor man and his life depends on it..."

Why does a worker's life depend on timely payment of wages you make ask? A worker represents a household. A household requires the basics to function: food, shelter, clothing, and health, etc. Deprived of wages, a person unable to provide for himself or their households with these basic needs is left desperate. Heaven forbid they may even be pushed to break divine laws: stealing, coveting, etc. And we have not even mentioned civil laws. Industries that do not pay workers are not only thieves themselves; they promote lawlessness.

Employers who do not pay workers cause an overload to Cook County's fragile safety net as unpaid workers may increase the burden on the county's public safety and social services. Between 2000 and 2007/11, Cook County's poverty increased from 13.5 percent to 15.8 percent, leaving us with the highest poverty rate in the region. Currently, Cook County's FY 2015 budget shows deficits in several social service line items. Therefore, wage theft not only steals from workers, but from all of Cook County.

As a tax paying citizen of Cook County, I want us to support industries that are ethical in their treatment of workers, and thereby, worthy of tax breaks and county contracts. When Cook County passes the Anti-Wage Theft ordinance, it represents a stance for ethical business and financial prudence.

Thank you,