

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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24 Workers Sue Industrial Pallet, LLC for Wage Theft & Racial Discrimination

Latino Workers Seek Unpaid Overtime, End to Racist Harassment by Eastford, CT Company

CONNECTICUT – Today, twenty-four Latino pallet workers at Industrial Pallet, LLC in Eastford, Connecticut filed a lawsuit in federal court alleging failure to pay overtime and seeking an end to racial discrimination and harassment. This lawsuit builds on a year of worker organizing to demand just wages and better working conditions from Industrial Pallet’s management, in which the pallet workers have collaborated with the Centro Comunitario de Trabajadores (“CCT”) to call for an end to the abusive workplace practices.

As the complaint filed today alleges, Industrial Pallet and its owners, Randy Therrien and Joseph O’Brien, systematically deprived the workers of overtime pay, flouting federal and state laws. Along with a manager also named as a defendant in the lawsuit, they subjected the pallet workers to a hostile and degrading workplace environment, where white supervisors routinely hurled racially charged insults at the Latino pallet workers.

“We are the ones who are doing the hard, dangerous work that keeps Industrial Pallet running – but instead of treating us with respect, the bosses and supervisors undercounted our hours for years. We had to punch out at noon, and then keep working late into the night without overtime pay. The supervisors insulted us and called us racist names for years. If we complained about the conditions, they threatened to fire us,” said Felipe Toj Chach, who has worked for Industrial Pallet for more than five years and is a Plaintiff.

As set forth in the complaint, Industrial Pallet and its owners have denied Latino pallet workers the benefits and working conditions that white workers enjoy, including sanitary indoor bathroom facilities, a place to sit while eating lunch, and a sink to wash their hands – especially concerning given the COVID-19 pandemic.

“As workers, when we come together we can change our workplace for the better. We are supporting each other so that the management cannot abuse us any longer,” said Edgar Perea, who has worked for Industrial Pallet for more than seven years and is also one of the Plaintiffs.

Adrian Ventura, Executive Director of CCT, condemned Industrial Pallet’s behavior and attitude and noted that the problems surfacing in Industrial Pallet are a sign of pervasive workplace exploitation in the state. “There are so many violations of labor rights and human rights in Connecticut. CCT condemns every boss who acts this way towards our fellow workers. We cannot ignore the complaints these workers, our brothers, are raising. We are grateful to the workers who are searching for a solution to the problems they are facing in the workplace. We hope the court will respond swiftly to these abuses,” he said.

“State and federal law is clear. Employers cannot discriminate against workers because they are Latino, and employers must pay overtime to employees who work more than 40 hours in a week,” said Isabelle Barnard, a law student intern in the Worker & Immigrant Rights Advocacy Clinic (WIRAC) at Yale Law School, which represents the workers. “These twenty-four workers had the courage to stand up for their rights and demand that the abuses stop, and we are proud to represent them.”

“These workers are united in their efforts to improve working conditions and serve as a reminder to all workers that change is possible,” said Pablo Carrasco, Staff Attorney at Justice at Work, co-counsel for the workers. “We are grateful to partner with WIRAC to support the workers and CCT. Access to safe and dignified work benefits workers, their communities, and industry.”

A copy of the complaint filed today is available [here](#).

The Worker & Immigrant Rights Advocacy Clinic (WIRAC) at Yale Law School represents immigrants, low-wage workers, and their organizations in labor, immigration, criminal justice, civil rights, and other matters. For more information, please visit law.yale.edu/wirac.

Justice at Work is a legal services nonprofit based in Boston, Massachusetts, that supports workers in low-wage jobs in exercising collective power. Justice at Work aims to strengthen workplace organizing by providing labor and employment legal services, training, and strategic guidance to workers' organizations. For more information, please visit jatwork.org.

Centro Comunitario de Trabajadores (CCT) is an immigrant workers' center based in New Bedford, Massachusetts that strives to enhance working experience through community building and organizing. CCT's staff and leadership are drawn exclusively from the immigrant worker community it serves. CCT provides workers with support in situations of workplace injustice through a three-pronged approach, which includes education, organization, and taking action. For more information, please visit cct-newbedford.org.

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