



STATE OF MAINE  
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR  
1 STATE HOUSE STATION  
AUGUSTA, MAINE  
04333-0001

JOHN ELIAS BALDACCI  
GOVERNOR

February 28, 2006

Re: Formation of a Governor's Coalition for Sweatfree Procurement

Dear Governor:

I am writing to invite you to join me in a new collaborative effort to level the playing field for ethical businesses and advance justice for workers laboring in substandard work environments — commonly known and referred to as “sweatshops” — worldwide.

Sweatshop conditions in apparel and other industries around the world and in the United States are well documented. Young women and children work long hours for poverty wages in inhumane conditions until they are worn out and unemployable. These abuses cause untold human suffering and economic and political volatility across the globe.

State government procurement is a tool which we can use responsibly to address this serious problem, as procurement laws and policies may be implemented to stop contractors and vendors that do business with State governments from relying on sweatshop labor as a tool to underbid responsible contractors or to maximize their profits inhumanely.

In 2001, for example, the State of Maine adopted a sweatfree procurement law to end unsuspecting taxpayer support for sweatshop abuses and to help create market demand for fair labor standards. The centerpiece of that law is a contractor- and subcontractor-binding code of conduct, which includes the requirement that contractors and subcontractors adhere to basic international standards of workplace fairness and safety.

Presently we are updating our statutes and our rules to keep them current with emerging best practices. Most significantly, we are taking steps to guarantee sweatfree procurement by examining protocols for independent monitoring and inspecting of supplier factories.

Yet we can accomplish more together. If we work together as States, we can both learn from each other and better leverage our resources.

I propose that we form a coalition of Governors and States — as an initial step to best align our common experience and interests and resources. Our coalition will explore and develop strategies soon after formation, including the possibility of joining existing coalitions of universities and emerging coalitions of cities already working together to put an end to



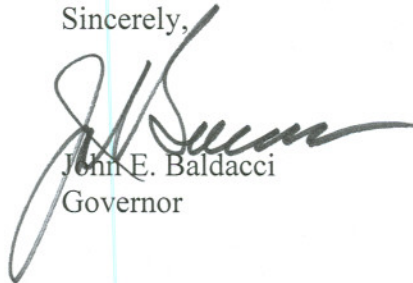
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procurement from sweatshops. Moreover, the coalition could consider the use or formation of a consortium—such as the Worker Rights Consortium, which has worked well for universities—to investigate complaints of States' contractors and subcontractors subjecting their workers to sweatshop conditions.

If you are interested in joining this new and important coalition I am proposing, please review the attached resolution, sign it and return it if possible, or contact my staff with any changes that might be necessary for you to come on board. My lead staffperson on this initiative is Alan Stearns, who can be reached in my office at (207) 287-3531 (voice); (207) 287-1034 (fax); or alan.stearns@maine.gov (e-mail). Our goal is to have an initial conference call of signatory or interested coalition members by April 1, 2006. I hope you will come to the table with staff assignments, resources to support their leadership, and recognition that with focus and coordination we can make progress.

Please join me in standing up for good jobs and justice for workers in the United States and around the world. I look forward to working with you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John E. Baldacci", written over the printed name and title.

John E. Baldacci  
Governor

**RESOLUTION CREATING A GOVERNOR'S COALITION FOR SWEATFREE  
PROCUREMENT AND WORKERS RIGHTS (Page 1 of 1)**

**WHEREAS**, sweatshop conditions in apparel and other industries around the world and in the United States are well documented;

**WHEREAS**, workplace abuses cause untold human suffering and economic and political volatility across the globe;

**WHEREAS**, State contractors and vendors who use sweatshop labor are able to maximize their profits inhumanely and underbid responsible contractors who pay fair wages and maintain humane working conditions;

**WHEREAS**, States may act as market participants, implementing procurement laws and policies to level the playing field for ethical businesses and promote fair treatment of workers.

**NOW THEREFORE**, I, \_\_\_\_\_, Governor of the State of \_\_\_\_\_ do hereby make the following commitments toward the formation of a Governor's Coalition for Sweatfree Procurement and Workers Rights:

1. I have an active interest in exploration and support of new or improved State laws, policies, and regulations that advance best practices in the area of prevention of sweatshop abuses through State procurement controls, including:
  - Implementing contractor- and subcontractor-binding codes of conduct requiring adherence to basic international standards of workplace fairness and safety and non-poverty wages;
  - Requiring that contractors and subcontractors disclose the names and addresses of supplier factories;
  - Necessitating contractor and subcontractor cooperation with independent investigations of supplier factories; and
  - Mandating corrective action in case of worker rights violations.
2. I have an active interest in the development of tools to facilitate cost-effective and reliable independent monitoring mechanisms and inspection of contractor and subcontractor places of manufacturing.
3. I have an active interest in creating a purchasing consortium that allows States to leverage their purchasing power to support sweatfree supplier factories.
4. I designate \_\_\_\_\_ as my lead staff person to help with the formation of a Governor's Coalition. This person can be contacted as follows (email): \_\_\_\_\_
5. I have an active interest in coordination of shared resources to accomplish the above-stated goals.
6. I agree that other members of the coalition, including the Office of the Governor of Maine, may publish and broadcast and otherwise communicate my name and the name of my State as an active member of this coalition, yet only within the confines of the commitments above.

This resolution may be revoked at any time by the signatory party by written communication to the Office of the Governor of Maine.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Gubernatorial signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date