



A Network for Local Action Against Sweatshops

Subsidizing Sweatshops II

Factsheet for Illinois

April 15, 2009-- *Subsidizing Sweatshops II* tracks developments in four factories covered in the *Subsidizing Sweatshops I* (July 2008) and adds four additional factory case studies. These eight factories are located in China, Honduras, Dominican Republic, Mexico, and United States and produce for nine major uniform brands – Armor Holdings / BAE, Cintas Corporation, Eagle Industries, Elbeco, Fechheimer Brothers Company, Lion Apparel, Propper International, Rocky Brands, and Williamson-Dickie Manufacturing.

Subsidizing Sweatshops II documents severe violations of labor law and human rights in nearly all factories investigated. In light of these findings, SweatFree Communities asks companies to improve conditions in the facilities and assess the impact of their prices, delivery schedules, and supply chain relationships on factories' ability to comply with codes of conduct and labor rights standards. In addition, SweatFree Communities urges governments to maintain contracts with companies working to remedy violations and to join the Sweatfree Purchasing Consortium.

Below are summaries of labor conditions documented in the report at factories that provide products to brands that supply the State of Illinois. The full report, including quotes from workers and detailed recommendations for each case, is available at www.sweatfree.org/subsidizing.

Brand: Dickies

Vendors: Henderson's Advertising, Ray O-Herron Company Inc., Uniforms Manufacturing Inc. for Uniforms for Department of Natural Resources. Contract expires 9/30/3009.

<http://www.purchase.state.il.us/ipb/master.nsf/frmMCViewFrameset?ReadForm&view=viewAllByAgency?OpenView&start=1&count=250> Click on SWC - Statewide Contract, then click on Contracts #4014466, 4014467, 4014468 UNIFORMS FOR DNR10/01/200709/30/2009

[http://www.purchase.state.il.us/ipb/Master.nsf/ViewAttachment/73ED6F74E79507AD86257413000E205B/\\$file/T6960222072.pdf?OpenElement](http://www.purchase.state.il.us/ipb/Master.nsf/ViewAttachment/73ED6F74E79507AD86257413000E205B/$file/T6960222072.pdf?OpenElement)

Factory investigated: Confecciones Mazara (Tehuacán, Mexico)

- **Unlawful discrimination against union supporters in hiring decisions**, otherwise known as 'blacklisting'. A "List of Workers Not Recommended for Hire" used by the company to deny employment to workers contains 551 names, most of whom are members of the

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Executive Director

National Organizer

Midwest Regional Organizer

30 Blackstone St., Bangor, ME 04401 USA

207-262-7277

bjorn@sweatfree.org

www.sweatfree.org

September 19 Garment Workers Union or have been active in protest campaigns supported by the Human and Labor Rights Commission of the Tehuacán Valley.

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<http://www.purchase.state.il.us/ipb/master.nsf/frmMCViewFrameset?ReadForm&view=viewAllByAgency?OpenView&start=1&count=250> Click on SWC - Statewide Contract, then click on Contracts #4014466, 4014467, 4014468 UNIFORMS FOR DNR10/01/200709/30/2009

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Factory investigated: Dickies de Honduras (Choloma, Honduras)

- **Fifty-eight workers fired**, supposedly to reduce cost. But they were **all union supporters**. Were they fired because they support the union?
- **Poverty wages**. The base wage pays at best one-half the cost of basic necessities for a family of four.
- **Exhausting work schedules**. The “4 x 4” schedule, from 7:00 am to 6:00 pm four days a week, amounts to 11 hours a day, and often 12 hours a day when workers fail to meet excessive production goals and must work late to catch up.

Brand: Armor Holdings (subsidiary of BAE)

Vendor: Galls and Aramark Co. Contract # 4014469 for police supplies, belts, holsters, etc. expires 10/30/2009.

<http://www.purchase.state.il.us/ipb/master.nsf/frmMCDocFrameset?ReadForm&RefNum=4014469&DocID=BAC1B7561788F36B862574F4000E9452&view=viewAllByAgency>

Factory investigated: Safariland (Tijuana, Mexico)

- **Unpaid mandatory overtime**. 16 workers reported mandatory day-shift overtime of 2.5 hours daily for which they were not paid the overtime rate of pay; 3 workers reported mandatory night-shift overtime of 4.5 hours nightly for which they were not paid the overtime rate pay.
- Most workers interviewed worked with either **no formal work contracts or extended temporary work contracts**.
- **Mandatory pregnancy tests**. Women testified being forced to submit a pregnancy test in order to be hired. Those pregnant would not be hired.
- **Pressure and intimidation**. Many workers reported supervisors pressuring them to work faster, yelling at them, and sometimes sitting beside them for extended periods and harassing them if they did not attain production quotas.
- **Dangerous conditions**. Many workers reported accidents that resulted in puncturing and even losing fingers. Most workers interviewed also expressed concern regarding dangerous substances including Resistol glue.

Brand: Elbeco

Vendor: Ray O’Herron Company Inc. Contract 4014467 for Dept of Natural Resources Uniforms.

<http://www.purchase.state.il.us/ipb/master.nsf/frmMCDocFrameset?ReadForm&RefNum=4014466&DocID=D55A1431974A1997862574AA000CEA6E&view=viewAllByAgency>

Factory investigated: Elbeco’s City Shirt Company (Frackville, Pennsylvania)

City Shirt Company is a unionized workplace and the only factory in this report with an effective functioning union, which helps establish decent wages and benefits for workers through collective bargaining with the company. The union also makes a more intangible difference in workers’ lives by giving them a seat at the table with the company and affording them a sense of ownership and respect. These are our recommendations for Elbeco:

- Prioritize continued production in unionized facilities with good wages and decent working conditions.
- Work proactively to ensure good working conditions in the company’s contract facilities. Assess the impact of Elbeco’s purchasing practices on working conditions in contract facilities and eliminate negative practices while enhancing positive practices.

Note: Currently SweatFree Communities does not have information as to whether these particular factories are supplying the State of Illinois. However, the State has active contracts with vendors that supply products made by the brands named above. These brands source from the factories documented here, among others.