



TEXAS EMPLOYMENT LAWYERS ASSOCIATION

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January 29, 2021

To: All Texans and their representatives

Re: A Call to Make Texas Laws Work for Texas Workers

I am President of the Texas Employment Lawyers Association (“TELA”) — a voluntary association of lawyers who regularly represent workers in employment matters in Texas. With the 2021 session of the Texas legislature underway, the Texas Employment Lawyers Association (TELA) calls on all members of the Texas House and Senate to advance and enact legislation that will protect and uplift Texas workers.

TELA also calls on all workers, employers, and voters of good conscience to call on their elected officials, in 2021 and beyond, to support bills that will assure Texas workers dignity, respect, safety, and equality in the workplace.

TELA’s stated mission is “to promote and protect the legal rights of employees in the State of Texas.” The over 180 Texas lawyers who are members of TELA have dedicated their careers to representing Texas workers in Texas and federal courts. We understand all too well how protections for Texas workers fall far short of protections provided to US workers in other states.

We are the lawyers and legal aid attorneys who have to turn away employees who have suffered egregious and unjust treatment because there simply aren’t strong enough laws on the books in Texas to protect workers from all types of mistreatment, retaliation, and discrimination.

We see in the rulings that judges make in our clients’ cases how weak worker protections and gaps in Texas law end up denying Texas workers their day in court and the justice they deserve.

We urge the Texas House and Senate, during the 2021 Legislative Session to:

- **Give LGBTQIA+ workers** the same legal protections under Texas law as they now have under Federal law (SB 223, HB 188);

- **Increase Texas’ \$7.25 per hour minimum wage up to \$15 per hour** (HB 60, HB 615, HB 250, HB 732)

- **Expand whistleblower protections** to include employees who report violations of the law to their supervisors or Human Resources (HB 550)
- **Prohibit discrimination based on hair texture/style** in Texas workplaces, schools, and businesses by passing bills (SB 77, HB 38, HB 392)
- **Guarantee Texas workers sick time and medical leave** so workers don't get fired for doing the right thing and staying home when contagious or sick (HB 87, HB 247, HB 1298)
- **Strengthen sexual harassment protections** to prohibit sexual harassment of ALL interns and employees, and ban agreements that keep sexual harassment a secret from other employees (SB 209, SB 45, and HB 48)
- **Crack down on employers who commit wage theft** and fail to pay workers for the labor they've performed (SB 57, HB 405, HB 190)
- **Enact fair hiring protections** by banning the box and creating an Equal Pay Act for Texas workers (HB 360, HB 419, & HB449)
- **Increase the amount of time for Texas workers to file discrimination charges under state law**, so that they have the same amount of time that is allowed by federal law (HB 21, HB 405, & HB 449)
- **Make limited liability companies responsible for paying fees**, when they refuse to pay for rendered services or performed labor (HB 1358)

The ability of each and every Texas worker to have a fair and equal chance to feed their family should be a concern of all Texas legislators and all Texas voters regardless of political party.

Sincerely,



David L. Wiley
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