



## Taking Care of Caretakers

**O**n January 20, 2011, Stephanie Moulton was working alone at a group home with a client. Hours later, her body was found in her car, hidden in the back of a parking lot. Moulton was one of two human service workers murdered on the job that month in Massachusetts; a third human service worker would be killed later that year.

Determined to make the violence against human service workers a thing of the past, MassCOSH has joined forces with Moulton's mother, SEIU Local 509, and the National Association of Social Workers-Mass. (NASW-MA) to press for legislation and funding that will strengthen protections for our state's caretakers.

At a Workers Memorial Day commemoration last April, Julie Balasalle, a social worker with NASW-MA who was fortunate to survive an assault by a client, described the common circumstances that put human service and social workers at grave and unnecessarily high risk.

"I was working alone, had no real life safety training, did not have back up, was in an unfamiliar place, and my client was in an elevated state when I arrived," said Balasalle. "This is the reason we need to prepare our social workers and human service providers for the risk of the various settings we work in by creating a climate of safety in our agencies."



MassCOSH's Jeff Newton and Moulton family testify at State House

To help address this, NASW-MA, with MassCOSH support, is seeking to pass H592/S2006, which requires behavioral health employers to create safety plans and perform annual risk assessments.

A second bill, spearheaded by Moulton's family, is known as Stephanie's law (SB 2006). The bill is supported by MassCOSH and SEIU 509 and requires

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## Riding the Road to Temp Worker Justice

**J**ust as Freedom Riders challenged Jim Crow fifty years ago, temporary workers and their supporters rode across Boston this September, using the Labor Day holiday to bring visibility to the plight of immigrant temporary workers. Dubbed 'Riding the Road to Temporary Worker Justice,' the event culminated in a call for legislators to pass the Reform Employment Agency Law bill, ensuring that temporary agencies abide by basic labor standards.

"Today – for the first time, temporary workers are uniting to fight against abuses by temporary agencies," said Evelyn Sanchez, a temporary worker. "The time has come for temporary agencies to take

responsibility for their actions and today, workers, community, labor and faith leaders and elected officials are uniting to ensure that they do."

Gathering in East Boston, near a temp worker pick-up site, over 100

temp workers, worker centers like the Latino Immigrant Committee and the Immigrant Worker Center Collaborative, labor and faith groups expressed their solidarity with low-wage temp workers.

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# MassCOSH

Dear Friend in MassCOSH:

As I look through the stories in this issue of Safety Net, it's clear that this summer was no vacation for MassCOSH and our members. From spearheading a Ride for Temp Worker Justice with members of the REAL (Reform Employment Agency Law) Coalition to launching a new effort to engage parents in teen worker safety, MassCOSH continued to break new ground for worker safety and health.

It's also pretty clear that the Fall will be just as action packed. As you'll see from the article on the Brockton healthy schools program, teachers, janitors and their unions as well as parents and administrators are teaming up with MassCOSH to make their schools healthy places to work and learn. Social service workers, unions and family members are also working with MassCOSH put a halt to workplace violence.

As chair, I recognize that none of this can be done without the support of people like you. Thank you for all you have done to make the initiatives described in this newsletter possible by giving generously of your time and your money. If you have not done so already this year, please take a moment to step up in the fight for safe and healthy jobs by becoming a MassCOSH member. The impact your membership makes is substantial and your support is essential.

I hope you'll also allow me to thank you in person by joining me at MassCOSH's 35<sup>th</sup> anniversary event: Celebrating the Movement. Tickets are available now and more details can be found on the back of your newsletter!

Thank you,

Kim Wilson

*MassCOSH board chair*



The 2012 MassCOSH Board (from left to right)

Tonia Greene - Vice Chair, Nhu Pham - Clerk, Ana Montesinos, Philip Katz, Iveth Caceras, Steve Bergel, Israel Guevara, Kim Wilson - Chair, Elissa Cadillic, Melissa King - Treasurer, Susan Shepherd (not pictured: Steve Gauthier, Martin Kantrovitz)

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## Teens Lead @ Work Peer Leaders

Ashlee Morton, Deonna Johnson, Jessica Tavares, Laurie Paris, Lilibeth Pimentel, Nhu Pham, Shacora Kornegay, Maria Gonclaves, Shaquira Coulter, Tonia Greene, Charles Archie, Alana Johnson, Akelia Medford, James Cutts, Aleah Bobb, Aaliyah Narcisse, Jessica Claude, Yen Nguyen

## MassCOSH

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## Teen Safety – Signed, Sealed, and Delivered

**A**dam was just 16 years-old when he died while on the job at a country club on the North Shore. The Beverly high school student had been working for less than a month before the accident occurred that took his life.

“I would give up my home, my job, my everything – if he could come back,” said Margaret Carey, reflecting on her son.

MassCOSH’s Teens Lead at Work (TL@W) has found that all too often, parents are only vaguely aware of the tasks their child completes on the job.

This summer, a record 18 peer leaders took the challenge of educating parents head on in the form of informative, easy-to-read brochures for adults. The 12 unique publications address various topics including workplace safety, sexual harassment, and tools parents can use to keep their child safe.

“We wanted to create a tool that would make it easy for parents to find out more about what their child does on the job and

if some of the tasks are too dangerous or even illegal for their kid to be doing,” said Nhu Pham.

The youth are partnering with unions, including 1199SEIU and AFCME Local 1526 who will disseminate the youth’s work to their members, many of whom are parents. The publications will also provide teen-approved methods on how to talk to their child about safety without coming off as annoying or nosey.

“There is that misconception that teens don’t want any parent involvement in their lives,” said Tonia Greene. “But parents still play a very very important role in their lives. [Parents] still have to keep their kids safe and talking to them is a very important step. We hope that parents take advantage of all our hard work.”

The pamphlets were just one project TL@W’s peer leaders initiated to increase their impact and engage more youth and adults. Thanks to an increased number of peer leaders, as well as a spike in demand for their workplace trainings, TL@W



Peer Leaders show off their parent safety publications

doubled its goal of educating 300 youth – training over 600 youth on such topics as sexual harassment, workplace violence, wage and hour law, and health and safety.

“I am very proud of what TL@W has achieved this year,” said Nancy Luc, who coordinates TL@W. “They displayed real leadership when holding their trainings, and these very informative brochures will be used for years to come. I hope that parents realize that even in their child’s teenage years, they can play a critical role in keeping their child safe on the job.”

*Interested in receiving one, three or all of TL@W’s workplace safety brochures? Please email [nancy.luc@masscosh.org](mailto:nancy.luc@masscosh.org) to arrange for your mailing.*

## A Breath of Fresh Air in Brockton Schools



This Spring, a ten year-old Fitchburg middle school student died after a severe asthma attack that started while at school. The loss of such a young student served as a very sad reminder that school air quality can sometimes be a matter of life and death for students, teachers and other school staff with respiratory issues, especially asthma. Recognizing the right to a healthy work and learning environment for teachers, administrators, and students, the Brockton Education Association (BEA), MassCOSH, the Greater Brockton Asthma Coalition, and the Brockton Public School district joined together to proactively improve the indoor air quality of their buildings.

“For the first few months that I worked here, my students never heard my normal voice because I was so congested all the time,” said one Brockton Public School teacher who wished not to be identified. “My allergies rarely bother me outside of school, but as soon as I walk into the building I begin to feel congested.”

The collaboration formed between the four organizations, and funded last year by the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), aims to greatly expand the role

parents, families and health care providers can play in efforts to improve access to education and resources on asthma management. The group also seeks to educate school staff and families on daily environmental practices that can improve air quality.

“Many of our families live in homes that are old and poorly maintained and then they go to school and spend more time in buildings that need repairs,” said Linda Barros, Healthy Homes Program Manager and the coalition’s coordinator. “By helping families assess asthma triggers in their home and working with staff to do the same in the Brockton schools, we have already created measurable results.”

With help from MassCOSH, the BEA held a training based off the EPA’s Indoor Air Quality Tools for Schools Program during one of its union member meetings. After the training, teams of knowledgeable staff focused their efforts on three buildings in the district and distributed a classroom environmental survey to identify asthma triggers such as pests, leaks and mold.

The teams took it upon themselves to help schools achieve some immediate solutions to their air quality issues. Staff created a newsletter to let people know about asthma triggers and included tips on how to reduce clutter, a major technique to

reduce food and harborage for pests. They met with facility departments to talk about cleaning schedules and what would need to be done to schedule a major cleaning over the past summer.

“Improving our school buildings – whether replacing roofs and windows or switching to green cleaners – is a clear indication of our commitment to wellness district wide,” said Michael P. Thomas, Executive Director of Operations & School Administration. “We will continue to work with our faculty, staff and with MassCOSH to expand our efforts for the benefit of our students and staff.”

“MassCOSH has been very proud of the work done by the newly formed Brockton Healthy Schools Committee to improve the indoor air quality of their buildings,” said Tolle Graham, MassCOSH’s Labor and Environment Coordinator. “They serve as a great example of how anyone can take the initiative and help make dramatic strides in making their workplace and community a healthier place to work and live.”

*For more information on how to improve the environmental conditions in your school, please contact: Tolle Graham, 617-825-7233 x19 or by email: [tolle.graham@masscosh.com](mailto:tolle.graham@masscosh.com)*

## Taking Care of Caretakers continued from page 1

workers employed in residential facilities that receive state funding to be equipped with “panic buttons” to summon immediate emergency assistance.

On September 27, MassCOSH’s Jeff Newton testified at the State House in favor of the bill. Joined by Moulton’s family, Newton spoke of the critical need for safety measures.

“The result of a national study of 1,029 National Association of Social Workers members illustrates the need to pass Stephanie’s law,” testified Newton. “85.5% of the survey participants reported being subjected to psychological aggression while on the job and 30.2% reported experiencing physical assault at the hands of a client at some point in their careers. These findings are unacceptable and should never be considered ‘just part of the job.’”

MassCOSH has also teamed up with SEIU Local 509 to address another critical factor that puts human service workers at risk: unsafe staffing levels and inadequate safety training.

“It has become clear that the human services industry has systemic safety concerns from years of budget cuts and deregulation,” said Toby Fisher, Senior Field Policy Specialist for SEIU. “As a result, MassCOSH has been providing technical support to Local SEIU 509, to improve safety statewide. This includes helping to promote legislation mandating a safer workplace, supporting SEIU staff to effectively work with OSHA to better regulate the industry, and researching the industry to better understand the risks and remedies.”

MassCOSH, SEIU 509, NASW-MA

and the family of Stephanie Moulton have committed to ensuring that no other families experience a preventable loss of a loved while caring for others.

“My daughter Stephanie just got engaged – she was about to get married. The night before she died, she found her wedding dress,” said Stephanie Moulton’s mother, Kimberly Flynn. “What happened to her was horrendous. We’ll never know exactly what happened... but I will tell you this — on my daughter’s soul — this will never ever happen again.”

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*For information on upcoming rallies or breaking news regarding House bill 592 or Senate Bill 2006 email [jeff.newton@masscosh.org](mailto:jeff.newton@masscosh.org)*

## Temp. workers, faith communities on the road to justice continued from page 1



Workers rally in East Boston for temp worker rights

“Temp workers and supporters from New Bedford to Lynn joined together in this ride to halt the egregious employment practices that plague this unregulated industry,” said Marcy Goldstein-Gelb, Executive Director of MassCOSH and co-coordinator of the REAL Coalition. “While too often these abuses take place in the shadows, we will continue to shine a spotlight on agencies that fail to abide by decent labor standards.”

Utilizing street theater in English and Spanish, temp workers and members of the Workman’s Circle told the story of workers who are picked up

at street corners, reenacting how workers are kept in the dark regarding who they are working for and the plight of workers who are hurt on these jobs. Following the performance, supporters demonstrated solidarity with workers by boarding cars, vans and a bus and ride from the East Boston park to a corresponding rally in South Boston, just blocks from a major temp agency with a history of abuses.

Riders rolled into the parking lot of Iron Workers Hall Local 7 to much fanfare, where they joined the Greater Boston Labor Council, Community Labor United, Massachusetts Building Trades and dozens of other union and community members, and temp workers. Local elected officials also threw their weight behind the rally, including state Senator Jack Hart, and Representatives Martin Walsh, Nick Collins, and Linda Dorcea Forry.

“This Labor Day, working women and men are calling on America to recognize the value of work and all who do it,” said Walsh. “Regardless of who

we are, work connects us all...we need justice for temp workers now.”

The rally culminated with a delegation of temporary workers and community leaders marching to nearby Diamond Staffing Incorporated, a business that workers claim is a prime example of a temporary agency with unfair labor practices.

“This legislation is trying to target those that are not paying people for the work that is being done, that are taking people away and putting them in situations that are dangerous,” said Forry, the bill’s lead sponsor. “I want to thank you as advocates and people that are galvanizing and getting the message out there that this is an important piece of legislation.”

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*Find the latest news, happenings, and actions regarding the fight for the REAL Campaign at [www.masscosh.org/node/23](http://www.masscosh.org/node/23)*

## We Are All Angelica Workers



*On August 3, Angelica laundry workers who suffered high rates of injuries from laboring under extreme heat at a dangerous pace were joined by MassCOSH and other supporters to rally just one block from their Somerville employer and denounce the dangerous working conditions they experienced. Below, MassCOSH member Judy Goldberger tells why she needed to be involved.*

**A**ngelica Textile Services in Somerville launders the linens and scrubs for most of the hospitals in the Greater Boston area, including Boston Medical Center, where I work as a nurse. Last month, they held a rally to testify about their working conditions and I felt I needed to be there.

I was horrified to witness through their testimony their daily reality under new production quotas, each person now doing the work of two or three. Imagine you are pushing and pulling old carts with sticky wheels, loaded with 600 to 1,000 pounds of linen through crowded aisles – 400 carts each shift – pulling your muscles and getting hit. Imagine you work hour after hour in 100-plus degree heat without the opportunity to take a break to cool down – the cafeteria is not air conditioned, and outside the summer sun is fierce. That is, if you can get permission to take a break even to use the bathroom. You’ve fainted before. One of your coworkers has even suffered a stroke. Imagine you work with caustic chemicals under these conditions with poor ventilation and inadequate protection. When you are aching or ill, management offers you the choice between taking leave without pay or returning to work under the full production quota. How will you keep your apartment and feed your children if you take unpaid leave? No one has told you that you can see your own

doctor rather than the company’s doctor. Many workers are your parents’ age, and you are anguished to watch them at your side day after day struggling to meet the same production quotas under the same oppressive conditions. What can you do? You can’t afford to quit or risk being fired...

I wear the pain of my sisters and brothers literally on my back every day I am at work. Their pain is in the sheets I so lovingly spread over the women laboring to bring their children to light, in the blankets I wrap with a prayer around their newborns. The name is on my pocket, on the hems of the linens. Remember, it says. I remember two years ago, settling a new mother in her room and preparing a sleeper chair for her mother. I unfold a sheet. “Trabajo para Angelica,” her mother says. “I work for Angelica.” Grandmother. My sister. My mother.

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*Judy Goldberger is a member of 1199SEIU, a MassCOSH member.*

## Oceans Apart, Recyclers Fight For Rights

**T**o pay her rent and put food on the table, Evelyn Zanabria worked at a recycling facility near Boston, sorting blue bins filled with sharp metal objects, chemicals from containers and broken glass. Thousands of miles away, in Bogota, Columbia, Nohra Padilla picked trash from a municipal dump and sold it to factories, as she had done since the age of seven.

On September 21, Zanabria and Nohra joined recycling workers and advocates from India, Columbia, Philippines and Boston at an event called ‘From your bin to their hands: securing justice for recycling workers.’ The event was organized by MassCOSH, Boston Recycling Coalition, Green Justice Coalition, and Global Anti-Incinerator Alliance, which share a mission of expanding recycling to combat climate change and create decent, safe jobs.

“[At the recycling facility,] there was trash everywhere – in the bathroom, in

the eating area, and where we worked,” said Zanabria, a member of MassCOSH’s Worker Center. “I worked with so much dust and dirt that I got sick. I had to go to the hospital – and then went into debt from the bills.”

Meanwhile in Columbia, Padilla united recycling workers and formed cooperatives to fend off multinational corporations which sought to throw people out of the dumps to control the waste, long a source of income for poor residents.

“We are working to ensure that these jobs offer better conditions than those that we experienced,” said Padilla, whose family has recycled trash for a century. The waste workers used their power to get a court to suspend a multinational corporation’s \$1.3 billion contract for failing to involved recyclers in the process.

Similarly speakers from Uruguay and India spoke about the successes of

cooperatives and unions, created to ensure that recycling workers have a voice to protect their livelihood and well-being.

“A lot more can be done here in the Commonwealth,” said Alex Papali of Clean Water Action who emceed the event with Diana Bell of Community Labor United, both members of the Boston Recycling and Green Justice Coalitions. “Boston has an appallingly low recycling rate of 13% and offers poor working conditions.”

“There’s a lot we can learn from other countries,” added Isabel Lopez, MassCOSH’s Worker Center Coordinator, “With the strength of workers, unions, and environmental activists, the Boston Recycling Coalition can take the lessons abroad and within the US, and put Massachusetts on the road to good, green jobs.”

## Courting the Legal Community

**A**na Montesinos, a Cambridge hotel housekeeper, tripped over a sheet, severely injuring her right knee. When her temp agency employer refused to grant her workers' compensation to pay for surgery, Montesinos turned to the MassCOSH Workers' Center. MassCOSH staff helped Montesinos obtain medical documentation and linked her with legal committee member Paul F. Murphy.

"Ana had visited a health center initially and they misclassified the injury," said Murphy. "MassCOSH assistance was instrumental in allowing Ana to find treating physicians who reviewed the facts and classified it as a work injury."

As a result of Montesinos hard-fought efforts and support from Murphy and MassCOSH, the temp agency's insurer agreed to compensate Montesinos.

To help workers like Montesinos obtain critical medical treatment, lost wages or restitution for other labor

abuses, MassCOSH benefits from a network of forty attorneys who provide legal assistance and support policy efforts. In June, MassCOSH launched an effort to expand and increase engagement of its Legal Committee.

At a June kick-off event, Attorney General Martha Coakley told 75 guests how her agency works with MassCOSH to help workers address wage theft and Child Labor violations and collaborates on policy efforts, such as the temp agency reform bill (see page 1).

In early October, MassCOSH co-sponsored a legal event with the Mass. Bar Association to introduce the new Department of Industrial Accidents (DIA) Director Phillip Hillman and discuss the agency's priorities. Director Hillman told the 30 participating attorneys of the agency's efforts to increase accessibility— putting more information on-line and promoting the DIA's safety grants to smaller businesses. MassCOSH Executive Director Marcy Goldstein-Gelb shared some advances the legal committee and community partners have made in working with the



Co-hosted by Douglas Sheff of the Mass. Bar Association and MassCOSH Board Member Steve Bergel, the event raised critical funds and served as an important networking event for MassCOSH workers, attorneys, and other supporters.

DIA to increase access for non-English speaking workers, including the establishment of a language line.

"We hope these events inspire other legal professionals to get involved with our work," says Bergel, who had spearheaded the DIA event.

*For more information on how to become more involved in the MassCOSH Lawyers' Committee or a schedule of upcoming events email [jeff.newton@masscosh.org](mailto:jeff.newton@masscosh.org)*

## Volunteer Spotlight Ani Barsoumian



With the time and effort that teachers devote to young people, one would imagine that they would relish summer as a time to relax. Not Ani Barsoumian. When eighteen peer leaders at Teens Lead @ Work (TL@W) indentified a need for academic assistance with their summer reading assignments, Barsoumian was there to lend an expert hand.

Barsoumian, a social studies teacher at a Dorchester middle school, helped make the teens'

summer reading more meaningful by promoting thoughtful discussion and offering one-on-one assistance. She also helped the incoming seniors write persuasive essays for college applications.

"TL@W does an amazing job of helping students achieve in school," said Barsoumian, who also spent the past four April school vacations preparing meals for 80 hungry participants at TL@W's three day institute. "From having book clubs, to writing college or personal essays, to having adults spend time with teens as they do their homework."

The joy Barsoumian found in working with the youth was hard to miss.

"The best moment was seeing TL@W's four alumni, now college freshman, verbalize how much

TL@W has positively shaped who they have become and helped them realize their goal of attending college," she said. "It was also great seeing the teens want to move up and take on leadership roles within the organization – even coming back from college to intern as Christina and Yen did."

Barsoumian encourages others who want to help Boston youth reach their potential to volunteer with TL@W.

"Come and be a part of a youth program that shows how our area youth can succeed in school, in large public forums, in advocacy and affect change," says Barsoumian.

*For volunteer opportunities, please email Nancy Luc at [nancy.luc@masscosh.org](mailto:nancy.luc@masscosh.org).*

## Get to know a donor: Cynthia Barger

The worker safety roots of one of MassCOSH's generous donors traces back to the origins of MassCOSH itself. In 1972, Cynthia Bargar worked at Urban Planning Aid (UPA), the precursor to MassCOSH. Although her grandfather had lost part of a finger in a workplace accident, before working with UPA, she had never before considered the dangers workers face on the job.

It wasn't until about 30 years later that Bargar had any direct involvement with the official MassCOSH – taking on a job to help with grant writing for new programs like Teens Lead at Work (TL@W) and the Workers Center.

In 2010, Bargar became a sustaining monthly donor – a critical source of funding for the organization that helps save money on printing and mailing costs and allows MassCOSH to better predict its yearly income.

"I would say that TL@W is my favorite program," said Bargar. "Training young people in environmental and worker justice activism is critical to strengthening the movement. So I was delighted when Marcy and Laurie Paris, a teen peer leader, met with me to ask me to become a sustaining donor. As a fundraiser myself, I am very aware of how important it is for progressive organizations like MassCOSH to have regular philanthropic supporters."

Bargar and MassCOSH are teaming up to encourage others to become part of this very special group of supports.

"[Automatic donations] makes it easy for me to help MassCOSH," said Bargar. "I would encourage others to consider this option when making your next gift."



MassCOSH's work is made possible with support from our members and from:

Barr Foundation  
 The Boston Bar Foundation  
 Boston Woman's Fund  
 Clipper Ship Foundation  
 The Clowes Fund  
 Health Resources in Action  
 (through the Mass. Department of Public Health)  
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 US Environmental Protection Agency  
 Massachusetts Environmental Trust (made possible through the purchase of license plates:  
<http://www.mass.gov/rmv/express/whale.htm>)

### Concerned About Worker Safety? Join MassCOSH!

#### Unions

Less than 100 members	\$115
101 – 500 members	\$250
500 – 2000 members	\$520
Over 2000 members	\$785

#### Non-profit Organizations No dues

#### Individuals

Ally	\$ 30
Advocate	\$ 75
Champion	\$150
Movement Builder	\$250
Low income	\$ 10
Extra contributions welcome	\$ _____

**Total Enclosed** \$ \_\_\_\_\_

#### Interested in volunteering?

- I want to join a MassCOSH committee:
  - Legal  Health Tech  Labor
  - Immigrant Safe Work  Teen
  - Research
- I want to get involved in campaigns
- I want to volunteer

### MassCOSH members receive:

- Information and resources • Free training workshops •
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at 1199SEIU at 150 Mt. Vernon St. in  
Dorchester to **celebrate our 35th**

**anniversary** of fighting for the  
health and safety of all workers!

Featuring a silent auction full of  
great bargains, this year's event is  
not to be missed!

*Get your tickets quickly  
and easily online by visiting  
our web site at  
[www.masscosh.org](http://www.masscosh.org)*

## MassCOSH 35th Anniversary Event

*Wednesday, November 16, 2011 6-8:30pm*

*Celebrando El Movimiento*

*Miercoles 16 de Noviembre, 2011 6-8:30pm*

## CELEBRATING THE MOVEMENT

### Celebrate MassCOSH award recipients:

- The King Family • Pollos El Chalan Workers•
- Monica Halas, Greater Boston Legal Services, UAW Local 2320•
- Wilfred "Willie" Desnoyers, President, UAW MA State CAP Council•
- REAL (Reform Employment Agency Law) Coalition:  
temp workers, unions and community members•