



## Workers File Suits Against Tyson and Perdue

Over the last four years, the staff and leaders of the National Interfaith Committee for Worker Justice have met with and talked with hundreds of workers employed by the poultry industry. Most of the workers labor in the processing lines, but some catch chickens and others grow chickens.

We've heard stories of low wages, negligible benefits, harsh working conditions, injuries, abuse, disrespect, and illegal activities. We've heard women tell about urinating on themselves because they weren't allowed to go to the bathroom. We've heard Latino workers say they were not allowed to speak Spanish to one another on the line. We've heard about workers being locked into plants, so they couldn't walk off in protest of conditions. We've heard growers speak in hushed voices about their constant fear of having contracts canceled if they complain about short weighting of birds or poor feed. We've heard about "occurrence" systems that dock workers for family illness. We've heard about safety incentive programs that encourage workers to not report injuries, instead of addressing the causes of injuries.

Recently several groups of workers have filed suits alleging that workers weren't paid for hours worked. Given that the Department of Labor in an investigation of the poultry industry found that more than 60 percent of the plants were violating wage and hour laws, it seems likely that the workers may be owed back wages.

Because of legal peculiarities, the lawsuits are not "collective action" suits, but rather "group" suits, onto which workers must individually sign. This means that workers must be informed about the suits and sign on in order to benefit if the violations are found to be true. Both current and former workers are eligible on the suits.

Because of the potential of these suits, and the National Interfaith Committee's experience with poultry workers, we believe that it is important to help publicize these suits and urge workers to consider joining. The wage concerns being raised against Tyson and Perdue are slightly different, but both suits allege that workers weren't paid for what they worked.

**If your congregation has current or former poultry workers, please consider using the flyer to publicize the suits. If you know of congregations in your faith tradition that are near poultry plants, please send the flyer to them.**



1020 W. Bryn Mawr Ave., 4th fl.  
Chicago, IL 60660  
Phone: (773) 728-8400  
Fax: (773) 728-8409  
E-mail: [info@nicwj.org](mailto:info@nicwj.org)  
Website: [www.nicwj.org](http://www.nicwj.org)

## Justice for Poultry Workers



Are you a worker or a former worker of a Tyson or Perdue poultry processing plant? Do you know other people who are?

A 1998 Department of Labor investigation revealed that 60 percent of poultry plants were violating Wage and Hour Laws. Many poultry workers do not know their rights and may be owed thousands of dollars in back pay.

### Do you get...

- Paid for all the time putting on and taking off your gloves, aprons, hairnets, and other work required gear?
- Paid for all the time you spend on the line?
- Paid your full meal break?

Perdue and Tyson workers have each filed lawsuits seeking back wages allegedly owed them. To get information about joining the lawsuit against Tyson Foods, call the toll-free number (877) FAIR WAGE (324-7924). Perdue workers should call the toll-free number, (877) 868-8660. Both calls are completely confidential.

To get involved in a local poultry justice alliance, contact:

#### In Delaware, Maryland, or Virginia

contact Rev. Jim Lewis, (302) 854-9262

#### In North Carolina

contact Ms. Deb Young, (919) 929-6104

#### In Georgia

contact Msgr. Ron Richardson, (770) 330-8338

#### In Kentucky

contact Mr. Chris Sanders, (502)695-6172

You may be able to join the federal lawsuit that could make Tyson or Perdue pay the money you are owed. Remember, you may be owed thousands of dollars in back pay.

## Justicia por los Trabajadores de Polleras



¿Trabajas o has trabajado en un pollería de Tyson o Perdue? Conoces a otros trabajadores de Tyson o Perdue?

Una investigación del Departamento de Trabajo en 1998 mostró que 60 por ciento de pollerías violaron las leyes sobre los sueldos. Muchos trabajadores no saben sus derechos. Es posible que te deban miles de dolares en sueldos atrasados.

### Recibes:

- ¿Pago por el tiempo en que te pones y te quitas los guantes, los delantales, las redcillas para el cabello, etc?
- ¿Pago por todo el tiempo que está en la línea?
- ¿Tu hora de descanso para comer?

Trabajadores de Tyson y Perdue presentaron una demanda tratando de recibir sueldos atrasados. Para recibir información sobre el juicio contra Tyson, llama al (877) 324-7924. Si trabajas en Perdue, llama al (877)868-8660. Todas las llamadas son totalmente confidencial y gratuita.

Para participar en una alianza para justicia de trabajadores de pollera:

#### En Delaware, Maryland, or Virginia

llama a Rev. Jim Lewis, (302) 854-9262

#### En North Carolina

llama a Sra. Deb Young, (919) 929-6104

#### En Georgia

llama a Padre Ron Richardson\*, (770) 330-8338

#### En Kentucky

llama a Sr. Chris Sanders, (502) 695-6172

Es posible que puedas participar en el juicio federal contra Tyson o Perdue para que te pagan los sueldos que mereces. Acuerdo, es posible que te deban miles de dolares en sueldos atrasados.

*\*Se habla español.*