

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

December 4, 2023

The Honorable Julie Su,
Acting Secretary of Labor
United States Department of Labor
200 Constitution Ave NW
Washington, DC 20210

The Honorable Deanne Criswell,
Administrator
Federal Emergency Management Agency
500 C Street SW
Washington, DC 20024

The Honorable Jessica Looman,
Administrator of the Wage and Hour Division
United States Department of Labor
200 Constitution Ave NW
Washington, DC 20210

Dear Acting Secretary Su, Administrator Looman, and Administrator Criswell,

We write to express concern regarding the alleged exploitation of unhoused refugees—including workers who were bussed to California by Texas Governor Greg Abbott—by hotels and staffing agencies in Los Angeles and to ask that your agency investigate this matter.

On October 23, 2023, the Los Angeles Times published an in-depth article reporting that several prominent hotels, or agencies acting on their behalf, had brought in unhoused refugees from Venezuela and Colombia to replace their own workers during recent strikes. The article reported that the Los Angeles district attorney was concerned about “potential wage theft and violations of child labor law.”

The Los Angeles Times reported that “one migrant worker, a 17-year-old student at Belmont High School who requested anonymity, said he skipped two days of school to clean rooms at the Holiday Inn LAX.” The article stated: “He and his mother, who secured work as a housekeeper at the Holiday Inn, received payment via banking app Zelle from an agency called Arya Staffing Services Inc. Aimbridge Hospitality did not respond to questions about whether staffing agencies it used had secured appropriate permits to employ minors.”

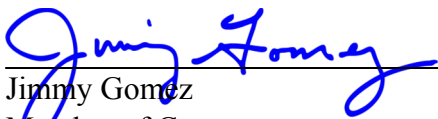
Additionally, it is our understanding that a number of major hotels—including at least the Le Meridien Delfina Santa Monica, the Four Points by Sheraton, Holiday Inn LAX, and Pasadena Hilton—may have employed the unhoused refugees during the recent hotel worker strikes.

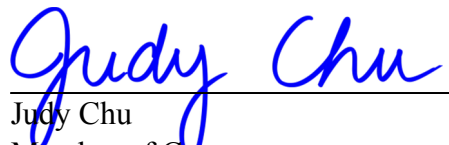
The reported exploitation of vulnerable migrant workers to undermine hotel workers’ efforts to win livable wages and other improvements in labor standards is deeply troubling. We ask that your agencies investigate this situation. In particular, we ask that the DOL and FEMA investigate for potential violations by Los Angeles hotels and their contracted staffing agencies of the Fair Labor Standards Act and any other applicable federal statutes protecting against potentially predatory behavior towards recent migrants and/or refugees.

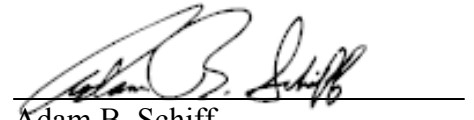
We would also welcome any other support that the DOL and FEMA can provide for the vulnerable newcomers who may have been exploited during the ongoing labor dispute, including assistance in securing dignified housing and employment.

We appreciate your attention to these matters and your broader efforts to secure respect for worker rights and the humane treatment of migrants and refugees.


Sincerely,


Jimmy Gomez
Member of Congress

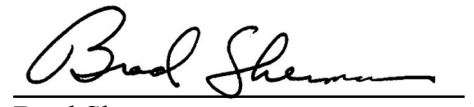

Judy Chu
Member of Congress


Adam B. Schiff
Member of Congress



Katie Porter
Member of Congress

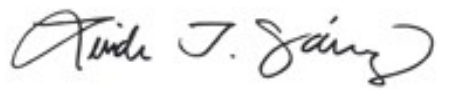

Barbara Lee
Member of Congress

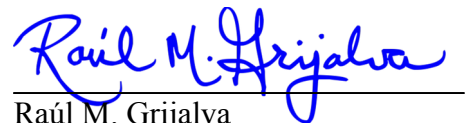

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MARK TAKANO
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Sydney Kamlager-Dove
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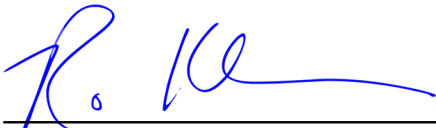

Raúl M. Grijalva
Member of Congress



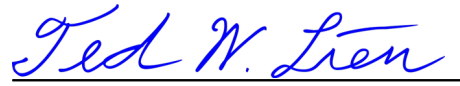
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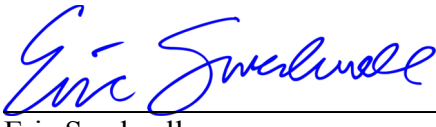
Tony Cardenas
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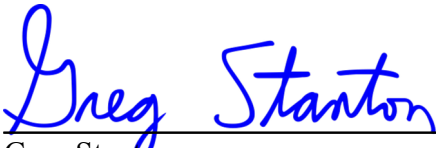
Mark DeSaulnier
Member of Congress



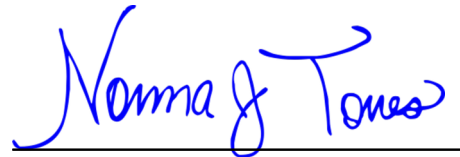
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