Resolution

A Resolution Pertaining to Sweatshop Free Procurement

WHEREAS, there is ample documentation that abusive sweatshop conditions and practices are widespread in the global garment industry, including serious violations of the wage, health and safety laws of relevant jurisdictions, repeated violations of the core labor rights as defined by the International Labor Organization, as well as universally condemned practices of forced labor and indentured child labor; and

WHEREAS, indiscriminate buying of uniforms by public agencies from vendors at the very end of the garment supply chain easily can and frequently does result in the purchase of uniforms produced in sweatshops, with the unintended consequences that public money is (1) indirectly supporting the infamous and illegal activity of sweatshops, (2) giving unfair advantage to sweatshop users who can offer products at lower costs than operators who comply with the law and rights of workers and, further, (3) helping to perpetuate the cycles of poverty, deprivation and poor health where sweatshops dominate local economies, thus promoting further social instability; and

WHEREAS, the City of St. Louis Supplies Division and Board of Standardization currently uses standards set forth in Ordinance 62017 for purchasing goods and commodities for the City; and

WHEREAS, Ordinance 62017 also provides that the Supply Division of the City of St. Louis shall purchase supplies for all departments, boards, or offices, exclusive of material for public works or improvement, according to standards and specifications, if any, adopted or prepared by the Board of Standardization and by advertising for proposals thereof; and

WHEREAS, the Board of Aldermen is recommending by and through this Resolution that the Board of Standardization require, pursuant to their power to set standards and specifications, that a detailed disclosure form be completed by vendors who are awarded the annual contract for the City of St. Louis' uniforms so that the City may document where and under what workplace conditions and labor practices the uniforms are being produced; and

WHEREAS, the average annual expenditure in the City for the last three years for uniforms and other similar items (including bedding and sheets) was approximately $530,000 and, thus about $530,000 of annual spending for the City of St. Louis is potentially at risk of supporting a sweatshop operation somewhere in the world—a situation in which the Board of Aldermen find unacceptable and in need of remedy; and

WHEREAS, approximately 14 states, counties, cities and other public entities in the United States have taken steps to begin sweatshop free buying, the Sweatshop-Free initiative stands in need of highly visible and credible leadership among public entities in Missouri and Illinois, as well as nationally, which leadership this City desires to provide and is capable of providing; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of Aldermen requests that the Board of Standardization prepare standards and specifications for a Comprehensive Sweatshop Free Program and that such standards include the requirement for the vendor to complete a procurement disclosure form; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the City of St. Louis may join in the future the national Sweatshop Free Procurement Consortium whose membership is comprised of three states and 12 municipalities seeking the most effective ways for governmental bodies to share information and resources to become a single entity powerful enough to positively influence the global garment industry on sweatshop-free issues, including monitoring and certification of manufacturers, and joint purchasing contracts to gain bulk discounts; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED that the City conduct the necessary educational, promotional and public relations efforts to assure that the municipal staff, the community and public at large are given ample opportunities to understand and appreciate the rationale for the City of St. Louis' sweatshop free buying policies.

Introduced on the 26th day of June, 2012 by:

Honorable Craig Schmitt, Alderman 20th Ward
Honorable Louis E. Reed, President of the Board of Aldermen
Honorable Charles Quincy Troop, Alderman 1st Ward
Honorable Diocese Flowers, Alderman 2nd Ward
Honorable Freeman Rodley Sr., Alderman 3rd Ward
Honorable Samuel L. Moore, Alderman 4th Ward
Honorable Tamara Hubbard, Alderman 5th Ward
Honorable Kacie Sturr Triplett, Alderman 6th Ward
Honorable Myllis Young, Alderman 7th Ward
Honorable Stephen Conway, Alderman 8th Ward
Honorable Kenneth Ottoson, Alderman 9th Ward
Honorable Joseph Vellain, Alderman 10th Ward
Honorable Thomas Albert Villa, Alderman 11th Ward

Adopted this the 26th day of June, 2012 as amended by:

[Signatures]

President, Board of Aldermen

[Signature]

Clerk, Board of Aldermen