

JOINT RESOLUTION MEMORIALIZING THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES AND THE UNITED STATES CONGRESS TO ADOPT LEGISLATION THAT STRENGTHENS ENFORCEMENT OF DOMESTIC SOURCING LAWS AND PROHIBITS PURCHASING FROM NONDOMESTIC SWEATSHOPS

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WE, your Memorialists, the Members of the One Hundred and Twenty-fourth Legislature of the State of Maine now assembled in the Second Regular Session, most respectfully present and petition the United States Congress as follows:

WHEREAS, small businesses in the State face unfair competition from nondomestic businesses commonly known as "sweatshops" that cut costs by unlawfully sacrificing humane working conditions and disregarding workers' human and labor rights; and

WHEREAS, more than 20,000 manufacturing workers in the State have lost their jobs since 2000 because of the uneven field of competition in the global economy; and

WHEREAS, Mainers believe that jobs should fairly compensate hard work with a livable wage, that the health and safety of working people should be protected and that all forms of unlawful workplace discrimination and abuse should not be tolerated; and

WHEREAS, local and national governments have a moral obligation to ensure that sweatshop contractors cannot underbid responsible businesses and that the sweatshop practice is not rewarded through public contracts and taxpayer dollars; and

WHEREAS, Maine is a leader in sweatshop-free government purchasing, enacting with a broad bipartisan majority and strong support from diverse constituencies in the State the first sweatshop-free purchasing law in the nation, and, in all, 9 states, 40 cities and 15 counties have committed to buying only sweatshop-free products; and

WHEREAS, the Federal Government buys more than \$4,000,000,000 of apparel every year, most of which should by law be bought from domestic manufacturers; and

WHEREAS, domestic sourcing requirements are not being implemented as intended by the United States Congress when government subcontractors obtain goods from nondomestic sources, such as when clothing purchased by advertising agencies and given away by military recruiters, when uniforms worn by private military contractors and when safety gear used in reconstruction or American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 projects are all made overseas; and

WHEREAS, federal government procurement from domestic manufacturers is vital to economic recovery, is good for businesses in the State and also strengthens national security because dependency on foreign sources for military items could lead to supply problems during wartime; and

WHEREAS, there are no procurement laws prohibiting the Federal Government from purchasing products made in nondomestic sweatshops; and

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WHEREAS, requiring nondomestic suppliers to the Federal Government to maintain humane working conditions and respect workers' human and labor rights can help improve global manufacturing and reverse the course that is costing workers in the State their jobs; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED: That We, your Memorialists, respectfully urge and request that the United States Congress enact and the President of the United States sign legislation to strengthen enforcement of domestic sourcing laws, such as the federal Berry Amendment and Buy American Act, to require the Federal Government to give preference in procurement to domestically produced, manufactured or domestically grown products and to prohibit procurement of manufactured goods from nondomestic suppliers unless the suppliers comply with internationally recognized core labor standards; and be it further

RESOLVED: That suitable copies of this resolution, duly authenticated by the Secretary of State, be transmitted to the Honorable Barack H. Obama, President of the United States and to the United States Congress and to each Member of the Maine Congressional Delegation.