



## PROTECTING AND UPLIFTING CALIFORNIA'S WORKERS

California is home to the largest and most diverse economy of any state in the country — a testament to the resilience and skills of its workforce. The California Department of Justice (DOJ)'s Worker Rights and Fair Labor Section (WRFLS) works in partnership with DOJ's Civil Rights Enforcement Section and Antitrust Law Section to defend and advance the rights of California's workforce. The Worker Rights and Fair Labor Section's mission is to:

- Combat systemic business practices that undermine the economic security, health and safety, and dignity of California's workers.
- Maintain a level playing field for legitimate businesses operating in the state.

## AREAS OF WORK

DOJ uses both litigation and advocacy to fight for justice in the workplace, and protect and uplift all of California's workers by:

### BATTLING WAGE THEFT AND EXPLOITATION

Wage theft deprives workers of their hard-earned income, forcing them into financial hardship and often trapping them and their families in cycles of intergenerational poverty. Often, the targets of wage theft are vulnerable workers, such as low-wage workers, immigrants, and undocumented workers, who may be less likely to assert their rights due to fear or a lack of resources.

### FIGHTING WORKER MISCLASSIFICATION

Misclassification of employees as independent contractors deprives workers of the legal protections they are entitled to, including the right to a minimum wage, overtime, and workers' compensation. Rampant misclassification distorts competition across entire industries, threatening job stability, exacerbating income inequality, and undermining fair competition.

### DEFENDING AND EXPANDING MINIMUM WAGE PROTECTIONS

Ensuring that workers receive fair and sufficient compensation for their time helps lift workers out of poverty, narrows income inequality, puts food on the table for millions, and opens the door to a better life for future generations.

### PROTECTING THE HEALTH AND SAFETY OF WORKERS

As climate change continues to rapidly advance, and as employers increasingly seek to invasively monitor and police workplace production, threats to the health and safety of workers in a variety of industries has increased. DOJ will continue to advocate for stronger health protections for workers across the U.S.

### COMBATING ANTI-COMPETITIVE PRACTICES THAT HARM WORKERS

Illegal no-poach, non-compete, and training repayment contracts prevent or discourage workers from seeking new and better opportunities, and can prevent employers from hiring qualified workers. Impeding worker mobility means not only that individual workers are not able to improve their economic circumstances, but also limits competition in labor markets, potentially resulting in the suppression of wages for all workers.



## **WORKERS' RIGHTS AND RESOURCES**

As a worker in California, you should know about your workplace rights, including that:

- You may be an employee even if you are called a contractor.
- You have important wage-and-hour-rights, including the right to a minimum wage.
- Your wages, tips, and accrued vacation are yours.
- You may be entitled to time off — both paid and unpaid.
- Most contracts restricting your ability to compete with your former employer are invalid.
- You are entitled to safe working conditions.
- You can reasonably refuse to do unsafe work.
- Your employer cannot retaliate against you for exercising your rights.

If you are aware of an employer that you believe is violating workplace laws, and you wish to make a complaint, you can contact the Attorney General's office at [oag.ca.gov/report](https://oag.ca.gov/report).

