

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: On opening Day of Democratic National Convention the Southern Workers Assembly will be a Convergence to Organize Labor in the South

WHAT: Southern Workers Assembly

WHEN: September 3, 2012 (Labor Day) 1:00pm-5:00pm

WHERE: Wedgewood Baptist Church, 4800 Wedgewood Drive, Charlotte NC 28210

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On September 3rd, the opening day of the Democratic National Convention, Southern workers will hold a Southern Workers Assembly (SWA), where workers from throughout the South will gather to speak out about our vision for worker rights as human rights; and begin initial planning toward organizing a rank-and-file led workers movement in the South to build power to realize these human rights.

The mainstream U.S. and international media will flood the City of Charlotte to cover the DNC. They will hear politicians hovered over by highly paid lobbyists who will talk about their visions for the American economy and a democratic society, but none will speak about the issues and denial of rights for workers throughout the South.

"In an economy that demands that the majority of the people work in order to provide the basic necessities for themselves and families, worker rights are human rights. Yet, despite a ruling by the International Labor Organization, an agency of the United Nations, that the U.S. and North Carolina are out of compliance with international laws and conventions, neither the Bush nor Obama administrations have taken action to bring the U.S. and North Carolina into compliance. The U.S. is obligated, by treaty, to enforce this international law," said Angaza Laughinghouse, President of statewide UE local 150, North Carolina Public Service Workers Union, a Southern Workers Assembly endorser.

The SWA will be held on September 3rd at Wedgewood Baptist Church in Charlotte starting at 1pm. It will include workers speaking from the public and private sectors and sectors excluded from protections under the National Labor Relations Act or state laws. There also will be some initial planning for a South wide meeting to form a Southern Labor Alliance to unite local unions, worker organizations, worker centers and supporters, in launching a South wide campaign to organize a labor movement.

"Since farmworkers are excluded from US labor laws, we will be present at the SWA to build relationships and raise awareness about the abhorrent conditions in which most tobacco farmworkers live and work, as we continue to pressure Reynolds American and other tobacco giants to guarantee labor rights for the Southern workers in their supply chain," stated Justin Flores, organizer with the Farm Labor Organizing Committee, AFL-CIO.

Labor in the South beginning with African enslavement, set the basic philosophy and standard for the relationship between employer and workers. In a nutshell, this meant that Southern workers had no rights that the employer was bound to respect.

From the brutal corporate anti-union campaigns like J.P. Stevens, in NC, the Charleston ILA in SC, and Smithfield foods in NC, that saw the beating and

jailing of pro-union workers, and the industrial murder of 25 workers by the Imperial Foods Company in Hamlet, NC who had no union. These attacks on workers occurred during the 1970's through the 2000s, making clear that the legacy of denying worker rights throughout the South continues. The SWA is the start of a movement to challenge and end this legacy.

To learn more, including seeing a list of endorsers, visit <http://southernworker.org> . Or contact Saladin Muhammad at 252-314-2363 or [Saladin62@aol.com](mailto:Saladin62@aol.com)

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