Temp Abuse, Corporate Gains, State Losses

“[We are] working in the factory so that the factory earns and the [temp] agency earns and every day they treat us badly and we have less quality of life. And for them, more profit.”*

Big companies are replacing good, permanent jobs with permanently temporary jobs

• 80% of Fortune 500 companies, including Walmart and Amazon, outsource parts of their business to companies, which often contract with temp agencies - up from 65% in 2008.¹

• 800,000 workers worked through temp agencies in Illinois last year.²

• 8 is the average number of years surveyed workers had worked as temps.

• 80% of surveyed workers had never had a temp job lead to being hired directly. Temp jobs likely diminish workers’ future earnings.³

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They are increasing profits by turning Illinois workplaces into sweatshops

• 22% is how much temps earn less than direct hires that do the same work.⁴ The average annual income of surveyed temps is below $12,000.

• 75% of surveyed temps experienced wage theft. Too often temp agencies win low-bid contracts and make up profit margins stealing workers’ wages.⁵

• 92% of surveyed temps were denied basic health and safety rights on the job.⁶

• 54% of surveyed temps were retaliated against for claiming their rights at work.

“If I went to get a job, everyone directed me to temp work. No one would directly give me an application.”

And they are shifting the costs of doing business onto the State of Illinois

Illinois pays for abusive jobs

• Subsidizing poverty wages for working families costs the state $2.2 billion in public assistance.⁷

• Temp hiring excludes Black workers, fueling Black joblessness & incarceration. Each inmate costs Illinois $38,000 per year.⁸

• States also pick up the tab on 5% of job injuries, involving a disproportionate share of temps.⁶

And loses on lower wages

• Each surveyed temp contributes an average of $603 less in income tax than the average Illinois worker with a high school diploma.⁹

• Temped out jobs mean workers have less money to spend, creating ripple effects in local economies.
Supporting Organizations

Chicago Workers’ Collaborative
Coalition of Labor Union Women
Illinois AFL-CIO
Illinois Jobs with Justice
Illinois-National Organization for Women
Kenwood Oakland Community Organization
Latino Policy Forum
Local 881 UFCW
National Economic & Social Rights Initiative
National Employment Law Project
Progress Center for Independent Living
Rainbow Push Coalition
Raise the Floor Alliance
Warehouse Workers for Justice
Women Employed

End Notes

*Worker survey data and quotes based on 2016 study with two dozen Illinois temp workers employed in Illinois factories and warehouses. This data provides an in-depth account of their frontline experiences.

5 A large 2008 study found wage theft affected 47% of a sample population involving more than 300,000 low-wage workers in Illinois. Nik Theodore, Unregulated Work in Chicago (2010).
8 Vera Institute, The Price of Prisons (2012). Black temps surveyed were assigned significantly fewer hours per week than Latino temps. Companies target workers they believe are undocumented and less likely to claim their rights, which benefits no workers.
9 Based on average annual income of surveyed temp workers. Average annual income of Illinois workers with only a diploma is based on U.S. BLS data on weekly earnings by educational attainment, 2015.