

118TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. RES. 710

Honoring the Thai-American garment workers who opened the country's eyes to sweatshop conditions in the United States and, against all odds, expanded rights for immigrant workers and survivors of human trafficking while holding corporations responsible for the conditions in which their clothes are made.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

SEPTEMBER 20, 2023

Ms. CHU (for herself, Ms. JACOBS, Ms. SÁNCHEZ, Ms. MENG, Ms. SCHAKOWSKY, Mrs. NAPOLITANO, and Ms. BARRAGÁN) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Education and the Workforce

RESOLUTION

Honoring the Thai-American garment workers who opened the country's eyes to sweatshop conditions in the United States and, against all odds, expanded rights for immigrant workers and survivors of human trafficking while holding corporations responsible for the conditions in which their clothes are made.

Whereas Thai garment workers were forced to work behind barbed wire and under armed guard in an apartment complex in El Monte, California, sewing garments for 16 to 18 hours a day, 7 days a week under the threat of harm to themselves and their families in Thailand;

Whereas the workers were trafficked into the United States, held against their will, had their passports taken from them, and were denied contact with the outside world until August 2, 1995, when a multiagency law enforcement raid exposed their conditions of involuntary servitude;

Whereas the workers were threatened with deportation until community advocates intervened and helped the workers find freedom, shelter, new jobs, and the chance to rebuild their lives in the United States;

Whereas the workers filed a landmark lawsuit against their captors and against the companies they were sewing for, which was the first Federal lawsuit of its kind, transformed the garment industry, and launched anti-sweatshop legislation and campaigns across the country and around the world that reverberate to this day;

Whereas advocates fought for the workers to stay in the United States and pioneered the use of S visas, in partnership with Federal prosecutors, which led to the creation of T and U visas to protect workers who serve as material witnesses to come forward and report abuse and exploitation without fear of immigration-based retaliation;

Whereas the workers have inspired countless individuals, and their story has been documented in books, an animated short, museums, including the National Museum of American History, and is taught in high school, college, and law school curricula;

Whereas the workers freed from the El Monte sweatshop went on to contribute in invaluable ways to the United States as activists, spokespersons, small business owners,

health care professionals, service providers, and more;
and

Whereas the workers are now inducted into the United States
Department of Labor's Hall of Honor, taking their right-
ful place in the labor history of the United States for
their courage, resilience, and groundbreaking efforts:
Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved*, That the House of Representatives—

2 (1) honors the Thai garment workers freed
3 from the El Monte sweatshop for their courage, per-
4 sistence, and resilience;

5 (2) recognizes the many legal, cultural, and pol-
6 icy changes that have resulted from the El Monte
7 sweatshop case;

8 (3) recognizes the individuals that continue to
9 fight against forced labor and human trafficking, for
10 corporate accountability, and for an end to exploita-
11 tive working conditions; and

12 (4) respectfully requests that the Clerk of the
13 House of Representatives transmit—

14 (A) an enrolled copy of this resolution to
15 the Director of the National Museum of Amer-
16 ican History; and

17 (B) 5 copies of this resolution to the Sec-
18 retary of Labor.

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