Ensuring Sweat-Free Labor in Factories that Produce Stanford Collegiate Apparel

Undergraduate Senate Resolution

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Action Requested: Approval; Requires 2/3 of Undergraduate Senate

WHEREAS Article I, Section 5 of the ASSU Constitution renders the Association to be “the sole representative of the entire Stanford student body”, and

WHEREAS students at Stanford have a moral interest in ensuring that the operations of their University, or the operations with which it is closely affiliated, pass basic standards of human decency, and

WHEREAS sweatshop labor in the twenty-first century is widely recognized in America and in many areas abroad as an affront to said humanity, and

WHEREAS the University has already expressed a commitment to ensuring sweat-free labor in factories where Stanford collegiate apparel is produced through its membership in the Fair Labor Association (FLA), an organization whose primary purpose is to monitor working conditions in such factories so as to prevent labor rights violations, and

WHEREAS the Fair Labor Association has a substantial, documented history of failing to properly control against said violations, and

WHEREAS the Fair Labor Association has a number of policy and institutional flaws that are conducive to its failure to ensure or to minimize labor rights violations, and

WHEREAS one such flaw is the absence of a living wage criterion for factory workers, which allows for workers to meet basic human needs, such as housing, food, education, and healthcare, and

WHEREAS another flaw is the absence of a criterion whereby workers must be allowed the right to organize without being threatened, harassed, or discriminated against, and

WHEREAS, participating companies presently occupy six seats on the Executive Board of the FLA, which constitutes a collective veto power of any decisions made by participating non-governmental organizations (NGOs) or universities, and

WHEREAS the effectiveness of the Worker Rights Consortium, another monitoring group, remains uncompromised by the aforementioned inadequacies, and

WHEREAS peer universities such as Harvard, Columbia, Duke, Brown, as well as schools within the University of California system, are members of the Worker Rights Consortium, and
WHEREAS membership in the Worker Rights Consortium, as compared to membership fees
levied by the Fair Labor Association, poses no additional cost to the University, and

WHEREAS the University can also stand to benefit from membership in the Designated
Suppliers Program, which concentrates apparel manufacture within specific factories in order to
make it easier for independent organizations to monitor working conditions, and

WHEREAS Stanford University, as of now, does not have an adequate means of monitoring
working conditions in factories that produce licensed collegiate apparel, and

WHEREAS the Associated Students of Stanford University commends the University on the
efforts it has taken thus far to control for sweat-free labor, but feels that Stanford can do more,
and

WHEREAS the ASSU believes that the University can feasibly address these current problems
and take greater measures to uphold humane working conditions through existing mechanisms,
without incurring any detrimental consequences,

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Associated Students of Stanford University strongly
urges:

THAT Stanford University join the Worker Rights Consortium (WRC)¹,

THAT Stanford enroll in the Designated Suppliers Program (DSP)²,

THAT Stanford University generally do everything in its power to prevent arbitrary dismissals,
forced overtimes, verbal and physical harassments, and occupational hazards in factories that
produce licensed apparel bearing Stanford University trademarks, and

THAT Stanford University do everything in its power to safeguard women’s rights and decent
working conditions for all in said factories,

THAT Stanford University support a living wage for these laborers that will allow them to meet
their basic human needs,

THAT Stanford University aim to ensure independent monitoring of working conditions within
said factories, and

THAT the University seek to truly fulfill the commitment made by Jane and Leland Stanford “to
promote the public welfare by exercising an influence on behalf of humanity and civilization”.

¹ The WRC works with labor rights experts in the U.S. and around the world to investigate factory conditions. If violations
are uncovered, the WRC works with colleges and universities, U.S.-based retail corporations and local workers and
organizations to correct the problem and improve conditions.

² Under the DSP, university licensees are required to source most university logo apparel from supplier factories that
have been determined by universities, through independent verification, to be in compliance with their obligation to
respect the rights of their employees.