

Highlights from the 2009 National Student Labor Week of Action

During the National Student Labor Week of Action, students and workers joined together to demand justice in communities and campuses across the country. The National Student Labor Week of Action has become an important time for student organizing, with hundreds of actions each year.



SLAP students at Temple University had a rally "stampede" in support of campus workers getting better contracts at their university.

The National Student Labor Week of Action offers students an opportunity to:

- Start building relationships with workers in order to understand the issues in that particular community or campus.
- Educate fellow students and community members on the plight of workers and injustices occurring in our daily lives.
- Show solidarity with friends, allies, or other champions of justice.
- Reach across campuses and communities in order to get to know other activists and organizers who are fighting for social change on a wide range of issues such as environmental justice, human rights, and racial justice to name a few.
- Escalate and win campaigns they have been working on for a long time.

Organized by

- Student Labor Action Project
- U.S. Student Association
- United Students Against Sweatshops
- Student Farmworker Alliance
- Movimiento Estudiantil Chicano de Aztlán
- Young Communist League
- Young Democratic Socialists
- National Farmworker Awareness Week

History

On April 4th, 2000, SLAP took the lead in coordinating the first National Student Labor Day of Action to commemorate the life of civil rights leader Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Since then, the day of action has expanded to a full week that also celebrates labor leader Cesar Chavez.

On March 31st we celebrate Cesar Chavez' birthday. Civil rights activist, labor leader and Chicano hero, Chavez co-founded the United Farm Workers (UFW) with Dolores Huerta and changed organizing forever. With their innovative and powerful tactics, Cesar Chavez and the brothers and sisters from the UFW struggled for better wages and working conditions in the field of the California, winning landmark legislation including the California Agricultural Labor Relation Act.

On April 4th, we commemorate the life of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Dr. King, who was in Memphis, TN supporting the sanitation workers' strike at the time of his assassination, understood the importance of alliance building between labor, students and civil rights activists. His legacy is one of solidarity, understanding, non-violence and justice for all.

Education is a Right

Across the country, students took action to take down the barriers to accessing higher education and fight to make education a right for all by having informational events about student debt and budget cuts.



Students at Wichita State University set up a “student debt money machine” and collected signatures in support of the DREAM Act.



The United States Student Association opened the week of action with a rally at the U.S. Capitol followed by a lobby day in Washington, DC. Students lobbied their Representatives for passage of the DREAM Act and for a budget that benefits students.

Workers’ Rights and the Employee Free Choice Act

Students and workers came together during the National Student Labor Week of Action to demand the passage of the Employee Free Choice Act. This important legislation would give workers a fair and direct path to form unions through majority sign-up, help employees secure a contract with their employer in a reasonable period of time, and toughen penalties against employers who violate their workers’ rights.



Students at the University of Illinois-Champaign Urbana rallied for passage of the Employee Free Choice Act, a Vendor Code of Conduct, and living wages for teaching assistants at the school.



Students from the University of Maine-Orono and a number of schools in NYC rallied in support of Rite Aid workers & the Employee Free Choice Act.

Students held rallies, called their Senators, and stood in solidarity with workers to demand fair wages and a democratic process to form a union and bargain collectively.

U.S. Students Stand in Solidarity with Workers Abroad

On April 1st, United Students Against Sweatshops called for a day of action against **Russell Athletics**. Russell closed a factory in Honduras after workers tried to exercise their human rights and organize a union. To date, more than 80 schools have cut contracts with this company in solidarity with workers abroad.



Other schools used the National Week of Action to promote their campaigns to demand that their schools sign up for the **Designated Suppliers Program**. The Designated Suppliers Program (DSP) is a comprehensive program for enhancing the enforcement of university codes of conduct. The DSP has been endorsed in principle by a substantial and growing number of universities, and is under active consideration by many others.



As a result of student actions, Purdue University has dropped Russell Athletic as a Supplier.



After a multi-year campaign, the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee signed on to use the DSP during the NSLWoA.

Farmworker Justice Now



Students at University of Central Florida gleaned leftover cabbage from the fields to donate to the Farmworker Association of Florida. They learned about the nature of farmwork, the dangers of pesticides, and gathered food that otherwise would have gone to waste.

Did you know that farmworkers are not recognized under the National Labor Relations Act? Farmworkers, domestic workers, and others not covered under the law are the most vulnerable to abuses and low paid work.

During the National Student Labor Week of Action and Farmworker Awareness Week, students educated the community about the plight of farmworkers.

Many student groups also joined the "Dine with Dignity" campaign led by the Student Farmworker Alliance. The campaign seeks to secure agreements from campus food service providers Aramark, Compass and Sodexo to enter into meaningful agreements with the Coalition of Immokalee Workers to guarantee more dignified wages and working conditions for farmworkers in their tomato supply chains.

Supporting Workers on Campus and in Our Communities

The importance of student solidarity with workers lies in understanding the power students have in their universities to change the condition working condition of workers. Students during the week of action took a stand in their universities and communities against injustices in their universities and stood in solidarity with workers demanding justice in the forms of fair contracts, right to organize and livable wages.



Students from schools in New York City including Hunter College and the City University of New York rallied in support of Stella D'oro bakery workers on strike.



Students at Vanderbilt University held an Ice Cream social for workers and students in support of their living wage and no budget cuts campaign.

SLAP would like to thank activists from the following schools for making the Student Labor Week of Action a success:

Pima Community College Desert Vista, Cal Poly Pomona, California State University- East Bay, California State University- Sacramento, Palomar College, San Jose City College, University of California- Los Angeles, University of California- Irvine, Auraria, Colorado University- Boulder, Connecticut College, Wesleyan University, Yale University, American University, George Washington University, Georgetown University, Eckerd College, Florida State University, Rollins College, St. Petersburg College, University of Central Florida, University of Florida, University of South Florida, University of West Florida, Agnes Scott College, Emory University, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, DePauw University, Indiana University- Purdue University Indianapolis, Notre Dame, Purdue University, University of Kansas, Wichita State University, Boston University, Harvard University, Northeastern University, Tufts University, Wellesley, Thomas S. Wootton High School, University of Maryland, University of Maine, University of Southern Maine, Southgate Anderson High School, Wayne County Community College, University of Minnesota- Twin Cities, Saint Paul School Of Theology, Washington University of St. Louis, University of North Carolina- Chapel Hill, Princeton University, Rutgers University, William Paterson University, Adirondack Community College, Bard College, City University of New York, Cornell University, Fordham Law School, Hofstra University, Ithaca College, New York University, Northwest State Community College, Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, Rochester Institute of Technology, Siena College, Skidmore College, State University of New York- Albany, State University of New York- Stony Brook, University of Buffalo, Miami University, Ohio State University- Columbus, Ohio State University- Mansfield, University of Oregon, Wooster College, Clackamas Community College, St. Joseph's University, Western Oregon University, Penn State University, Temple University, East Tennessee State University, Vanderbilt University, Northeast State Technical Community College, University of Houston, University of North Texas, University of Texas- Pan American, University of Virginia, Saint Michael's College, Evergreen State College, University of Washington, Riverside High, University of Wisconsin- Milwaukee

