



**For Immediate Release**  
**May 28, 2010**

Contact:

Jill Shenker, National Domestic Workers Alliance, (510) 761-NDWA (Spanish/English)

Juana Flores, Mujeres Unidas y Activas (415) 823-6047 (Spanish)

Supervisor David Campos (Legislative Aide, Hillary Ronen), 415-554-7729 (Spanish/English)

**Police Remove Domestic Workers and Elected Officials from San Francisco Law Firm**  
*Employer Representative Refuses to meet with Supervisors and Workers*

On Thursday, over 35 housekeepers, nannies, caregivers and their allies, including San Francisco Supervisor Eric Mar, and representatives from the offices of Supervisor David Campos and Assemblymember Tom Ammiano, were threatened with arrest if they did not leave the offices of Littler Mendelson, a notoriously anti-union law firm, in downtown San Francisco. Domestic workers sought to bring attention to their plight in the run up to the International Labour Organization's (ILO) annual conference, which will be held in Geneva from June 2 – 18. The Supervisors sought to deliver a copy of a resolution that the San Francisco Board of Supervisors unanimously passed on Tuesday, calling for an end to domestic worker exploitation and urging John Kloosterman, an attorney at the firm who will represent U.S. employers of domestic workers at the International Labour Conference, to support a strong ILO Convention on domestic work. Mr. Kloosterman refused to appear, and instead the law firm called the police.

Hillary Ronen, aide to Supervisor David Campos, said "This is a disgrace. Kloosterman is calling the police on elected city officials when all we are asking is for 5 minutes of his time. This man is supposedly representing US employers of domestic workers at the ILO, and yet he is refusing to even face a room full of domestic workers who have come to his office."

Domestic workers called on Kloosterman to work with workers to pass a strong convention to end the abuse in their industry. For the first time ever the ILO will discuss decent work for domestic workers as part of the conference. Juana Flores, a former domestic worker who is now Director of a Bay Area immigrant women's center Mujeres Unidas y Activas and the Caring Hands Worker Association, will represent U.S. based workers in Geneva. "We have been working tirelessly with sister organizations from around the world, the AFL-CIO, and the U.S. Department of Labor to pass a strong convention which will help end the abuses these workers face, and I'm saddened that Mr. Kloosterman seems uninterested in discussing these issues with us" she said.

The San Francisco Board of Supervisors unanimously passed a resolution to end the exploitation and harassment of domestic workers on Tuesday, and the Board sent letters to Mr. Kloosterman asking him to support the recommendations of the National Domestic Workers Alliance. Supervisor Eric Mar, who authored the resolution and who requested to deliver the resolution to Mr. Kloosterman personally, said, "Domestic workers help to ensure the health and prosperity of families by freeing others to participate in the workforce. But domestic workers usually work alone, behind closed doors and out of the public eye, leaving them isolated and vulnerable to exploitation. I had really hoped to convey this message personally to the representative of domestic worker employers at this historic ILO Conference."

"Equality is at the heart of our American values but we are long overdue in treating domestic workers as equals. They are the mothers and daughters that provide vital assistance to our families, to our seniors and who take care of our children, yet they lack the basic protections under the law that many of us take for granted," said California Assembly member Tom Ammiano, who is coauthoring a resolution in the state legislature on their behalf.

The delegation of domestic workers leaving for Geneva tomorrow are undaunted by the hostility of the law firm and the encounter with the police. They hope to win the basic recognition that domestic work is work just like any other, and should be protected as such. They will demand the same labor protections that other workers already enjoy under international labor law or are able to gain through collective bargaining, a process that is not always feasible for domestic workers. These include basic rights such as the right to rest breaks, sick time, health and safety protections and wage and hour regulations.

# # #