

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

November 13, 2014

Barack Obama
The President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:

Thank you for showing your commitment to working families by issuing executive orders that ensure a minimum wage and workplace protections for hundreds of thousands of Americans working under federal contracts. We now ask you to issue a new executive order in defense of these hard-working Americans: a Model Employer Executive Order that gives an incentive for corporations to provide good middle class jobs.

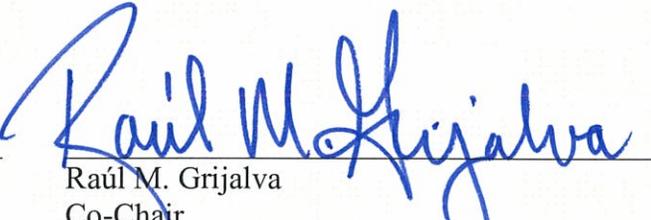
Holding corporations who receive taxpayer money to a minimum standard, as you did with the first two executive orders, is a logical first step. We must also reward those who go above and beyond. A Model Employer Executive Order would give preference for federal contracts to those companies that do more than just the legal minimum by providing living wages, paid leave, and covering health care for their workers. It would also require contractors to respect their employees' right to collectively bargain.

The potential impact for working families is substantial. According to a report by the Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee of the U.S. Senate, "companies that receive government contracts employ an estimated 22 percent of the American workforce, approximately 26 million workers." The National Employment Law Project interviewed over 500 federal government contract workers and found that 74 percent do not have sick leave, 89 percent do not have health insurance through their employer, and 58 percent receive no benefits at all. The right to collective bargaining, which is the most effective way workers can fight for these basic benefits, has been under attack.

The corporations that are doing their part to correct the causes of economic inequality should have a competitive advantage when pursuing government contracts. Instead, they are currently undercut by corporations who only pay the legal minimum and take away workers' seat at the table. A Model Employer Executive Order would give a competitive advantage to corporations that treat workers well. The Congressional Progressive Caucus stands ready to work with you to finish the job of making sure taxpayer dollars are not funding the low wage economy.

Sincerely,


Keith Ellison
Co-Chair
Congressional Progressive Caucus


Raúl M. Grijalva
Co-Chair
Congressional Progressive Caucus