

## Hyatt Regency, San Francisco Boycott

Posted on February 22, 2012 by Rosemary Feurer

Past recipients of the Philip Taft Labor History Prize call on the Cornell School of Industrial and Labor Relations to dissociate from HR conference at anti-union Hyatt Regency hotel.

Dear Cornell ILR Professors,

We write to you as proud past recipients of the Cornell ILR School's Philip Taft Labor History Book Award. Cornell's ILR School has a rich history as an innovator of the study of industrial relations. From its beginnings, ILR tasked itself with the mission "to improve industrial and labor conditions," and, while that mission may have given way to "advancing the world of work," it has been our hope that ILR would retain some of its founding intentions.

It was therefore with deep dismay that we learned that the Cornell ILR School has involved itself in a serious labor dispute and is aligning itself with an abusive employer. By sponsoring the 6th Annual HR in Hospitality Conference and Expo at the Hyatt Regency hotel in San Francisco, ILR is violating a worker-called boycott. Such an action clearly conveys the message that the ILR School is siding with Hyatt management against the Hyatt workers who have called on customers not to eat, sleep, meet, or spend any money at their hotel until they achieve a fair contract. The dispute in which ILR has entangled itself extends beyond San Francisco. Hyatt workers across the country are struggling for fair contracts and decent working standards.

As scholars of labor history, we are deeply troubled by the anti-worker actions of Hyatt Hotels. Over two years ago, Hyatt shocked observers of the hospitality industry when it began an aggressive push toward subcontracting local jobs by firing 98 longtime housekeepers at its three Boston-area hotels. While subcontracting may have a role in a global supply chain for certain industries, we see no justification for subcontracting the jobs of the women who are intimately involved in the day-to-day operations of a hotel. These are women who make the beds, scrub the bathrooms, and vacuum the floors. They work in the hotel, not at a far-off call center or factory. They should be employed by the hotel itself.

Why is Hyatt pushing for more subcontracting of hotel jobs? Subcontracting allows Hyatt to pay housekeepers poverty wages while evading legal liability for unsafe working conditions.

Subcontracting also allows for the exploitation of undocumented immigrants who can more easily be abused by employers who do not bear the legal responsibility for their employment. Subcontracting hotel workers is unnecessary and unjustifiable. Cornell ILR School should condemn the abusive practice as one that moves the “world of work” backwards. Instead, Cornell will lend its imprimatur to Hyatt’s abuse when Hyatt Senior Vice President Doug Patrick presents on the euphemistically named “Alternative Hospitality Workforce” at the Cornell-sponsored conference.

Professors of the ILR School, we urge you to take a moment to reflect on ILR’s role in our country’s labor and academic landscape. Reflect on the inappropriateness of this conference bearing ILR’s proud name, and take action. Cornell ILR School must withdraw its sponsorship of and participation in the HR in Hospitality Conference unless it is moved to a non-boycotted hotel. We beseech you to speak out and make sure that the ILR School corrects its course and recommits itself to advancing the world of work.

Sincerely,

Eileen Boris	Robert Korstad
Dorothy Sue	James Leloudis
Cobble	Walter Licht
Lizabeth Cohen	Nelson
Chris Daly	Lichtenstein
Alan Derickson	Jana Lipman
Douglass	Nancy MacLean
Flamming	Mary Murphy
Steve Fraser	Gunther Peck
Joshua Freeman	Seth Rockman
Laurie Green	James Schmidt
James Gregory	Philip Scranton
Alice Kessler	Peter Way
Harris	Robert Zieger
Frank Tobias	
Higbie	
Jacqueline Jones	
Alexander	
Keyssar	

## Author



Rosemary Feurer

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