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## Connecticut Attorney General's Office

### Press Release

#### Attorney General Joins Dozens Of Workers Suing Construction Company For Unpaid Wages

December 23, 2008

A group of 34 immigrants today sued a major Connecticut construction company in federal court for failing to pay tens -- possibly hundreds -- of thousands of dollars of wages for construction work on a luxury condominium development in Stamford.

Attorney General Richard Blumenthal, who joined the plaintiffs at a press conference today, said he will seek to support or intervene in the lawsuit and has contacted state Department of Labor officials to coordinate.

Blumenthal said the alleged conduct raises grave concerns about the treatment of workers perceived to be undocumented or otherwise vulnerable, but also practices that compromise the job market for legal construction workers.

The lawsuit was filed in U.S. District Court and names National Carpentry Contractors, Inc. of Stamford and several company officials.

Blumenthal said, "Today's action requires courage and integrity by immigrants, overcoming fears about their own safety and security, to report wrongdoing. Whether or not they were actually undocumented, their employer perceived them as vulnerable and thought they could be exploited.

"The employer egregiously exploited its workers, hopeful or certain that they would be reluctant to report abuse for fear of retaliation or other consequences. Despite its promises, this company paid its workers less -- and sometimes nothing at all -- for physically draining 70-hour work weeks.

"These reprehensible practices allegedly jeopardized lives and livelihood -- denying hundreds of workers fair wages and employment opportunities. My office is working closely with state labor officials, who share my concerns, to prepare appropriate state action.

"Even if employees are undocumented, they are still protected by state and federal laws that require fair treatment of employees. We will fight vigorously to uphold the law in this case -- and others when employers prey on vulnerable men and women. Substandard pay or working conditions for some workers affects all workplaces."

National Carpentry Contractors allegedly hired the plaintiffs -- virtually all of them Connecticut residents -- to perform construction work on a luxury condominium development in the Stamford area.

In many instances, the company allegedly promised \$13 per hour in wages, but

paid only \$10, and falsely claimed that they deducted \$3 per hour for "taxes and benefits." The company also allegedly paid no overtime above 40 hours per week when many of the men worked 65 and 70-hour work weeks.

As of June this year, the employer ceased paying the workers altogether, despite promising that they would be paid. Many are owed between two and eight weeks for their work.

The plaintiffs are seeking double their unpaid wages, as well as attorney fees and costs. The plaintiffs include Marvin Lopez, Walter Guerreros, Servando Campos, Carlos Olivares, Hector Rivera, Marvin Perez, Rigo Morales, Felipe Enriquez, Gilberto Landivar, Jose Sanchez, Alberto Zarama, Abner Agustin Najera, Juan Carlos Rosas, Jesus Ortega, Samuel Ancacura, Mauro Barrera, Israel Beltran, Cristobal E. Coloma, Cristobal G. Coloma, Francisco Lima, Erick Malina, Juan Mozo, David Morales, Nelson Moziaga, Aurelio Lorez Pena, David Gaytan Perez, Marvin Pineda, Julio Morales Reyes, Mario Rivera, Rolanda Romero, Bartolo Vidal, Rigoberto Vidal, Rufino Vidal and Elvin Vigil.

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