

# The People First Agenda

The **WORKERS' RIGHTS** team empowers, advocates for, and defends the rights of workers so that all jobs in North Carolina are good jobs, workers are treated with dignity and fairness, and North Carolinians can afford to take time off work when they need it.



## OUR 2026 GOALS

### Enforce Existing Workplace Protections

- ▶ Litigate on behalf of agricultural, contingent, and other low-wage workers to expand rights and protections, win compensation for employees whose rights were violated, and deter bad actor employers.
- ▶ Ensure that labor agencies, including the N.C. and U.S. Departments of Labor, the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, and National Labor Relations Board, aggressively enforce workers' rights through strong investigations and accountability to workers.
- ▶ Challenge new laws and regulations that undermine workplace protections.

### Advocate for Pro-worker Policies

- ▶ Coordinate coalition work to build momentum for a family-friendly workplace policy agenda that includes paid sick and safe days, paid family medical leave, and a livable minimum wage.
- ▶ Encourage state and local governments to adopt policies that provide paid leave for public employees.
- ▶ Reform Unemployment Insurance by increasing the amount of weekly benefits and the duration of benefits for jobless workers.

### Advocate for Safer and Healthier Workplaces

- ▶ Push for a required safety plan for all employers that prioritizes the health and safety of their employees.
- ▶ Demand common-sense heat stress protections to put an end to avoidable deaths due to heat on the job.
- ▶ Build public awareness and support for legislation to protect migrant farmworkers and improve housing conditions.

### Build Worker Power

- ▶ Educate workers on existing protections regarding wages, workplace safety, and discrimination, and how to enforce their rights through concerted activity.
- ▶ Support unionization and organizing efforts around the state by sharing resources and amplifying campaign messages.
- ▶ Engage more working people in creating worker-friendly policies by sharing opportunities to impact policymaking and working to center directly impacted people

## OUR 2025 HIGHLIGHTS

**In 2025, we continued to utilize legal action, education, and advocacy to advance pro-worker policies and empower workers.**

- Filed complaints and litigated cases on behalf of farmworkers, construction workers, and restaurant employees facing wage theft, human trafficking, sexual assault, discrimination, and employer retaliation.
- Through our successful litigation, we obtained \$187,245 in damages for 9 clients. We also settled two class actions, totaling \$605,000 in damages that will benefit over 400 class members.
- Supported immigrant workers by fighting harmful legislative proposals, providing information about their rights related to immigration enforcement, and through participation in the NC Farmworker Advocacy Network.
- Supported emergency planning through NCJC's Power of Attorney clinics.
- Advocated to advance a living wage, paid sick days, and paid family medical leave with a multi-coalition lobby day and press conference.
- Built momentum for pro-worker policy change by meeting with members of Congress, the NC General Assembly, and the Commissioner of Labor, to push for family-friendly workplace policies and promote workplace heat protections.
- Worked with state legislators to introduce Unemployment Insurance reform that passed both Chambers.
- Increased outreach and engagement with trainings, speaking engagements, and participation in partners' initiatives, strengthening relationships with coalitions and community groups.
- Developed new bilingual written and social media content to educate working people about their rights. We doubled our followers on Facebook alone! Follow us @ [ConzcaSusDerechosConNCJC](#) on Facebook and [@buildingworkerpower](#) on Instagram.



### CORE STRATEGIES AND APPROACHES

- Promote policies that create better jobs with living wages, safe working conditions, work-life balance, and adequate benefits for both employed and unemployed workers.
- Enforce workers' rights and workplace protections through litigation, deter unlawful employment practices, and recover compensation for workers.
- Build worker power by providing low-wage workers with the tools and resources needed to enforce their rights, improve workplaces, and influence policymakers.