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# SOLE

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*Students Organizing for Labor and Economic Equality - University of Michigan*

February 16, 2006

Dear President Coleman,

Four and one-half months ago, SOLE delivered the Designated Suppliers Proposal to your office. Your initial response to this letter was to defer judgment to the Advisory Committee on Labor Standards and Human Rights. This has proved extremely time-consuming and has been deemed unacceptable. The Designated Suppliers Proposal has been endorsed by the Worker Rights Consortium as the single most effective way to achieve meaningful code enforcement.

The committee has debated endlessly about the proposal, arguing that implementation is unclear and that there is not enough information for the university to properly adopt it. These barriers exist only artificially, as the LSHR committee's concerns should not preclude meaningful policy action. This proposal comes from the joint efforts of students and workers to find a solution to the perennial, systemic problem of poor working conditions and low wages. It is from this position that we come to you today.

Today we stand here in physical solidarity with the workers who make University of Michigan apparel to demand that you adopt the Designated Suppliers Proposal immediately. These workers have endured incredible hardships in their struggle to achieve meaningful rights, and any further deferral to the deliberations of the committee will act as a direct and deliberate insult to all of those before you.

The Designated Suppliers Proposal provides for effective self-monitoring by workers, through its mandatory requirement of a union or other representative worker body. It solves the problem of downward price pressure from the industry as a whole by creating living wages within the collegiate apparel industry, and forcing brands, those who profit the most from standing on the backs of sweatshop workers, to pay a price premium that will allow for these living wages. Most importantly, a meaningful list of factories is to be maintained by the Worker Rights Consortium, a list that will finally provide a real guarantee to the University that clothing with the Michigan logo will no longer be produced under sweatshop conditions.

We, students and workers together, implore you to recognize that this proposal needs no further debate and adopt the Designated Suppliers Proposal as University policy today.

Thank you for recognizing the dire urgency with which we come to you,  
Students Organizing for Labor and Economic Equality (SOLE)  
Phannara Duangdet, Lian Thai Factory, Thailand  
Bernice Musavi, Protex Factory, Ahti River Free Trade Zone, Kenya  
Siti Malikhah, PT Kolon Factory, Indonesia

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