



Legislation Text

File #: Res 0582-2006, **Version:** *

Res. No. 582

Resolution calling on the City of New York to cease purchasing products from Tar Heel, North Carolina's Smithfield Packing Company, and urging supermarkets operating in our city to cease purchasing Smithfield products from Tar Heel, North Carolina until the company ends all forms of abuse, intimidation and violence against its workers.

By Council Member Gioia, Jackson, Mark-Viverito, Comrie, Foster, Gentile, Gerson, James, Koppell, Mendez and Palma

Whereas, The National Labor Relations Board ("NLRB") in 2004 and 2006 and the U.S. Court of Appeals for the DC Circuit in 2006 found the Tar Heel, North Carolina division of the Smithfield Packing Company ("Smithfield") to be in violation of U.S. labor law due to physical assault and intimidation of workers, illegal arrest of workers, threatening workers with arrest by federal immigration authorities, unlawfully firing its own workers, and assisting in firing contractors' workers; and

Whereas, In the aforementioned decision, the Court of Appeals affirmed the NLRB's 2006 ruling that Smithfield managers, the company security chief, and security guards hurled racial slurs at Black workers, beat a Union organizer, and unlawfully beat and arrested a worker at its Tar Heel plant in 1997; and

Whereas, In 2000, Smithfield created its own private police force (the "Company Police") with public police power which, in 2003 and 2004, held workers against their will, and, as the NLRB found in 2006, was implicated in the arrest of more than ninety workers, including union supporters, the detainment of whom included physical assault and intimidation and resulted in many arrested employees' forced payment of court costs and eventual firing; and

Whereas, in April 2006, the NLRB ruled that Smithfield used the Company Police in 2003 to retaliate against the workers of its cleaning contractor, QSI, because the QSI workers joined together to protest for better

working conditions; and

Whereas, Two reports by Human Rights Watch found that Smithfield violated international human rights standards by its consistent pattern of flagrant disregard for the laws of this nation and the rights of its workers; and

Whereas, The City of New York has a long history of supporting the civil rights movement and working to end abuse and discrimination of working men and women in this City and across the country; and

Whereas, The City of New York contends that companies doing business in New York City must respect the rights of their workers and be responsible corporate citizens; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the New York City Council calls upon the City of New York to cease purchasing products from Tar Heel, North Carolina's Smithfield Packing Company, and urges supermarkets operating in our city to cease purchasing Smithfield products from Tar Heel, North Carolina until the company ends all forms of abuse, intimidation and violence against its workers.

BRS
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