



California **Labor** Federation | AFL - CIO

Headquarters: 600 Grand Av., Ste 410, Oakland, CA 94610-3561 (510) 663-4000 FAX (510) 663-4099
Legislative Office: 1127 11th St., Suite 425, Sacramento, CA 95814-3809 (916) 444-3676 FAX (916) 444-7693

EMBARGOED UNTIL: August 2, 2007 at 9:00AM

Contact: Anastasia Ordonez, (510) 207-7905

Administration's Public Forums on Meal Breaks Concerns Working Families

Statement from Art Pulaski, Executive Secretary-Treasurer, California Labor Federation

More than two years ago, the Schwarzenegger administration tried to sneak in an emergency regulation just before the Christmas holidays in an attempt to do away with our legal right to breaks for meals and rest. California's working men and women vigorously opposed this direct assault on their basic rights and claimed a victory. In what resembles *déjà vu*, the Labor Commissioner's office announced plans last week to hold two public forums to reopen the same issue. And once again, working people are demanding that the Schwarzenegger administration leave their lunch breaks alone.

All workers deserve time to eat and rest without intimidation or fear of reprisal. Some workers are employed in industries where taking breaks are crucial to their safety and the safety of the public they serve. We don't need bus drivers, crane operators, or people who routinely work with toxic pesticides to be hurt or hurt others because they don't get enough time to rest. Exposing our workers to environments where they are susceptible to repetitive stress, hunger and fatigue makes a less productive workforce and is a step in the wrong direction for California.

We believe the state's labor agency should be protecting workers' rights, not trying to undermine them. We hope the Division of Labor Standards Enforcement will stand with the workers it purports to protect and resist efforts to diminish critical worker protections.

###