

# PRESS RELEASE



**From State Senator Sue Morano**

*13<sup>th</sup> Senate District*

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
November 19, 2009**

**Contact: Senator Morano  
(614) 644-7613**

## **Senator Morano Introduces Wage Protection Act**

COLUMBUS – On Thursday, November 19, Senator Sue Morano (D-Lorain) held a press conference at the Ohio Statehouse, addressing the problem of wage theft in Ohio. Members of the labor and religious communities joined Senator Morano at the conference. November 19<sup>th</sup> is the National Day of Action to Stop Wage Theft.

“Wage theft is a very real problem across the nation and here in Ohio,” said Senator Morano. “Too many hard working Ohioans are being cheated out of the wages they’ve earned. This legislation affirms Ohio’s commitment to protecting workers.”

Wage theft, the act of an employer not paying an employee for the total time worked, is a dilemma facing thousands of workers in Ohio. This Wednesday, Senator Morano introduced Senate Bill 212, the Wage Protection Act, in the Ohio Senate to expand the Department of Commerce’s enforcement abilities to allow the Director to investigate complaints beyond the scope of minimum wage.

Under current law, the Ohio Department of Commerce is only permitted to investigate and resolve violations of the minimum wage requirements of the Ohio Constitution. An employee who earns above the minimum wage is presently unable to file a complaint with the Department for the full amount of unpaid wages. Civil action may be taken, but this is often a difficult route for many working Ohioans to take, given today’s economic climate.

On Wednesday, Senator Morano also introduced Senate Concurrent Resolution 22, urging Congress to pass House Resolution 3303, the Wage Theft Prevention Act. HR 3303 would ensure that delays in investigating claims of wage theft not result in a permanent loss of back pay for workers.

Wage theft is an issue that affects workers of all income levels. A recent study conducted by the National Employment Law Project, entitled [\*Broken Laws, Unprotected Workers\*](#), found that low-wage workers in New York City, Chicago, and Los Angeles had an average of \$51 stolen from their weekly earnings. And today, Ohio is one of only 5 states in the U.S. that does not investigate unpaid wages above the minimum wage.

Video of the press conference may be viewed here:  
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T1j1zKmfmaQ>