**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

Los Angeles is home to the United States largest garment manufacturing hub, with over 46,000 garment workers, largely immigrant women from Mexico and Central America. Fashion businesses based in the US and around the world rely on over 4,000 contractors and manufacturers for the production, finishing, and distribution of apparel products, utilizing LA’s well-situated twin ports in addition to its skilled low-wage labor workforce, including a growing number of fashion businesses invested in sustainable practices and ethical domestic production.

But systemic problems plaguing garment workers threaten the long-term viability of the industry, such as insufficient pay and occupational hazards, including blocked exits, poor ventilation, unsanitary worksites, and cramped conditions, and have been exacerbated by and in turn intensified the current Covid-19 public health crisis. Thousands of garment workers, deemed essential for the production of masks and PPE, have been forced to choose between earning desperately needed yet sub-minimum wages while risking exposure to the virus, at the same time being denied sick leave, health care, and hazard pay.

In Labor Violations in the Los Angeles Garment Industry, December 2020, Garment Worker Center (GWC) reports on the impact of wage theft and the Covid-19 pandemic on garment workers.

GWC conducted two needs assessments with over 300 garment workers between March and August of 2020 to gather insight into the effects of the pandemic on LA’s garment workers. An analysis of 142 wage theft claims filed recently through the Center’s Wage Justice Clinic provided a stark view of the impact of the piece-rate, an archaic yet prevalent system of pay which for too long has kept minimum wage out of reach many of LA’s garment workers.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

**PASS THE GARMENT WORKER PROTECTION ACT**

AUTHORED BY SENATOR DURAZO AND ASSEMBLYMEMBERS GONZALEZ AND KALRA

Three major components of the Garment Worker Protection Act (GWPA) will close loopholes in the law: (1) Eliminating the piece-rate pay in the garment industry; (2) Expanding liability for wage theft; (3) Expanding the Labor Commissioner’s Bureau of Field Enforcement ability to investigate and cite guarantors.