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NYC COUNCIL MEMBERS JOIN FEDERATION OF PROTESTANT WELFARE AGENCIES (FPWA) FOR CITY ADVOCACY DAY TO CALL ON THE NYC COUNCIL & MAYOR TO SUPPORT PROGRAMS AND INITIATIVES THAT ADVANCE UPWARD MOBILITY FOR LOW-WAGE WORKERS

New York, NY (Tuesday, May 12, 2015)— New York City Council Members joined FPWA on the steps of New York City Hall today to call on the New York City Council and Mayor Bill de Blasio to support initiatives that center on workforce development for low-income workers. Hundreds of thousands of New Yorkers do not bring home enough income to make ends meet and provide for basic family needs, and FPWA and its advocates would like to see more legislative priorities that will support its vision of building a city of equal opportunity. The priorities include programs and initiatives that provide training, work protections, entrepreneur opportunities and a living wage for many of New York’s lowest paid workers.

Speakers at the press conference included FPWA CEO and Executive Director, Jennifer Jones Austin, Council Member Helen Rosenthal, Rev. Yolanda Brown, and advocates from the New York City Network of Neighborhood Cooperatives, Staten Island Community Job Center, Graham Windham, Urban Pathways, The Urban Justice Center and Project FIND. Legislative meetings were held throughout the day with City Council Members to outline three FPWA priorities: the Worker Cooperative Campaign, the Day Laborer Initiative and the Career Ladder Project.

According to **Jennifer Jones Austin**, “In order to have an impact on long-term unemployment and the growing numbers of unemployed it’s time to change our commitment to low-wage workers. We can only advance upward mobility by advancing wages and worker rights and by providing career-ladder and entrepreneurial opportunities for all New Yorkers.”

"Worker cooperatives create good quality jobs, with high wages, good hours, and job stability. This democratic business model is a great tool to combat income inequality, and I'm proud that my bill, Int. 423-2014, signed by the Mayor in March 2015, will increase awareness about worker

cooperatives in the small business community. In FY 15 Council funding helped to establish nearly 30 worker cooperatives. Enhancing the Worker Cooperative Business Development Initiative to \$2.34 million will establish more worker cooperatives, creating good quality jobs for even more New Yorkers. I urge my colleagues to increase funding to further the development of worker cooperatives in New York City," said **Council Member Helen Rosenthal**.

"The growth of support for worker cooperatives is one of the things the City Council should be proudest of because worker co-operatives connect so many important issues in workforce and small business development. They provide an alternative model for the city to support the creation of living wage jobs. And because ownership and management decisions are in the hands of workers, co-operative jobs can be specifically tailored to the needs of the members and shift in response to new needs and opportunities as they arise. I'm excited about all of the existing worker co-ops have accomplished and the vast potential of this movement and look forward to being a worker co-op supporter for years to come," said **Council Member Robert Cornegy Jr.**

"Day laborers have contributed significantly to the fabric of this city, yet for years they have been left out of New York's workforce agenda. New York City prides itself on being a leader, and the Day Laborer Workforce Initiative is an opportunity for New York to catch up with other major cities, recognize day laborer contributions and protect this vulnerable workforce," said **Gonzalo Mercado, Regional Coordinator, National Day Laborer Organizing Network**.

"Social service workers are out in the community, every day providing vital supports and services to those in need," said **Harry Berberian, Senior Advisor at Graham Windham**. "Too often these workers struggle to make ends meet for their families as they work to lift their fellow New Yorkers in need up. It is critical that we not only fight for a living wage for these workers, but that we also ensure they are provided professional development opportunities to become upwardly mobile and thrive."

"The welfare of the City is only measured by the well-being of all its people," said **Rev. Yolanda Brown**, of Imani's Quest Sabbath Ministry at Emmanuel Temple. "It is the strength of the base that supports the structure, and a viable workforce is the strength to our national security."

About FPWA

The Federation of Protestant Welfare Agencies (FPWA) is an anti-poverty, policy, and advocacy nonprofit with a membership network of nearly 200 human-service and faith-based organizations. Each year, through its network of member agencies, FPWA reaches close to 1.5 million New Yorkers of all ages, ethnicities, and denominations. FPWA strives to build a city of equal opportunity that reduces poverty, promotes upward mobility, and creates shared prosperity for all New Yorkers. Visit us at www.fpwa.org and follow us on [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#).