

## **A National Charter of Workplace Ethics**

A fair workplace is one where workers have a voice and where their input is considered key to shaping organisational values and culture: it is inclusive, rather than exclusive.

Congress believes that building 'ethical workplaces' is critical to the creation of a decent, sustainable employment and a fair society. It requires a new view of workplace justice that is built upon a foundation of fair conditions of employment.

Unfair or abusive treatment at work should not be tolerated. Everyone is entitled to be treated with respect and dignity in the workplace.

There is also an urgent need to challenge the corrosive culture of precarious employment and introduce a framework of policies designed to facilitate the creation of decent jobs that offer decent hours with decent pay and conditions.

Congress was recently involved in supporting the President of Ireland's Ethics Initiative and organised its own *Ethical Workplace* programme to hear what working people had to say about this critical issue.

The response we received indicated that there was a profound desire for the creation of workplaces where ethics inform every aspect of the culture and are located at the heart of all practices and procedures.

Organisational culture dictates the ethical environment within which work is carried out. Ethical workplaces - and their absence - profoundly affect the wellbeing of workers, their families and communities.

An ethical society will not be achieved without measures to build and sustain ethical workplaces. This requires a renewed vision of workplace justice built on the principles of decent work and the core value that labour is not a commodity, as laid out in the ILO's ground-breaking Philadelphia Declaration. <http://bit.ly/ilodeclaration>

An ethical workplace culture is one that makes it far easier to do the right thing and harder to do the wrong thing. We need to build a wide community of support for ethical principles and values and translate these into benchmarks and concrete commitments, at the level of the workplace.

To this end, Congress is advocating the development of a **National Charter of Workplace Ethics** that will outline and provide clear guidance on the key principles that govern fair conditions of employment and ensure that every worker is treated with the dignity and respect they deserve.

A central lesson of Ireland's recent past is that in order to create a culture of ethics at work, workers must be confident they can raise concerns without fear of retribution.

No worker would fear victimisation or penalisation for speaking up. It is therefore essential that proper **whistleblowing policies** are put in place to provide protection for workers who raise concerns about practices in the workplace.

As part of the development of the **National Charter of Workplace Ethics**, Congress is calling on employers to sit down with workers and their unions and negotiate fair whistleblowing policies that will protect workers when they report concerns about *ethical failures*, rather than policies that only protect reporting on legal failures.