Referral to the United States Department of Justice, Civil Rights Division

Attached to The Declaration of Labor Independence – The First American Legal Revolution – viewit.channel/story

From: We The People – the undersigned of the Declaration of Labor Independence.
Re: Request for a pattern-or-practice investigation under 34 U.S.C. § 12601, review under 18 U.S.C. § 1589, and a consent decree.

We write as working Americans, in peace and by consent, exercising the right the First Amendment secures to every one of us: to assemble peaceably, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances. We leave politics at the door. We bring facts.

The facts. Before a single ticket is written, roughly 40 to 60 cents of every dollar a working Californian earns is already taken – withheld from the paycheck, added to every purchase, every gallon, every bill. Then the citation comes. It attaches to the car's registration; the registration is held until it is paid; a hearing is conditioned on paying first; the car is towed and stored at a daily charge; and collections follow with the threat of garnishment. None of it requires proof that the person did anything wrong. Every dollar taken at every step is earned back only one way: more hours of our labor.

Those hours are not free. Researchers at Stanford and Harvard, pooling 228 studies, found that workplace stressors raise the risk of early death by nearly 20 percent – a toll they compared to secondhand smoke – and account for more than 120,000 American deaths a year. Long working hours raise the odds of suicidal thoughts by 44 percent. The World Health Organization counts 745,000 deaths a year from stroke and heart disease traced to long hours. And while the State collected, its own Auditor reported that nearly $24 billion spent across five years could not be consistently tracked to any result.

The law. Congress has a name for labor obtained by serious harm, by threats of serious harm – including financial harm – or by the abuse of law and legal process: forced labor, 18 U.S.C. § 1589, with a civil remedy at § 1595. Congress also gave the Department

the power to act when a government's officers deprive people of their rights as a pattern or practice: 34 U.S.C. § 12601. The Supreme Court has held that no state may impose excessive fines. Whether California's system meets these definitions is the Department's question to answer. The pattern is ours to show — and with every signature and every record attached, we show it.

The request. We respectfully ask the Department to: (1) open an investigation under 34 U.S.C. § 12601 into the citation, registration-hold, tow, impound, fee, and collection practices of California's state and local agencies, and the tax-and-fee structure that funds them; (2) evaluate those practices under 18 U.S.C. §§ 1589 and 1595; and (3) negotiate and enforce a consent decree that provides, at minimum: no payment before a hearing; no ticket, tow, or registration hold that costs a person a job, a license, or a home; fines proportionate to the offense; the exclusion of working drivers from parking citations while actively working; a cap on registration fees; relief from gas and toll charges on roads already paid for; review of every tax rate above two cents of every dollar; a labor-rights fund; and a cap on utility profits, with the excess returned to the people.

The attachment. See the attached Declaration of Labor Independence, its Prayer for Relief, and every undersigned American, with their class of work and their own account, at **viewit.channel/story**. We do not ask the Department to consider. We ask it to act.

In 1776 the people declared that governments derive their just powers from the consent of the governed. We have not consented to this. We ask only what free people have always asked: that the fruit of our labor feed our families first, and that the laws written to protect us be enforced for us.

Respectfully submitted, in peace and by consent,
The undersigned — We The People

Sources: Goh, Pfeffer & Zenios, Management Science 62(2):608-628 (2016); Kim et al., Scand. J. Work Environ. Health 50(7):503-518 (2024); Pega et al. (WHO/ILO), Environment International 154:106595 (2021); Kivimäki et al., The Lancet 386:1739-1746 (2015); California State Auditor, Report 2023-102.1 (2024); 18 U.S.C. §§ 1589, 1595; 34 U.S.C. § 12601; Timbs v. Indiana, 586 U.S. 146 (2019).