

National Employment Law Project

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Top Ten Reasons Why Pro Bono Firms Should Do Wage & Hour Work

10. Enforcing the minimum wage floor is important for all workers, and it's good for our economy.
9. Our "growth" sectors (home health care, retail, building services, construction, hospitality) have rampant violations and we need them to be good jobs.
8. Many of these claims can and should be brought in federal court, including off-the-clock work, simple failure to pay minimum wage and overtime for all hours worked, and improper deductions from wages for recruitment and travel expenses. This provides good federal court training for your firm's lawyers.
7. The claims are typically fairly simple, and include basic failure to pay minimum wage and overtime for hours worked. NELP has models for almost everything and we're willing to help.
6. You can make money while doing good; recoveries in these case can be in the millions, and attorneys fees are automatic if you win.
5. The cases can be a good support for a community campaign or organizing drive, which brings you good will and closer ties to the local community.
4. Most states have wage payment and collection laws and prohibit deductions from wages, which can supplement your federal claims. Many states also permit bringing these claims as class actions.
3. It provides an opportunity to represent immigrant and other low-wage workers who otherwise would not have access to justice.
2. Bringing wage and hour claims can open the door to get at other sweatshop problems, like health and safety problems, employers' failure to report and pay employment taxes, and recordkeeping violations.
1. It's something positive to do that affirmatively puts money in workers' pockets and can change employer practices.