

# U.S. Reps. Pocan, Casar: Introduce Food Worker Pay Standards Act

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**WASHINGTON, D.C. - U.S. Representatives Mark Pocan (WI-02) and Greg Casar (TX-35)** introduced the Food Worker Pay Standards Act, which would ensure that the federal government only purchases food produced by workers who earn fair pay and benefits.

The bill would direct the Secretary of Labor to use local wages and benefits for food production workers in conjunction with local collective bargaining agreements to establish a regional prevailing wage and would prevent the federal government from purchasing food produced by workers paid less than those prevailing rates. This standard would apply to meat, meat food product, poultry, poultry food product, and processed food workers.

“The federal government should not be in the business of rewarding companies with taxpayer-funded contracts if they aren’t adequately paying or protecting their workers,” **said Rep. Mark Pocan.** “Food processing is one of our country’s most dangerous industries and one that relies heavily on workers from marginalized communities. The time is long overdue to protect these vulnerable workers with federal guardrails. This bill tells food processing companies that the government is only willing to work with businesses that put workers first. Anything less will not be funded by the American people.”

“Every single worker – no matter the industry or occupation – is entitled to just wages and safe working conditions,” **said Rep. Greg Casar.** “We can make sure that we’re doing business with companies that are paying fair wages. That way, the federal government is helping create an economy that works for all of us, not just a privileged few. It’s time for Congress to pass the Food Worker Pay Standards Act and support workers employed in one of our country’s most dangerous industries.”

Food production and processing workers face dangerous conditions and federal contracting should not undermine the high standards that workers have secured through bargaining with their employers. Animal slaughtering and processing workers suffer injury and illness at more than **twice the rate** of other workers. Federal contracts should improve - not undermine - wages and benefits for workers.