



**LAWYERS' COMMITTEE FOR
CIVIL RIGHTS
U N D E R L A W**

Moving America Toward Justice

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT:

Kim Hayes

202-662-8318, office

khayes@lawyerscommittee.org

**“Right to Know” Campaign Launches in Twin Cities’ Hmong Community,
Seeks to Raise Awareness of Employment Discrimination Rights & Resources**

MINNEAPOLIS, MN–November 1, 2012 – A new “Right to Know” Campaign launching in the Twin Cities’ Hmong community aims to increase awareness of employment rights and the resources available to address workplace discrimination.

The campaign is led by the national Lawyers’ Committee for Civil Rights Under Law, which is representing a group of Hmong-Americans in an employment discrimination case. The Hmong Cultural Center, based in Minnesota, is a key partner in the campaign, providing advisory, translation, and distribution support to the Lawyers’ Committee.

If successful, the Lawyers’ Committee’s case will mark a significant achievement in confronting discrimination against Hmong-Americans throughout Minnesota. Anecdotal evidence suggests that this case is only one of numerous instances of employment discrimination against the Hmong community, yet few cases are reported, potentially due to a lack of awareness of workers’ rights, fears of retaliation and concerns of affordability.

The Hmong make up about 1.2 % of Minnesota’s population, but are significantly disadvantaged in comparison to the rest of the population, including other minority groups. According to 2010 Census Bureau data:

- Unemployment for Hmong in Minnesota is 7.3% versus 5% for the general population.
- U.S. Hmong Per Capita Income in 2010 was \$11,012 compared to \$26,942 among the entire U.S. population.
- 25.3% of U.S. Hmong families lived below the poverty level in 2010 compared to 10.5% of all U.S. families.

These stark figures reflect the disparity of wealth in the Hmong community and likely widespread discrimination in employment opportunities.

“With our ‘Right to Know’ campaign, we plan to disperse information regarding employee rights and the resources available to victims of discrimination. The Hmong Cultural Center has been a vital resource in developing and launching this campaign,” said Lawyers’ Committee Employment Discrimination Project Director Ray McClain. “Together, we are taking action to raise awareness that workplace discrimination is absolutely unacceptable and that there are ways for Hmong employees to fight for fair and equitable treatment.”

The “Right to Know” campaign, which is generously supported by the Emma B. Howe Memorial Foundation funds of the Minneapolis Foundation, will provide employment discrimination information through local Hmong groups and outreach to Hmong media. Additionally, the campaign aims to raise awareness regarding resources that are accessible to the Hmong community and all people facing employment discrimination, including the EEOC and Minnesota Department of Human Rights, among others.

Electronic or printed versions of the “Right to Know” Campaign are available by request by emailing Kim Hayes at khayes@lawyerscommittee.org.

About the Lawyers’ Committee

The Lawyers’ Committee for Civil Rights Under Law (“LCCRUL”), a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization, was formed in 1963 at the request of President John F. Kennedy to involve the private bar in providing legal services to address racial discrimination. We are celebrating our 50th anniversary in 2013 as we continue our quest of “Moving America Toward Justice.” The principal mission of the Lawyers’ Committee is to secure, through the rule of law, equal justice under law, particularly in the areas of fair housing and fair lending; community development; employment; voting; education and environmental justice. For more information about the LCCRUL, visit <http://www.lawyerscommittee.org>.

About the Hmong Cultural Center (HCC)

Founded in 1992, HCC was the first Hmong cultural center in the Midwestern United States. HCC’s mission is to “to promote the personal development of children, youth and adults through cultural education while providing resources that enhance cross-cultural awareness between Hmong and non-Hmong” For more information about HCC, visit: <http://www.hmongcc.org/>.

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Note to Media: To coordinate interview opportunities with the Lawyers’ Committee, our pro bono partners, or the Hmong Cultural Center, please contact Kim Hayes, 202-665-8318 or khayes@lawyerscommittee.org.