

Rene Flores

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December 12, 2017

Councilmember Joe Buscaino, Chair, Trade, Travel, and Tourism Committee

Councilmember Curren Price, Chair, Economic Development Committee

City of Los Angeles

200 North Spring Street,

Los Angeles, CA 90012

RE: File No. 17-0725-S1

Dear Councilmembers Buscaino and Price:

Thank you for hearing our demands for justice and supporting our fight to end wage theft and employee misclassification at LA's port.

My name is Rene Flores and I am one of the more than 1,000 truck drivers at LA's port who has filed a claim for wage theft with the California Labor Commissioner. Because my claim is public information, a *USA Today* investigator contacted me and included my story in their article "Rigged," which ran on the front page of the paper in June. My employer, Morgan Southern – a division of multi-billion dollar division of Roadrunner Transportation Systems – fired me the next day and admitted it retaliated against me because I was in the article.

My wife and I came to America from El Salvador in 1998 for the American Dream, to build a better life for our four children, who are now 12, 14, 16, and 18. We had no idea that the dream was really the American nightmare and that good jobs at the ports were only for some – but not for us. We never imagined that LA would allow its port to do business with companies like Morgan Southern that are openly stealing from us.

And we certainly don't understand why, after the *USA Today* and a number of other media outlets have publicized these companies' illegal activity, they're still doing business at the ports! We get kicked out of the ports if we even run a stop sign, yet these companies are breaking the law and are still allowed by LA's port to do business there. Why the double standard? Why do the laws apply to people like me and not to these corporations?

Before Morgan Southern fired me, I often worked 20-hour days. Some weeks I earned nothing – I worked for free because I only earned enough to cover the cost of using the company's truck (the lease, fuel, insurance, repairs, and maintenance). This isn't just my story; it's the story of virtually every driver hauling containers on and off of LA's port.

Now there's talk of requiring new trucks as a part of the Clean Air Action Plan. My wife and I agree that we need clean air, but families like mine shouldn't have to pay for the program. The trucking companies and their big retail customers like Amazon, Target, and Home Depot must pay for these new trucks. And you must kick out any trucking company that breaks the law by making us pay for their equipment.

With billions in cargo coming in and out of the ports every year, there is just no excuse. Every job at the ports can and must be a good job.

Sincerely,

Rene Flores, Port Driver
(formerly Morgan Southern)