Freedmen and Day Laborers: Why Enforcement Matters

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Available at: https://works.bepress.com/raja_raghunath/3/
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Dear Journal Editor:

Please find enclosed my article, *Freedmen and Day Laborers: Why Enforcement Matters*, which argues for the increased enforcement of US labor standards on behalf of unauthorized workers, because of lessons drawn from the origins of those labor standards in Reconstruction, after the Civil War. Many of the indigent clients represented by my law clinic in claims for unpaid wages are day laborers without work status. In my prior published scholarship, I have explored other modern implications of the Thirteenth Amendment abolishing slavery, and the laws promulgated pursuant to it. Therefore, I have a unique perspective on the intersections between these two areas.

When the federal government failed to enforce the working rights of the freedmen during Reconstruction, it helped give back much of the promise of liberty that came with Emancipation. Much of the promise of our own most recent rights revolution has been given back as well in the fifty years since passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. It is therefore crucial for the rights of today’s workers that the enforcement of labor standards be targeted towards the most vulnerable segments of the workforce, which today can reliably be found wherever unauthorized immigrants are employed in great numbers, as they are in day labor.

This argument is timely both to the current debate over immigration reform in Congress, but also to the coming sesquicentennial (150th-anniversary) of Emancipation and the end of the Civil War. The article is 22,157 words in length, inclusive of footnotes, abstract, and table of contents. I have also enclosed a copy of my CV for your information. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

s/ Raja Raghunath

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