

Representative James P. McGovern (MA)
Statement on the 20th Anniversary of Solidarity Center
Wednesday, November 15, 2017

I want to send a special greeting to Solidarity Center on the occasion of their 20th Anniversary Celebration. I regret that I cannot be there in person tonight.

I can say, quite simply, that I would not be able to do my work on labor rights and on behalf of Colombian and U.S. workers without the information and expertise of the staff of Solidarity Center, both those based here in Washington, D.C., and in Colombia.

They have put me in contact with workers fighting for their most basic rights inside Colombia and allowed me to hear, first hand, what they face on-the-ground in Colombia – port workers; sugar cane workers –those who work in the fields and those who work in processing plants; workers who toil on palm oil plantations; port workers; those who work in the energy, oil and mining sectors; health care workers; those who work at the airports and for aviation companies; and so many more.

I feel privileged to have had the opportunity to meet them face-to-face, hear about their lives, and better understand the conditions of their workplace.

Solidarity Center is also taking on the long-neglected cause of community mothers and child care workers, as well as domestic workers, who have been abused for decades in their wages, working conditions, pensions and respect for the important work they provide.

It is an act of courage to organize a union in Colombia. It is an act of courage to stand firm and demand basic human rights and labor rights for your fellow workers. It is an act of courage to continue to organize and fight for rights in the face of death threats, assaults and attacks by employers, by the State, and by sinister paramilitary and criminal forces.

I applaud the workers of Colombia – and those of so many other places around the world – who stand up for their basic rights and the right to a decent wage and decent way of life.

I applaud and admire everyone at Solidarity Center who, day in and day out, provide these workers with support, technical and legal assistance, and who are often the only people getting the word out about these workers' struggles.

So, happy 20th Anniversary, Solidarity Center. And may you be with us for many more decades.