

MAURICE AND JANE SUGAR LAW CENTER FOR ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

GUILD LAW CENTER



Julie H. Hurwitz
Executive Director

MAURICE AND JANE SUGAR LAW CENTER FOR ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL JUSTICE: A PROJECT OF THE NATIONAL LAWYERS GUILD

2915 Cadillac Tower • Detroit, MI 48226 • Phone 313-962-6540 • Fax 313-963-9185

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CONTACT: JULIE HURWITZ
(313) 962-NLGO
(962-6540)

SUGAR LAW CENTER OPPOSES LAYOFFS AT SMITH CORONA

On behalf of the National Lawyers Guild/Maurice and Jane Sugar Law Center for Economic and Social Justice, in Detroit, Michigan, we are appalled at Smith Corona's outrageous and immoral treatment of its employees. The Sugar Law Center opened its doors on February 1, 1991 as a national litigation center and clearinghouse for workers' and civil rights. The Center is currently focusing primarily on the plant closing crisis in this country and specifically on the WARN Act. The Smith Corona case captured our attention and the attention of others from around the country who are concerned about enforcing this law and addressing its inadequacies.

Experts and professionals nationwide have been watching this case with much interest to see whether and how the WARN Act could be used to protect these employees. Although it is obvious that Smith Corona knew in advance of its plans to drastically reduce its work force and relocate its production to the cheaper labor market of Singapore, it nonetheless proceeded to lie to its employees and to the public, and then, in blatant violation of the spirit behind the WARN Act, it systematically laid off over 1000 skilled workers with little or no notice. Yet, Smith Corona has seemingly managed to sidestep the law, despite the fact that it is obviously guilty of violating the intentions of the legislature when they enacted this law.

This case is a glaring example of two major short-falls of the WARN Act in its present form:

First, this law is not equally enforceable between organized and unorganized workers. In order to remedy this, unorganized workers need a mechanism by which they can obtain, as a matter of right, the information necessary for protection under the WARN

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