WNYCOSH
HAZARDS COMMUNICATION
Western New York Council on Occupational Safety & Health

Fall 2025

Table of Contents:

Trump Tariffs: Fact vs. Misinformation
How the One Big Beautiful Bill Act Affects Workers
Why Is a Paycheck not Keeping Pace with my Grocery Bill?
Why is a Paycheck not Keeping Pace with my Grocery Bill?
Past Events
Upcoming Events
Working Lens
How Can I Get Involved?
Become a WNYCOSH Member
WNYCOSH Stands in Staff

Trump Tariffs: Fact vs. Misinformation

During Trump's first administration, voters were told to take him seriously, not literally. He made extreme threats and policy announcements to wake Washington up, shake things up, and force change. Many of his ideas were crude, distract from unpopular policies, and provoke his political opponents.

Fast forward to Trump 2.0 and the administration has been designed to have government agencies against potential political opponents, including AFLCIO and OSHA. Trump's "Liberation Day" tariffs are a crude, distract from unpopular policies, provoke political foes, and, in reality, a tax increase on American consumers. Tariffs are taxes on imports. Tariffs are paid by the importer, not the exporter. Tariffs are not a tax on anyone it claims are "well American" … anti-capitalist … and anti-Christian. … Tariffs are paid by the importer, not the exporter. Tariffs are not a tax on foreign governments because they are, in reality, wrongly, anti-capitalist.

What does this mean for WNYCOSH? For nearly 50 years we've fought for workers' rights, fair treatment, and a safer workplace. Tariffs don't change our mission, but they do complicate it. We're prepared for potential disruptions and attempted outreach. Tight budgets, layoffs, and shifting priorities will make our work harder, but our commitment to workers remains unshaken. We will be transitioned as needed.

It's hard to know, But one thing is clear: the more progressive businesses choose to stay silent in hopes of avoiding the agency's wrath, the more free, Extremely Right-Wing businesses will change policy and of these commonsense safeguards.

If we're not willing to stand up now, then when?

How the One Big Beautiful Bill Act Affects Workers

Editor's note: This is the first in a five part series on how the 118th(4) affects workers and workplaces. Future articles will cover the impact on OSHA, OSHA-required equipment, the dependent care flexible spending account increase, and the "Trump Accounts" and "Trump Account Contribution Pilot Program."

1. No Federal Taxes on Overtime and Tips: In Grand Deal or a Distraction?

Section 1101 of the One Big Beautiful Bill Act, contains some tax cuts – such as for parents, bartenders, hotel room cleaners, bartenders, and waiters – and it leans a lot on the "Trump Accounts" and "Trump Account Contribution Pilot Program" (TAC). That occupies open tax, charges, and pushes large sums among wealthy people.

Sounds great, right? But before anyone celebrates, here are some key details:

1. The U.S. Treasury Department will decide which jobs qualify for the tax cut.
2. State and local taxes still apply.
3. The tax cut expires in 2028 unless Congress or your employer – rapidly –
4. Employers will still fear tax on your tips if it wasn't enough the operation when they leave.
5. The tax cut is more money in your weekly paycheck – the benefit comes as a deduction when you file.
6. The change is temporary, expiring after the 2028 tax year.
7. Tip income is still taxed by Social Security, meaning you may owe Social Security taxes on tips, even if you don't owe income tax.

At first glance, this looks like a win for service workers. But beneath the surface, the tax cut raises more questions than it answers. Will employers adjust wages to offset the structural losses that make tipped work so precarious.

The federal minimum wage for tipped workers is still $2.13 an hour, a number that hasn't budged since July 2009. Even when employers do pay, the minimum is only $11.00 per hour. That's the same as 18 years ago, while the cost of housing, healthcare, and groceries has skyrocketed since then.

So some workers gain a few dollars on their paychecks. Tips remain employer-will use that policy are closer to with jobs where tips are common, using tips to pay the business's share of Social Security or health coverage, for example.

The real danger here is that the OBBBA distracts from what workers actually need: a living wage, safe working conditions, and protections against wage theft and unsafe workplaces. The government is offering a temporary tax break that does nothing to address the daily instability that tipped workers face.

If lawmakers truly wanted to help American tipped workforce, they'd raise the federal minimum wage and add the two-tiered pay system that keeps millions of workers in poverty. Instead, they've created a tax break that AFL-CIO calls the daily tuck, that sun nature, it's a distract or miscalculation.

OSHA
Updates

OSHA Updates Penalty and Debt Collection Procedures

On July 14, the U.S. Department of Labor announced major changes to OSHA's penalty and debt collection procedures, including a return to Trump's "tough on small businesses is compiny. But behind the bureaucratic language is a dangerous shift: it allows employers to delay compliance in our policies, and make the workers to stay alive.

Under the new policy, small businesses, those with 10 or fewer employees, can now request a payment plan for OSHA fines, with terms stretching up to five years. Penalties after being cited will go to 15% penalty reduction, 15 Penalty, that is potential reduction, 15 penalty reduction, 15 penalty reduction, 15 penalty reduction." In practice, it signals something very different: OSHA is giving employers permission to delay compliance.

The logic behind this changes, that lighter fines will free up resources for safety investments, is wishful thinking at best, and reckless at worst. History shows that employers don't use savings to improve safety. They use it to boost profits, or to keep unsafe conditions going until the time and it pays to one pay for.

Workers know this truth firsthand. Rare safety equipment, proper training, and enough staff to do the job safely are the exception, not the rule, in workplaces that hold accountable. Reducing those underpinnings that accountability, switching a lower penalty for a promise to fix it later, weakens the entire system.

For the millions of Americans who punch in every day at small businesses, this isn't an abstract policy debate. It's about whether they'll return home in one piece. Lowering the cost of ignoring safety rules sends a clear message to employers: companies controlling the cost.

If OSHA truly wanted to "increase product hazard awareness," it should strengthen enforcement, not soften it. Incentivizing fixes before incidents that safety or negotiation, not

Why is a Paycheck not Keeping Pace with my Grocery Bill?

By Kevin Gillmore

I have always tried to stick to my budget when grocery shopping and cut costs by using coupons, buying in bulk, and shopping at Aldi's. Lately, I've been using the self-checkout lanes and scanning everything. Salmon? Pass. Real Maple Syrup? Pass. Lobster? Pass. Ribeye? Pass. Ground Beef? Pass. Ground Beef? Pass. Ground Beef

Become a WNYCOSH Member

WNYCOSH is a membership organization, with support from individuals, unions, and organizations, helping to support our work and move it forward. Members vote on Board membership, have input into the training and Worker Center programs, and will be choosing the Roger Cook Badass Award recipients. **IF YOU HAVE NOT YET RENEWED YOUR MEMBERSHIP, PLEASE DO SO BY JULY 31 TO PARTICIPATE IN SELECTING THE ROGER COOK BADASS RECIPIENTS.**

We need members to help keep WNYCOSH going and ensure our work is serving our communities! If you're interested in becoming a member, please reach out to Brian Brown-Cashdollar at bbc@wnycosh.org.

Membership

Worker Center Hotline

Justice, just one call away

(716) 206-2550

WNYCOSH Board & Staff

WNYCOSH Board

Ann Converso, Board President
Sharon Scime, Vice President
LuAnne Brown, Treasurer

Lori Abbott
Illa Caira
Gregory Stoner
Diane Barth
Jennifer Hogue
Susan Woods
John Bieger
Elaine Laskowski

WNYCOSH Staff

Brian Brown-Cashdollar, Executive Director
Rob Byledbal, Fiscal Administrator
Elton Deneves, Program Manager
Rebekah Nerius, Outreach Staff and Trainer
Rachel Van Alstine, Staff Trainer
Tim Haritgan, Staff Trainer
Susanne Donovan, Outreach Staff and Trainer

Copyright © 2025 Western New York Council on Occupational Safety and Health, All rights reserved.

Our mailing address is:
WNYCOSH
2495 Main Street, Suite 438
Buffalo, NY 14214
(716) 833-5416
(716) 833-7507 FAX
inquiry@wnycosh.org

Want to change how you receive these emails?
You can update your preferences or unsubscribe from this list.