

# **united students against sweatshops**

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## **For Immediate Release:**

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## **STUDENTS FROM ACROSS THE COUNTRY GATHER TO PROTEST BURGER KING'S EXPLOITATION OF FARMWORKERS**

### **Two National Student Organizations Unite, Bringing Hundreds of Students to Demand Burger King Take Necessary Steps to End Sweatshops and Modern-Day Slavery in Florida's Fields**

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On Saturday, February 9 at 2:00 pm, hundreds of students, members of USAS and SFA, will be joining members of the Coalition of Immokalee Workers (CIW) and Miami-area allies to expose the reality of exploitation and human rights abuses in the fields where Burger King's tomatoes are picked and to protest Burger King's continued refusal to work with the CIW to improve these conditions.

Students have chosen a Burger King located adjacent to the campus of Florida International University – which hosts a Burger King restaurant on-campus – to call attention to the increasing numbers of students and young consumers who have rallied to the cause of Florida's farmworkers and are prepared to take action to ensure that the CIW's demands are met. USAS member and FIU student Carlos Isidro stated, “we are growing tired of Burger King's lies and are prepared to launch a widespread campaign on our campus to remove the Burger King restaurant from FIU, as was successfully done at over 20 universities and high schools during the Taco Bell boycott.”

By leveraging its high-volume purchasing power to extract the lowest prices possible, Burger King profits from and plays an active role in creating the miserable conditions in Florida's fields. Florida tomato pickers earn 40-45 cents for every 32-lb bucket of tomatoes they pick. At this rate, a farmworker must pick two tons of tomatoes to make just \$50 in a day. Farmworkers regularly work 10-12 hour days with no overtime pay, no health insurance, no right to organize, and no benefits whatsoever. In the most extreme cases, farmworkers are subjected to conditions of modern-day slavery. Indictments were recently handed down against a farm labor operation in Immokalee where workers were locked in shacks and panel trucks, beaten, and forced to work against their will in what one US Attorney referred to as “slavery, plain and simple” (“6<sup>th</sup> slavery case suspect arrested,” Ft. Myers News-Press, January 18, 2008).

**WHO:** Over 250 students from across the US, Immokalee farmworkers, and Miami residents

**WHAT:** Protest of Burger King

**WHEN:** Saturday, February 9 at 2:00 PM

**WHERE:** 955 SW 107th Ave, Miami, FL (near corner of US-41)

**VISUALS:** Dozens of colorful signs shaped as tomatoes and tomato buckets; flags; large puppet of BK “King” mascot; musical instruments

### END ###