



Jesse Arreguín
Councilmember, District 4

CONSENT CALENDAR
March 8, 2011

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council
From: Councilmember Jesse Arreguín
Subject: Resolution Commemorating the 100th Anniversary of the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory Fire

RECOMMENDATION:

Adopt a Resolution commemorating the 100th anniversary of the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory Fire.

BACKGROUND:

The Triangle Shirtwaist Factory fire in New York City on March 25, 1911, was the deadliest industrial disaster in the history of the city of New York and resulted in the fourth highest loss of life from an industrial accident in U.S. history. The fire caused the deaths of 146 garment workers, most of them women, who either died from the fire or jumped to their deaths. Most of the workers could not escape the burning building because the managers had locked the doors to the stairwells and exits to keep them from leaving early. Fire truck ladders only reached the sixth floor. People jumped from the eighth, ninth, and tenth floors. The fire led to legislation requiring improved factory safety standards and helped spur the growth of the International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union, which fought for better working conditions for sweatshop workers.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

NONE.

CONTACT PERSON:

Jesse Arreguín, Councilmember, District 4 981-7140

Attachments:

1. Resolution

RESOLUTION NO.

TRIANGLE SHIRTTWAIST FACTORY FIRE COMMEMORATION

WHEREAS, this year is the 100th anniversary of the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory Fire in New York City, one of the most deadliest industrial accidents in U.S. history; and

WHEREAS, on March 25, 1911, over 145 garment workers at the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory, mostly immigrant women of Jewish and Italian American descent, were either burned to death or died from jumping from the building to escape the fire; and

WHEREAS, most of the workers could not escape the burning building because the managers had locked the doors to the stairwells and exits to keep them from leaving early. Compounding the tragedy, fire truck ladders only reached the sixth floor of the building while the factory started on the 8th floor; and

WHEREAS, this human catastrophe exposed the need to strengthen labor laws, health and safety protection including fire protection rules as well as union protection for workers seeking labor rights; and

WHEREAS, these issues are still critical for women workers, immigrant workers, health and safety advocates in the United States and Northern California today; and

WHEREAS, events are taking place around the country that should be supported and publicized to help commemorate these victims of the fire and also to help raise awareness about the importance and relevance of this unfortunate incident in U.S. history; and

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Council of the City of Berkeley that it hereby designates March 25, 2011 a day of commemoration for the workers killed and injured in the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory Fire.