



**New York City
Central Labor Council
AFL-CIO**

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Workers, Labor Leaders, Elected Officials, & Students Join Families of Triangle Fire Victims to Commemorate 107th Anniversary of Tragic Blaze

Speakers & Attendees Recommit to Fight for Workplace Safety for All Workers

March 23, 2018

New York, NY — Hundreds of workers gathered in the heart of Greenwich Village today outside of what was once the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory. The factory employed scores of young women and had been the site of labor unrest following demands of safer conditions, better wages, and shorter work days.

On March 25, 1911, a terrible fire, and what would become known as one of the deadliest industrial disasters in our country, engulfed three floors of the garment factory.

146 lives were lost that day, but the workers – many of them young, immigrant women — did not die in vain, as the tragedy laid the groundwork for many of the labor laws and regulations that help protect workers today.

“This commemoration, in honoring the sacrifices made 107 years ago, is important to the work we do today ensuring that workers are treated with the respect they deserve and have the ability to go to work and return safely to their families at night,” **Vincent Alvarez, President of the New York City Central Labor Council** stated. “We must draw on the lessons of the past and join together to fight for fair treatment and safe working conditions for all workers across this city and country.”

“We remember the lives that were lost, but we also call attention to the fact that there is still much more work to be done to improve safety conditions for workers, especially in light of recent construction and transit worker deaths,” said **Edgar Romney, Secretary-Treasurer of Workers United**. “We are standing together to fight for all workers.”

“Though they perished, they did not do so in vain. They were martyrs to whom we owe much.” said **New York State Department of Labor Commissioner Roberta Reardon**. “The State of New York, and indeed our nation, is today a stronger place for workers because we refused then and we refuse now to allow the tragedy that occurred here to fade in our collective memory.”

New York City Comptroller Scott M. Stringer said: "Today is about honoring those lost in one of the greatest tragedies in our city's history. But it's also about recognizing the reforms that it spawned, the progress it triggered, and the change it made for millions of Americans. This moment in history led to some of our country's most important reforms, and as we look back to remember the past, we must always remember that there is more to do."

"On the 107th Anniversary of the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory tragedy, we continue to remember and honor the lives of the 146 workers who tragically died," said **New York City Public Advocate Letitia James**. "While nothing can make up for the lives lost that day, the aftermath of this tragedy led to much needed reforms and protections to ensure that this never happens again. Today we recommit to the fight and demand good jobs, fair wages, and safe work conditions for all workers."

"The 1911 Triangle Shirtwaist Factory fire was a tragedy for our city, state, and nation not just because of the 146 lives horrifically taken, but because it was the direct result of our society's tolerance of oppressive and inhumane working conditions," said **Manhattan Borough President Gale A. Brewer**. "Those workers — most of them young immigrant women — died because our society failed to protect them. We must all fight together until every single worker has the safety, fairness, and dignity they deserve."

"One-hundred seven years ago, the Triangle Shirtwaist Fire struck the labor community and our great City. When we remember the workers who were killed, what we are remembering is the struggle to fight for justice for working women and men. Now today, we remember and honor all of those victims, mostly immigrant women. And in remembering them, we are reminded that New York City continues to be the home for immigrant women. It is their dreams and hopes that we must carry on. As Speaker of the New York City Council, I am committed to the ongoing effort for equality and justice for all," said **New York City Council Speaker Corey Johnson**.

The commemoration began with a musical tribute from the New York City Labor Chorus, and from the singers of Onsite Opera's Morning Star. The names of the workers who perished during the blaze were read aloud, and flowers were laid at a makeshift memorial as while a bell tolled, rung by the Fire Department of New York.

The Triangle Shirtwaist Factory fire was one of New York City's greatest workplace disasters - but it was also an event that changed America, paving the way for progressive workplace reforms that protect working women and men to this day.

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