



**TESTIMONY OF**

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**ON BEHALF OF**  
**THE UNIFORM AND TEXTILE SERVICE ASSOCIATION**

**BEFORE THE**  
**SUBCOMMITTEE ON WORKFORCE PROTECTIONS**

**OF THE**  
**UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

**JANUARY 14, 2008**

Good Afternoon Chairwoman Woolsey, Ranking Minority member Wilson, members of the Subcommittee, and all assembled.

I am Jim Stanley and I am pleased to appear before you today on behalf of the Uniform and Textile Service Association or UTSA, which I am guiding as a safety advisory group member. I was an OSHA executive for 25 years, including serving as the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Labor.

UTSA represents 44 member companies all across the United States and Canada who provide uniforms and textile service products to a wide variety of businesses. The association's membership represents just a portion of the 1,200 or so similar companies in the U.S.

Most importantly, before I begin, I would like to express my and the association's deepest sympathies and condolences to the Diaz families. The tragedy at the North East Linen plant here in Linden has been a devastating loss to them and their friends and colleagues. The accident has had a major impact on the entire industry. No words can properly express the deep sadness and sympathy we all feel.

As UTSA's representative, my role today is to offer my opinion on OSHA and safety issues, based on my experience in the safety field, as well as my 25 years at OSHA. Accordingly, I am not in a position to speak for North East Linen nor am I able to comment on the practices of individual UTSA member companies. However, I and the association believe that every company has a duty to its employees to ensure a safe and healthful workplace.

All agree that safety should be a top priority, but in UTSA's view, safety should be more than a priority—it should be a core value—a value integrated into the business operations of all association members.

I think this sentiment is echoed throughout UTSA, regardless of the size of our members. This is certainly a message that the association has conveyed for many years and we will continue our drive to improve safety and health efforts with increased intensity in the coming months and years.

I have recently partnered with UTSA to enhance the industry's safety program and drive for continuous improvement. Historically the safety record of the association's member companies has been good and with about 140,000 workers there have been very few plant fatalities in the industry over the past decade. Yet the association recognizes that additional steps must be taken to ensure the proper commitment, systems, and practices are in place at every facility so that every worker is properly protected. We are taking numerous steps that are proactive and substantive, and we are confident will make a marked improvement in our industry's injury and illness performance. Indeed, UTSA's overarching safety goal is zero injuries and illnesses and of course zero fatalities.

Additionally, UTSA's Board is driving the future of UTSA's safety program. To that end, the association has assembled an Advisory Group of outside safety and health experts to guide the

association as it puts its comprehensive workplace safety plan into action. I am proud to serve on this group along with my esteemed colleagues Mr. Wayne Punch, Safety and Health Director of Milliken and Company, and Mr. John Henshaw, the former OSHA administrator. I can safely say that all three of us would not participate if we did not believe the industry is serious about making measurable improvements.

UTSA is taking swift action to implement its plan for improvement. I took part in a meeting two weeks ago with the UTSA president and staff in which we outlined a comprehensive voluntary safety plan that goes above and beyond OSHA compliance. UTSA's plan will make a difference across the industry, and simply stated its goal is to: Significantly reduce the number of OSHA Recordable Rates and Dart Rates. The plan will include goal setting, best practices sharing, training, performance tracking, third-party audits, and industry-specific on-site training, safety tools, and programs.

Another action that the association is taking is establishing association-wide baseline numbers related to workplace injury and illness. This is especially significant since the Bureau of Labor Statistics current combines dry-cleaning businesses and possibly others with our industry's illness and injury data. We believe this does not accurately reflect the uniform and textile service industry's performance. Once assembled, the data will be shared with OSHA and the industry in order to set a foundation on which to build and track continuous improvement.

Perhaps the most important aspect of the plan will be the integration of the OSHA "Challenge" program into our efforts. Our goal is to assist every member company in improving workplace safety and health and to prepare each to qualify to participate in OSHA's VPP program.

World-class performance does not just mean compliance with OSHA standards. It means leading the industry in attaining injury and illness rates well below industry averages and continually improving, to create a safer workplace. Let me summarize by noting that UTSA's member companies are committed to providing a safe workplace for their employees. The association recognizes that not all facilities are the same and there is room for improvement. That is why the association is moving forward with a major safety and health improvement effort with the ultimate goal of improving workplace safety industry-wide.

This concludes my remarks, thank you for allowing me this opportunity to speak to you today and I welcome any questions you may have.