ORGANIZE:

Workplace resistance to injustice is possible! Be inspired by the workers at Wayfair who walked out in response to their employer’s work at these horrific detention centers.

Tips for organizing your workplace:

- Talk to your coworkers, inside and outside of work
- Invite people to coffee, find out how they feel about working on projects related to the southern border immigration crisis. If they feel opposed or conflicted, let them know they're not alone.
- Understand your rights as a worker. Check out the Lobby’s Labor Law Pamphlet and research labor laws in your state.
- Research your employer and confirm specific projects that are objectionable (Places to start: does your office do work for the GSA, including the Department of Homeland Security? Is there a "civic" branch of your company that designs sites of incarceration?)
- Find out what it would take for people to say no to working on these projects (for instance, would they approach a supervisor or boss with their concerns as part of a group? How big of a group would it need to be?)
- Join The Architecture Lobby’s and attend the next Organizer Training workshop to learn crucial skills.
- Need support? Contact The Architecture Lobby by sending us an email at info@architecture-lobby.org, or reach out to your nearest chapter.

FAQ:
Below are some questions you might encounter in a conversation with co-workers:

“What does it matter if I say “no” to working on detention centers or projects relating to ICE or CBP, how does that change anything?”

Beyond your individual ability to sleep at night, it doesn’t matter and is risky if you refuse alone. But, imagine if half of your office did? or half of the registered architects in your state did? Or if half of the AIA chapters said they would refuse? This is a call to not just refuse alone, but to organize others to do so. If we refuse together as a unit then we can change the power structures of the profession and work to end these inhumane practices.

“Someone is going to design the detention centers, so why not us?”

We imagine there are many things other people do that you don’t. And, in terms of your firm’s work, let someone else take it! We’re sure your office has passed up jobs for clients that are not
ORGANIZE (cont):

worth the hassle or have a bad reputation. Does your firm want to be associated with these unjust practices? Will it actually affect your ability to get other work or hire new employees? Also, if the only work left for architects in this country is that of jailing people then we’re really in trouble.

“Can I be fired for refusing to participate in this work?”

Likely Yes. Most states in the United States are “at-will” employment, generally meaning you can be fired without any cause excluding cases of discrimination. This is why TAL works to shift the power structures of workplaces through Unions and Cooperatives. The ability of your employer to terminate your employment at-will is why collective refusal and organizing the workplace is the only way forward. If you’re in trouble at work, the Lobby will have your back and activate our networks and the Solidarity Bloc to the best of our ability. Together we are stronger. Together we will win.

“I’m not political. Architecture isn’t political.” or “I don’t do politics”

A way we find helpful to think of politics is: The mechanisms of or how any group of people chooses to distribute resources and power amongst themselves. Everything is political in this way as it is affected by and is an expression of how power and resources are allocated, Architecture is especially so. In fact the pressures on your life that might make it difficult to worry about “politics” - such as long work hours, debt, and housing costs - are precisely politics and why taking a position is so critical.

“The AIA shouldn’t be biased or political”

Did you know the AIA spends over a million dollars in lobbying and political contributions almost every year? They lobby both democrats and republicans and many different departments on things such as Defense spending contracts, Department of Homeland Security grants, and supporting tax cuts for foreign real estate investors. It doesn’t get more “political” than that!

“These things are legal, the government itself is asking us to do them.”

What is legal is not always just. Additionally, courts are continuously blocking many of these new regulations as they conflict or are in opposition to existing laws. Throughout American history the people have needed to correct the ills of the government: From the abolition of slavery; to establishing worker’s rights such as child labor laws, the 8hr workday, and weekends; to women’s sufferage; to civil rights; to LGBTQ rights; and the Americans With Disabilities Act; People have risen up and continue the fight today to create a government that is constituted “of the people, by the people, and for the people”.