



Fourth District Honoree

Juana Melara

Activist

Juana Melara is a passionate activist fighting for the rights of women, especially those working in the hotel industry. As a local hotel worker in Long Beach, California, Ms. Melara and other organizers with the UNITE HERE Local 11 (UHL11) Union are fighting against the culture of sexual harassment in the hotel industry. UHL11 represents more than 23,000 workers employed in hotels, restaurants, airports, sports arenas, and convention centers throughout Southern California and Arizona. UHL11 is also an affiliate of UNITE HERE, an international labor union that represents 270,000 working people across North America.

Although faced with the risk of retaliation, Ms. Melara remains fearless and has maintained her stance as a vocal champion for worker protections. She continues to work with UHL11 to create a women's organizing training project to teach people how to go beyond resistance and win real solutions to the challenges they face.

Ms. Melara has recently been named TIME Magazine Person of the Year as part of a group of women now known as the "Silence Breakers." Through her tenacious advocacy, Ms. Melara has put a face to the hundreds of thousands of hotel workers who quietly and diligently perform their duties while facing grueling and even dangerous working conditions, while providing for her own family in the hotel services industry.

Through her perseverance and dedication, Ms. Melara is a role model and inspiration that reminds us of the dignity and respect that should always be given in all field of work.

