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From Ashes to Action: The Urgent Need for Labor Laws

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Shaken by the terrible Triangle Shirtwaist Factory fire, our city is still grieving. Surrounded by rising smoke and blocked by locked doors, more than a hundred workers died because safety was ignored in the name of profit. I stood with **conviction** on Fifth Avenue in the pouring rain, mourning with hordes of other New Yorkers as the funeral procession of the unidentified victims made their final journey last week. As Martha Bruere put it, "It is dawning on these sounds and thousands that such things do not have to be!" And although some people argue that stricter labor laws might hurt businesses, the truth is that workers' lives must come first. Despite business owners' concerns that stronger labor laws might be costly, the United States must pass labor laws to protect workers' lives by preventing unsafe factory conditions and stopping future tragedies like the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory fire from happening again.

Rising from the smoke after this **tragedy**, the truth about factory conditions can no longer be ignored. Factories aren't required to have fire safety measures such as unlocked doors, fire extinguishers, automatic sprinklers, and fire escapes. This puts workers at extreme risk during emergencies. In addition, factories aren't required to provide basic sanitary conditions such as toilets or washing facilities. Without laws enforcing these protections, owners could continue cutting corners to save

money. When the bodies of young women were carried into the streets, the public finally saw what workers had described for years: without enforced regulations, factories would remain deadly places. For this reason, we must act now, insisting on stronger protections so another disaster does not occur.

While it is understandable that owners fear financial losses, this argument ignores the reality that unsafe workplaces cost far more. Worried about their own profits, business owners claim that new labor laws will cost factories too much money and slow production. Business owners argue that paying for sprinklers, fireproof stairwells, and inspections could be a financial **burden** and put them at risk of closing. This priority is **preposterous**. Workers have long been facing exhausting hours and constant danger, simply begging for basic protections. Therefore, even though business concerns exist, they cannot outweigh the need to prioritize and protect human life.

In conclusion, even though some argue that tougher laws may inconvenience factory owners, the events of March 25 show that failing to protect workers leads to far greater consequences. To honor the victims and build a safer future, the United States must pass strict and enforceable labor laws that put human lives above business profits.