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WORK WEEK

HATS OFF: A U.S. cap company gets a hard look from universities.

In recent months, Ohio State University, the University of Iowa and other colleges have questioned or canceled contracts with New Era Cap Co., a closely held firm near Buffalo, N.Y. The schools are responding to allegations by the Worker Rights Consortium, an antisweatshop group that has dealt with companies abroad, that U.S. workers face unsafe conditions.

New Era says the scrutiny is due to a dispute with the Communications Workers of America union, which represents some of its employees. New Era's Tim Freer says the company plans to meet with WRC this month. "We want to make sure rights are respected, whether it's in Bangladesh or Buffalo," says WRC's Scott Nova.

He says the group doesn't take union money, though AFL-CIO official Linda Chavez-Thompson is one of 50 board members.