August 4, 2020

Dear Speaker Pelosi, Leader McConnell, Leader McCarthy, and Leader Schumer,

We write on behalf of 208 organizations from 44 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico, and 64 national organizations, all fighting to protect the health and lives of working people during the COVID-19 pandemic to express our deep concern about the Senate Republican corporate immunity bill.

In April, one month into the pandemic, corporate lobbyists from the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and the American Legislative Exchange Council began a concerted national campaign to get both Congress and state governments to grant corporations legal immunity from accountability for their workers’ and consumers’ health and safety. Between May and early July, corporate immunity bills or executive orders were enacted in 10 states: Utah, North Carolina, Oklahoma, Alabama, Louisiana, Wyoming, Iowa, Kansas, Arkansas, and Mississippi.

Legislators in those states were warned that these bills would exacerbate the health and safety crisis facing essential and frontline workers, but they did not listen. And since early June, all of those states have witnessed surging COVID-19 case numbers and deaths. Many of the outbreaks in these states have been linked to unsafe working conditions, including in meatpacking and food processing plants, agriculture, and warehouses.

The Senate Republican corporate immunity bill would replicate this dynamic at a national level, leading to unsafe working conditions because employers would be incentivized to cut costs on safety measures they might otherwise take if the threat of legal action remained. It would be an outright disaster for Congress to encourage such behavior. If the Senate Republican proposal is enacted, there will be a race to the bottom in workplace health and safety, as even law-abiding employers will be disincentivized from implementing proper health and safety protections—endangering working people, their families, and their communities.

The Senate Republican corporate immunity bill would also let employers off the hook for ‘pandemic-related’ violations of minimum wage and overtime laws, discrimination laws, paid leave laws, and more. But a global pandemic is no excuse for employers to flout long-standing workplace protections.

Granting employers immunity from liability for COVID-related claims would especially endanger Black, Latinx, Indigenous, and other workers of color and women who make up a large share of workers in essential and in-person reopening jobs—even as communities of color have been the most vulnerable to coronavirus infection and death.

We therefore urge you to immediately drop consideration of the Senate Republican corporate immunity bill, and of any other legislation that grants businesses such immunity.

Sincerely,

The Undersigned Organizations
Alabama
Alabama Arise
NELA-Alabama
SPLC Action Fund

Arizona
Arizona Center for Economic Progress
Workers' Rights Clinic, James E. Rogers College of Law

Arkansas
Arkansas Advocates for Children and Families

California
350 Silicon Valley
Alvin Dayoan
APALA, Alameda County Chapter
Bet Tzedek Legal Services
Closing the Women's Wealth Gap Consumer Federation of California
Consumers for Auto Reliability and Safety
California Rural Legal Assistance Foundation
Equal Rights Advocates
Housing and Economic Rights Advocates
Labor Occupational Health Program
Legal Aid at Work
Legal Aid of Marin
Long Beach Alliance for Clean Energy
Restaurant Opportunities Center of Los Angeles
Restaurant Opportunities Center of the Bay
The Greenlining Institute
Unite Here Local 30
Worksafe

Connecticut
CT Working Families
SEIU - CT State Council
United Auto Workers, Region 9A

Delaware
Community Legal Aid Society, Inc.

District of Columbia
APALA DC Chapter
Fund for Community Reparations for Autistic People of Color's Interdependence, Survival, & Empowerment
Restaurant Opportunities Center of DC

Florida
Earth Action, Inc.
Miami Freedom Project
Opportunity For All Floridians
SEIU Florida
The Common Ground Project

Georgia
Georgia AFL-CIO
Georgia Budget and Policy Institute

Idaho
United Vision for Idaho

Illinois
Interfaith Worker Justice
ROC Chicago
Shifting Hearts and Minds

Indiana
Indiana Institute for Working Families
Women4Change

Iowa
Iowa Citizen Action Network
Iowa Citizens for Community Improvement
Iowa Main Street Alliance
LULAC Iowa
SEIU Local 199

Kansas
UFCW District Union Local Two

Kentucky
Kentucky Center for Economic Policy
Kentucky Equal Justice Center

Louisiana
ROC-UNITED-NOLA
Workplace Justice Project at Loyola Law Clinic

Maine
Cambodian Community Association of Maine
Maine AFL-CIO
Maine Center for Economic Policy
Maine Employment Lawyers Association
Maine Labor Group on Health
Maine Service Employees Association
Maine Small Business Coalition
Maine Women's Lobby

Maryland
APALA Maryland
Centro de los Derechos del Migrante
Congregation of Our Lady of Charity of the Good Shepherd, U.S. Provinces
MDC Consulting and Training
National Advocacy Center of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd
Public Justice Center
SEIU Local 500

Massachusetts
Corporate Accountability
Harvard Parity Project

Michigan
11th District Democrats
First United Methodist Church of Ferndale
Flint Rising
Michigan APALA
Michigan Nurses Association
Michigan Parity Project
Restaurant Opportunities Center of Michigan (ROC Michigan)
SEIU Healthcare Michigan
SEIU Local 517M
SEIU Michigan State Council

Minnesota
Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy
SEIU MN State Council

Mississippi
Mississippi Workers’ Center for Human Rights
Restaurant Opportunities Centers United – Mississippi

Missouri
SEIU Healthcare Missouri/Kansas
SEIU MO/KS State Council

Nebraska
Autistic Women & Nonbinary Network

Nevada
Battle Born Progress
Make It Work Nevada
Make the Road Nevada
Progressive Leadership Alliance of Nevada

New Hampshire
NH AFL CIO
Rights & Democracy - NH
University of New Hampshire School of Law - People's Parity Project

New Jersey
HPAE, Health Professionals and Allied Employees, AFT/ AFL-CIO
National Workrights Institute
New Jersey Citizen Action
New Jersey Policy Perspective

New Mexico
Native Women Lead
New Mexico Center on Law and Poverty
New Mexico Immigrant Law Center

New York
Asian American Legal Defense and Education Fund (AALDEF)
Citizen Action of New York
Communications Workers of America, District 1
DRUM - Desis Rising Up & Moving
ECE On The Move
Justice in Motion
LatinoJustice PRLDEF
Legal Services Staff Association, NOLSW/UAW 2320
Make the Road New York
National Center for Law and Economic Justice
National Employment Lawyers Association/New York
New York Communities for Change
New York Taxi Workers Alliance
Nobody Leaves Mid-Hudson
NY NJ Regional Joint Board, Workers United/SEIU
Occupational Health Clinical Center, Syracuse
Retail, Wholesale and Department Store Union (RWDSU)
ROC-NY
SEIU32BJ
The Legal Aid Society
United University Professions
We All Rise
Western New York Council on Occupational Safety And Health
Worker Justice Center of New York

North Carolina
Equality North Carolina
NC-NELA
North Carolina Justice Center
ROC City Of Oaks

Ohio
Move to Amend Ohio Network
Ohio Citizen Action

Oregon
350PDX
Disability Rights Oregon
Northwest Workers’ Justice Project
Oregon AFL-CIO
SEIU Oregon
UFCW Local 555

Pennsylvania
Asian Pacific American Labor Alliance (APALA) Pittsburgh Chapter
Philly CLUW
Pittsburgh United
The Restaurant Opportunities Center of Pennsylvania
Women’s Law Project

Puerto Rico
Taller Salud

Rhode Island
Direct Action for Rights and Equality
The Rhode Island Center for Justice

South Carolina
Women’s Rights and Empowerment Network

Tennessee
Restaurant Opportunities Centers-Music City
SEIU Tennessee State Council
Tennessee AFL-CIO Labor Council
Tennessee Citizen Action

Texas
Asian Pacific American Labor Alliance (APALA)
Border Workers United
Equal Justice Center
Every Texan
Proyecto Azteca, Inc.
Rio Grande Valley Equal Voice Network
Tarrant County Central Labor Council AFL-CIO
Texas Progressive Action Network
Texas Watch
Workers Defense Action Fund
Vermont
Rights & Democracy - VT

Virginia
Virginia AFL-CIO
Virginia Poverty Law Center

Washington
350 Seattle
AFT Washington
Asian Pacific American Labor Alliance, AFL-CIO, Seattle chapter
Casa Latina
Clark County Volunteer Attorney Program
Fix Democracy First
Inlandboatmen’s Union of the Pacific - Marine Division of the ILWU
Our Revolution Washington
PROTEC17 - Professional & Technical Employees, Local 17
QLaw Foundation of Washington
Seattle University School of Law Labor & Employment Law Association
SEIU 775
SEIU 925
SEIU Healthcare 1199NW
SEIU6 Property Services NW
Teamsters 117
Unemployment Law Project
Washington Community Action Network
Washington Defender Association
Washington Federation of State Employees/AFSCME Council 28
Washington Progressive Party
Washington State Alliance for Retired Americans
Washington State Council of County and City Employees/AFSCME Council 2
Washington State Labor Council, AFL-CIO
Working Washington/Fair Work Center

West Virginia
National Association of Social Workers West Virginia Chapter
Our Future WV
Rise Up WV
West Virginia Center on Budget and Policy
WV Center on Budget and Policy
WV Citizen Action Group

Wisconsin
Citizen Action of Wisconsin
End Domestic Abuse Wisconsin
Kids Forward
Milwaukee Area Service & Hospitality Workers Organization
SEIU Healthcare Wisconsin
SEIU Wisconsin State Council
Wisconsin Faith Voices for Justice

National
AF-CIO
AFSCME
Alianza Nacional de Campesinas
Alliance for Justice
Alliance for Retired Americans
American Association for Justice
American Association of University Women (AAUW)
Americans for Democratic Action (ADA)
Asian Pacific American Labor Alliance, AFL-CIO
Bend the Arc Jewish Action
Center for American Progress
Center for Constitutional Rights
Center for Justice & Democracy
Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP)
Coalition of Labor Union Women
Coalition on Human Needs
Communications Workers of America (CWA)
Consumer Federation of America
Consumers for Auto Reliability and Safety Demos
Earthjustice
Economic Policy Institute
Equal Rights Advocates

Food Chain Workers Alliance
Friends of the Earth U.S.
Greenpeace USA
HEAL (Health, Environment, Agriculture, Labor) Food Alliance
Health Care for America Now
Hispanic Federation
In the Public Interest
International Brotherhood of Teamsters
Jobs to Move America
Justice in Aging
Legal Momentum: The Women’s Legal Defense and Education Fund
MomsRising
Move to Amend Coalition
Muslim Public Affairs Council (MPAC)
National Association of Social Workers
National Council for Occupational Safety & Health
National Domestic Workers Alliance
National Education Association
National Employment Law Project
National Employment Lawyers Association
National Immigration Law Center
National Organization for Women
National Partnership for Women & Families
National Rural Social Work Caucus
Oxfam America
People’s Parity Project
People’s Action
Public Advocacy for Kids
Public Citizen
Public Justice
Public Rights Project
Service Employees International Union (SEIU)
Shriver Center on Poverty Law
Sierra Club
Tax March
Temp Worker Justice
The Center for Popular Democracy
Union of Concerned Scientists
UNITE HERE
Voices for Progress
Workplace Fairness