

April 29, 2020

Dear Member of Congress:

The undersigned 202 worker rights, public health, and consumer advocacy organizations urge Congress to pass the COVID-19 Every Worker Protection Act of 2020. This bill will require the Occupational Health and Safety Administration (OSHA) to immediately issue an Emergency Temporary Standard (ETS) to protect all workers who continue to go to work during the pandemic from exposure to the coronavirus that causes COVID-19. Without specific safety mandates, businesses are left with little direction, and the result is rapid spread of the disease in the workplace and into our communities. This is needed not just for those who are currently still working but is equally important as we make plans to re-open the economy, so that employers will implement adequate precautions to ensure that unsafe conditions do not lead to a second wave of infections.

Currently, there is only one OSHA standard enforcing the protection of workers from infectious diseases, and it applies only to bloodborne pathogens. There is no standard protecting workers from COVID-19. Though OSHA should have issued an ETS weeks ago, it has not done so and indicated no willingness to do so. Workers have no protections—they are on their own in this pandemic.

Therefore, Congress must take the important step of requiring OSHA to issue mandated protections that will help reduce the spread in the workplace. Many thousands of workers have already become ill from workplace exposure to COVID-19 and hundreds have died. The number of confirmed cases and fatalities in the workplace that are related to COVID-19 are growing exponentially every day.

For example, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reported that over 16,000 healthcare workers have been infected to date with coronavirus, and over 41 have died. Due to lack of access to testing in many parts of the country, we know this number represents only a fraction of the frontline healthcare workers who are sacrificing their personal health and well-being to provide medical care to patients.

The COVID-19 pandemic has also spread through many other workplaces including grocery stores<sup>1</sup>, meatpacking<sup>2</sup> and poultry plants, warehouses, and among transportation<sup>3</sup> workers to name a few—sickening thousands and killing dozens and dozens of workers just in the last two weeks. Furthermore, these jobs have high concentrations of women and Black and brown workers, exposing our most vulnerable communities<sup>4</sup> to further economic inequities in addition to inadequate safety protections.

Worker reports from all over the country are exposing the fault lines in our prevention efforts. Workers are required to congregate in break rooms, in locker rooms, are working shoulder to shoulder or are interacting with the public often with little or no protections<sup>5</sup> from COVID-19.

CDC and OSHA have issued no mandates that require that employers implement any protective measures. All OSHA or CDC have released are voluntary guidance for employers to follow to mitigate workplace exposure to COVID-19. These guidance documents and posters are advisory, not enforceable. Employers can choose to implement these measures or ignore them. As the number of workers infected with and dying from this disease continues to grow, and as we see spread in communities where workers live, it is clear that a voluntary approach to worker safety is not mitigating this public health disaster.

As the public is being advised to practice safety precautions like frequent hand washing, social

distancing, sanitizing hands, and wearing masks, the federal government must ensure that all workers have the same health and safety precautions in place and provided by their employers.

Worker health is public health. We urge you to pass the COVID-19 Every Worker Protection Act to protect our brave and valuable workers, which will mitigate the spread of COVID-19 and protect our communities and the public.

Sincerely,

A Better Balance  
Advocating Opportunity  
AFSCME  
Air Line Pilots Association International  
Alaska Community Action on Toxics  
Alianza Nacional de Campesinas  
Allied Progress  
American Association for Justice  
AMERICAN FEDERATION OF TEACHERS, AFL-CIO  
American Muslim Health Professionals  
American Public Health Association  
American Public Health Association/APHN  
Americans for Democratic Action (ADA)  
Animal Legal Defense Fund  
APHA Public Health Nursing Section  
Arizona Center for Economic Progress  
Asian Pacific American Labor Alliance, AFL-CIO  
Association of Flight Attendants - CWA  
Association of Occupational and Environmental Clinics  
Autistic Women & Nonbinary Network  
BCTGM International Union  
Bet Tzedek Legal Services  
BlueGreen Alliance  
Border Workers United  
Bucks County Central Labor Council  
Cathleen Dennis RN and consumer  
Center for Disability Rights  
Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP)  
Center for Progressive Reform  
Center for Public Policy Priorities  
Center for Science in the Public Interest  
Center for Worker Justice of Eastern Iowa  
Central Iowa Center for Independent Living  
Centro de los Derechos del Migrante, Inc.  
Centro Legal de la Raza  
Chicago Jobs Council  
Chicago's Legal Aid Society  
Child Welfare League of America  
Coalition of Labor Union Women  
Coalition on Human Needs

Colorado Fiscal Institute  
Communications Workers of America (CWA)  
Consumer Federation of America  
CRLA  
CUNY Graduate School of Public Health and Health Policy  
Disability Rights Education & Defense Fund (DREDF)  
Disciples Center for Public Witness  
Disciples Refugee & Immigration Ministries  
Economic Policy Institute  
Environmental Health Strategy Center  
Environmental Working Group  
Equal Justice Center  
Equal Rights Advocates  
Equality North Carolina  
Fair Work Center  
Family Values @ Work  
Farmworker Association of Florida  
Farmworker Justice  
Food & Water Action  
Food Chain Workers Alliance  
Food Policy Action  
Freedom Network USA  
Futures Without Violence  
Good Jobs First  
Government Accountability Project  
Hawaii Appleseed Center for Law and Economic Justice  
HPAE  
Human Impact Partners  
Human Rights Watch  
Indiana Institute for Working Families  
Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy  
Interfaith Worker Justice of East Tennessee  
International Chemical Workers Union Council (ICWUC)  
International Union, UAW  
Iowa Federation of Labor, AFL-CIO  
IUE-CWA  
Jobs to Move America  
Jobs with Justice of East Tennessee

Justice At Last, Inc.  
Justice at Work (Pennsylvania)  
Justice for Migrant Women  
Justice in Motion  
Kalmanovitz Initiative for Labor & the Working  
Poor of Georgetown University  
Kentucky Center for Economic Policy  
Kentucky Equal Justice Center  
Kids Forward  
Knox Area Workers' Memorial Day Committee  
La Union del Pueblo Entero (LUPE)  
Labor Occupational Health Program  
Laborers' Health & Safety Fund of North  
America  
Lambda Legal  
LatinoJustice PRLDEF  
Laundry, Dist. & Food Service Joint Bd. Workers  
United  
League of Conservation Voters (LCV)  
Legal Aid at Work  
Legal Aid Justice Center  
Legal Voice  
Local 881 United Food and Commercial  
Workers (UFCW)  
Long Beach Alliance for Clean Energy  
MANA, A National Latina Organization  
Massachusetts Coalition for Occupational Safety  
& Health (MassCOSH)  
Memphis Center for Independent Living  
Michigan League for Public Policy  
Migrant Clinicians Network  
Mississippi Workers, A Center for Human  
Rights  
MomsRising  
Montefiore Medical Center  
Mujeres divinas  
Muslim Public Affairs Council (MPAC)  
NAACP  
National Advocacy Center of the Sisters of the  
Good Shepherd  
National Association of Social Workers  
National Center for Law and Economic Justice  
National Center for Transgender Equality  
National Council for Occupational Safety &  
Health  
National Council of Jewish Women  
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 Wildlife Federation  
National Women's Law Center  
Natural Resources Defense Council  
Nebraska Appleseed  
NELP Action Fund  
NETWORK Lobby for Catholic Social Justice  
New Jersey Policy Perspective  
New Mexico Center on Law and Poverty  
New Solutions: A Journal of Environmental and  
Occupational Health Policy  
New York Committee for Occupational Safety  
and Health  
NJ State Industrial Union Council  
NJSNA  
Nontoxic Certified / MADE SAFE  
North Carolina Justice Center  
Northwest Workers' Justice Project  
NYCOSH  
OCA - Asian Pacific American Advocates  
Oxfam America  
PathWays PA  
People's Parity Project  
PhilaPOSH  
Philaposh  
PODER  
Pride at Work  
Public Advocacy for Kids (PAK)  
Public Citizen  
Public Health Nursing Section, American Public  
Health Association  
Public Justice  
Public Justice Center  
Restaurant Opportunities Center United  
RESULTS DC  
Retail, Wholesale and Department Store Union  
(RWDSU)  
RICOSH  
SafeWork Washington  
Santa Clara County Wage Theft Coalition  
Sciencecorps  
SEIU HCPA  
Shore Nurses Union/NYSNA  
Shriver Center on Poverty Law  
Sierra Club  
Sisters of Mercy of the Americas Justice Team  
SPLC Action Fund  
Steel Valley Authority (SVA)  
Temp Worker Justice  
Tennessee Immigrant and Refugee Rights  
Coalition  
The Forum for Youth Investment

The Fund for Community Reparations for  
Autistic People of Color's Interdependence,  
Survival, and Empowerment  
The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human  
Rights  
The Legal Aid Society  
The University of New Mexico Hospital  
Transport Workers Union of America  
Tufts University School of Medicine  
TWU Local 591  
UFCW Local 152  
UnidosUS  
Union for Reform Judaism  
UNITE HERE International Union  
United Food and Commercial Workers  
International Union  
United Steelworkers (USW)  
UnityPoint Health  
University of Illinois at Chicago School of Public  
Health  
University of Louisville

University of Maryland  
Utility Workers Union of America, AFL-CIO  
Voices for Progress  
Washington Lawyers' Committee for Civil  
Rights and Urban Affairs  
We are CASA  
West Virginia Center on Budget and Policy  
Western North Carolina Workers' Center  
Williamson County and Cities Health District  
WisCOSH, Inc.  
Women's Rights and Empowerment Network  
Work Environment Council of New Jersey  
Worker Justice Center of New York  
Workers Defense Project  
Workers' Rights Clinic, James E. Rogers College  
of Law, University of Arizona  
Workers' Rights Institute, Georgetown Law  
Center  
Working Washington  
Workplace Fairness  
Worksafe

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.usatoday.com/story/money/2020/04/14/coronavirus-claims-lives-30-grocery-store-workers-union-says/2987754001/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.npr.org/sections/coronavirus-live-updates/2020/04/17/837530494/workers-advocate-says-south-dakota-pork-plant-delayed-action-on-coronavirus>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/08/nyregion/coronavirus-nyc-mta-subway.html>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.vox.com/coronavirus-covid19/2020/4/18/21226225/coronavirus-black-cdc-infection>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/22/business/economy/coronavirus-osh-workers.html>