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Title: To Support an Essential Workers Bill of Rights

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To Support an Essential Workers Bill of Rights

WHEREAS, the City of Columbus has been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic and the resulting economic crisis that has spread throughout the United States, impacting the lives and livelihood of thousands of workers and families in the city; and

WHEREAS, since the beginning of the crisis, everyday heroes have emerged from every neighborhood in the city, steadfastly continuing to do the work that is needed to keep our country and our communities running; and

WHEREAS, because these workers were needed to keep the City of Columbus running, they have been designated as “essential workers,” necessitating that they continue to go to work despite lock-down orders that were put in place around the country to protect public health and safety; and

WHEREAS, essential workers include, but are not limited to, domestic workers, farmworkers, first responders, doctors, teachers, nurses, healthcare and home care workers, grocery store and drug store employees, food service workers, federal, state, and municipal employees, janitorial staff, delivery drivers, warehouse workers, transportation workers, frontline financial workers, and childcare workers; and

WHEREAS, even as essential workers have been celebrated for their commitment to the community and their neighbors, many are low-wage workers who face risks to their health and safety at workplaces, some of which lack proper COVID-19 controls, protocols, and personal protective equipment, and face higher rates of infection, serious illness, and death; and

WHEREAS, the workplace health and safety risks posed by COVID-19 to essential workers often compound longstanding workplace inequities and injustices including low wages, lack of overtime pay, lack of fair scheduling

practices, no paid leave or health benefits, and active efforts to limit workers's rights to collectively bargain; and

WHEREAS, due to the sectors in which they are disproportionately employed, Black, Latina, and immigrant women are more likely to be represented amongst essential workers at the greatest risk and with the fewest protections; and

WHEREAS, many essential workers have been excluded from the benefits of federal coronavirus relief funds and the existing safety net, causing tremendous economic stress for individuals and families due to the ongoing impacts of the COVID-19 health and economic crisis; and

WHEREAS, the COVID-19 crisis has revealed with acute clarity the longstanding inequities impacting essential workers that require the sustained focus of all levels of government to find policy solutions for these workers and their families; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF COLUMBUS: That this Council does hereby commit to ensuring equity, security, and benefits for all workers, and calls on the State of Ohio and Federal governments to do the same, with a focus on enforceable protections for essential workers exposed to additional risks from their work during the COVID-19 pandemic, by providing for all workers, regardless of status:

1. Health and safety protections at work, including healthcare security.
2. Living wages.
3. Job quality standards including those collectively bargained for by union members.
4. Universal paid sick, family, and medical leave.
5. Protection from retaliation for whistleblowers.
6. Proper job classification that ensures no one is unfairly excluded from basic labor protections.
7. Affordable and accessible childcare for every working family.
8. Respect for the dignity of all work and the expertise of individuals in their fields.
9. Accountability for companies that shirk their responsibilities to their workers.