

Communication from Public

Name:

Date Submitted: 01/26/2021 11:27 AM

Council File No: 20-1609

Comments for Public Posting: Please see attachment. "CF 20-1609 Hazard Pay - SFVYD"



January 26, 2021

Los Angeles City Council President Nury Martinez
200 North Spring Street, Suite 470
Los Angeles, CA 90012

RE: Council file number 20-1609 Support for Hazard Pay for Grocery Workers

Dear Honorable Council President Martinez and LA City Council Members,

On behalf of the San Fernando Valley Young Democrats, we are writing to express our strong support for the emergency, temporary ordinance of \$5.00 hazard pay for grocery workers in the City of Los Angeles. The San Fernando Valley Young Democrats for 27 years has advocated for progressive policies and political inclusion of young people. We are also a member of the Fair Workweek LA coalition which is a coalition of over 30 community groups, including health advocates, clergy, worker rights groups, as well as, grocery and retail workers.

Together with UFCW 770, their members, as well as, grocery workers from across the city of Los Angeles we have been calling on grocery store corporations to reinstate hazard pay as companies see record profits. Major grocers, such as Kroger, which owns Food 4 Less and Ralphs, agreed to pay Los Angeles grocery store workers a \$2 an hour hazard pay increase in March, only to end it six weeks later in May. Meanwhile grocery store companies have seen their net earnings skyrocket this year, with Kroger reporting a 15.8% increase in sales and net earnings increase of just under 100% in the first three quarters of 2020 as compared to the first three quarters in 2019.

Grocery workers are the unsung heroes of this pandemic and have been risking their lives and been on the frontlines for months providing a lifeline for our communities and keeping us fed. Many grocery workers have become the primary earners in their households as families struggle under the combined weight of COVID-19 and widespread unemployment. Working Angelinos, especially families of color, have also not been able to shelter in place throughout the pandemic because they are more likely to hold essential jobs and thus face an increased exposure to COVID.

As COVID-19 cases soar and Intensive Care Unit capacity reaches a breaking point in Los Angeles, grocery store workers continue to face the risk of infection and endure hazardous working conditions. To date, over 2,000 UFCW 770 members have contracted COVID-19. Nationwide, more than 200 UFCW members have died of COVID-19. We know the number is much higher due to lack of reporting by all grocery chains.

This is the right policy for this unprecedented moment. Grocery workers deserve hazard pay. Large grocery chains can afford it. Other large cities throughout California are poised to create

similar policy solutions. Los Angeles must lead as it always has in fighting for the rights and dignity of working people. Thank you for your leadership.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Xochitl M. Medrano". The script is fluid and cursive, with the first letter of each name being capitalized and prominent.

Xochitl Medrano
SFVYD President

Communication from Public

Name: Tim James

Date Submitted: 01/26/2021 09:08 AM

Council File No: 20-1609

Comments for Public Posting: Please accept the attached letter for your consideration. Thank you. Tim James, California Grocers Association.

January 26, 2021



The Honorable Curren Price
Chair, Economic Development and
Jobs Committee
200 North Spring Street
Los Angeles, CA 90012

RE: Premium Pay for Grocery Workers

Dear Supervisor Solis,

On behalf of Los Angeles City grocers, I write with concerns about the recommendation regarding hazard pay to grocery workers. Our industry shares your appreciation for critical infrastructure employees across the grocery spectrum. This is why grocery companies were at the forefront of implementing COVID-19 safety protocols, before being asked to do so, and have been leaders in providing additional compensation to employees.

Unfortunately, the current motion submitted as part of the agenda item is missing important information and uses data not fully applicable to Los Angeles or which is inaccurate. Without consultation with the grocery industry to provide additional information, we are concerned the council will make policy decisions based on flawed information and reasoning.

The impact of a less than fully informed decision will result in unintended and avoidable negative consequences for the city and grocers that could include increased grocery prices, limit access to grocery stores, and impact workers. This issue is best served by an immediate and genuine discussion with the grocery industry, not minimal notice of a decision coupled with a threat of action.

In addition to the concerns above, the recommendation limits its scope to only a small subset of essential critical infrastructure workers and ignores all other workers interacting regularly with the public in the same manner. As we all sadly know, COVID-19 impacts do not discriminate in any way. If a situation has risen to an emergency level in one work setting it would only be reasonable to assume the same concern exists in other similar settings with other critical infrastructure employees.

COVID-19 and its impacts are nothing short of a tragedy and have required a number of emergency responses. For the last ten months, the grocery industry, often in partnership with state and local governments, has implemented unprecedented efforts to ensure the safety of our employees and consumers. These efforts include implementing social distancing protocols, expansive leave for workers impacted by COVID-19, record levels of additional compensation, hiring of new workers numbering in the tens of thousands in Los Angeles County alone, and remaining open with a still impacted and limited supply chain.

PAGE 2
January 26, 2021



CGA and the grocery industry have partnered with the City of Los Angeles successfully on several emergency issues during the pandemic. Unfortunately, on this specific issue the city has chosen not to engage the grocery industry or provide any reasoning or justification to raise this issue to the point of requiring the extraordinary powers granted by the city's declaration of emergency. Again, the best course of action is an immediate and genuine consultation with the grocery industry. Failing this we believe there are significant policy and legal concerns, including potential for damages, and ask the city not to move forward with the recommendation as proposed.

Thank you for your consideration and we look forward to a continued partnership with the City of Los Angeles to combat COVID-19.

Sincerely,



Tim James
California Grocers Association

CC: Members, City Council, City of Los Angeles