

Communication from Public

Name: Rabbi Daniel Chorny
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Comments for Public Posting: My name is Rabbi Daniel Chorny and I live in Los Angeles City Council District 5, represented by Paul Koretz. I'm writing to express my strong support for the emergency, temporary ordinance of \$5.00 hazard pay for grocery workers in the City of Los Angeles. Grocery and drug retail workers have risked their lives to keep our communities fed and connected to the critical resources they have needed throughout the pandemic. Many grocery and drug retail workers are BIPOC women and have become the primary earners in their households as families struggle under the combined weight of COVID-19 and widespread unemployment. Working Angelenos, 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 the virus. Members of UFCW770 and grocery workers across the city of Los Angeles have been calling on grocery store corporations to reinstate hazard pay as companies see record profits. Major grocers quietly let the hazard pay they once offered at the start of the pandemic expire as COVID rates soar and Intensive Care Unit capacities are at a breaking point. Yet, workers continue to face hazardous working conditions and risk their health in order to provide life saving resources for our communities. The Jewish tradition teaches that all humans are created equal, therefore when one risks their life for another, that generates a debt that can never fully be repaid. Additionally, we are instructed not to oppress the poor (who disproportionately represent those who work on grocery stores and other essential services) and to not withhold a person's wages unjustly. As the second largest Jewish population in America, Los Angeles must reflect this segment's values and the broader cause of promoting justice and equity for all her residents. This is the right policy for this unprecedented moment. Los Angeles must lead as it always has in fighting for the rights and dignity of working people. Thank you for your leadership.