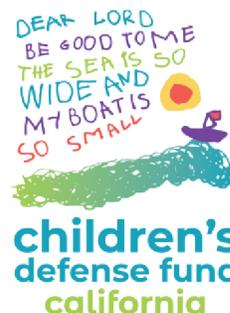


January 27, 2021

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 Children's Defense Fund-California 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. Since 1998, CDF-CA has been working to ensure high-need children and families have access to economic stability; comprehensive health and mental health care; high quality education; and respectful, rehabilitative and effective supports in justice systems. CDF-CA is a state office of the Children's Defense Fund, the national child advocacy organization with over 40 years experience working on behalf of children and families across the country.

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.

Over the last couple of months, community groups such as ours, grocery workers and UFCW 770 have been calling on grocery store corporations to reinstate hazard pay as companies see record profits. For example, 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 last year as compared to the first three quarters in 2019.

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. 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, appearing to read "Shimica Gaskins".

Shimica Gaskins
Executive Director
Children's Defense Fund-California