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August 24, 2021

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

**RE: VAX UP LA/ Covid 19 Vaccination Requirement Eligible Indoor Spaces Including Retail
(Council File 21-0878)**

Dear Council President Martinez and Fellow Councilmembers:

On behalf of The National Council of Jewish Women Los Angeles. I want to express our support for your leadership regarding the above referenced council action

NCJW|LA is a section of the National Council of Jewish Women (NCJW), a grassroots organization of volunteers and advocates who turn progressive ideals into action. NCJW | LA has served the needs of Los Angeles women and children for more than 100 years. Inspired by Jewish values, we pursue social justice by focusing on the advancement of equity and social justice for women and their families. We are developing programs which ensure high-impact outcomes through a solution-focused approach, grounded in the values of respect, justice, resilience, and community participation.

As you know grocery and retail workers have been deemed essential workers during this Covid 19 pandemic, they continue to experience some of the highest rates of infection. On top of this they have been subject to anti-maskers and anti-vaxxers, lack of on-site testing and social distancing, poor contact tracing, low staffing, and increased violence and theft. Just a couple weeks ago, a Rite Aid worker was tragically shot and killed while a customer tried to steal beer. This is unconscionable and unsustainable as we seek to recover from the devastation of the pandemic.

Therefore, we strongly recommend that this ordinance include a well-trained, full-time health and safety officer for each retail establishment. It is impossible for retail workers to maintain the store inside and enforce the vaccine requirement outside. Too often companies push the burden of enforcement onto their employees who are already understaffed. For example, in the City of West Hollywood an employee is assigned to each grocery store to enforce Covid 19 protocols including the mask mandate.

A similar policy requirement can be included in this ordinance. The health and safety officer could enforce the vaccine and mask mandate and any other Covid 19 orders. This position could also be another source of protection for workers and customers and monitor suspicious activity entering the retail establishment. A designated person, a health and safety officer could save the lives of thousands of Angelenos as we navigate the unprecedented nature of this pandemic.

We strongly encourage the Los Angeles City Council to do everything to make this policy successful through strong enforcement. Retail companies must be part of the solution and staff their stores accordingly. During this crucial moment in the pandemic, Los Angeles should continue to lead and set precedent for other cities and counties to follow.

Thank you

Nabila Sosa
Advocacy Program Manager