

April 30, 2020

The Honorable Eric Holcomb
Office of the Governor
Statehouse
Indianapolis, Indiana 46204-2797

Dear Governor Holcomb:

On behalf of thousands of members of UFCW Local 700 who work in meatpacking and poultry plants in Indiana, I urge you to use the full weight of your health and safety authority to implement and enforce the CDC and OSHA Meat and Poultry Processing Workers and Employers Guidance issued on April 26, 2020.

On April 28, the Administration issued an executive order requiring meat packing and processing to remain open during the pandemic. While we share the concern over the food supply, this executive order fails to address the safety of the workers who are putting their lives on the line during this pandemic.

Meat and poultry slaughter and processing workers are essential to ensuring that every American is able to continue to access the food they need to feed their families. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) guidance is a step in the right direction, but it needs to be implemented and enforced to protect these workers from further spread of COVID-19.

UFCW Local 700 urges you to require employers in Indiana to do the following:

- **Enforce Physical Distancing:** Plants must reconfigure the workplace to achieve physical distancing of at least six feet between workers, both on the production floor and off. Barriers, such as plexiglass, can be used to reinforce the six feet distancing, but are not a substitute for social distancing. This type of distancing may require the speed of the line to be reduced, in order to achieve a reduction or minimization in the spread of the virus.
- **Provide Respirators:** All workers on the production floor should be provided with N-95 respirators, which will provide the level of protection needed to protect workers from inhaling virus particles. Employers must additionally do the following to maintain the integrity of the respirators:
 - Provide a new respirator at the beginning of every shift;
 - Provide fit-testing;
 - Replace respirators if damaged or contaminated;
 - Follow the current CDC guidelines for disinfecting and storing respirators, if respirators are reused;

Joseph M. Chorpenning II
International Vice President
President UFCW Local 700

Michael D. Merrell
Secretary/Treasurer

- Provide training on proper donning and doffing procedures, in languages workers understand; and
- Provide additional time for hand hygiene and for proper donning and doffing of respirators.

- **Provide Testing:** All workers, including management, who are currently working in the plant, should be tested for COVID-19. Rapid testing of workers, as they enter the workplace, will ensure that workers carrying the virus are not entering the workplace.

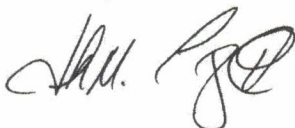
- **Provide Mandatory Paid Quarantine:** Provide two full weeks of paid leave for all workers who test positive for COVID-19 and provide paid leave to those workers who were in close contact with the infected individual to ensure that the nearby workers are not infected or exhibiting symptoms and to mitigate the spread of COVID-19 in the workplace.

- **Protect Workers From Retaliation:** UFCW believes that strong, anti-retaliation protections must be in place in order to ensure that workers who feel ill, or who are suffering from COVID-19, can remain at home, in quarantine for the full period of time recommended by the CDC, until it is safe to return to work. Workers must be encouraged to report any symptoms of illness, or of COVID-19, while at work, as well as any other safety and health hazards, and not suffer any negative consequences for doing so.

As we all know, meatpacking and poultry workers have been working tirelessly since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic to protect our country's food supply. The CDC/OSHA guidance is only effective if enforced by Governors like you. Urgent and mandatory action is needed to protect meat and poultry processing workers, the communities they serve, and our nation's food supply.

Thank you, and I look forward to discussing these issues further.

Sincerely,



Joseph M. Chorpenning II
Vice President, UFCW International Union
President, UFCW Local 700