

April 9, 2020

To: Governor Ned Lamont
Connecticut state and federal elected officials

From: 45 Connecticut community, labor, environmental and faith organizations

Connecticut Must Support All Workers – Including Undocumented Workers - During the COVID-19 Crisis

The COVID-19 pandemic has created a public health and economic crisis in Connecticut. Low-wage and immigrant workers are among the most vulnerable, particularly immigrants without authorized federal immigration status. Connecticut is home to approximately 100,000 undocumented immigrant workers. Tens of thousands of U.S. citizen children in Connecticut have an undocumented parent. Undocumented workers pay about \$400 million in state and local taxes annually. Yet they are currently left out of every relief program.

Undocumented workers are disproportionately likely to own small businesses and to work in the sectors that have been hardest hit by coronavirus-related closures. However, workers without federal immigration status – and their US citizen families -- are largely excluded from the programs that are supposed to help workers who lose their jobs or have their work hours cut. This includes the federal stimulus payments, state unemployment benefits and federal Pandemic Unemployment Assistance and most temporary leave and disability payments.

In order to address our current economic crisis and effectively spur demand in our local communities, it is critical that Connecticut provide safety net support to all individuals, regardless of federal immigration status. Thousands of undocumented workers across Connecticut have lost their jobs and have no income to rely on or income support. Still, tens of thousands more continue to work in frontline work without access to health care or income support, although they are doing the very work that allows Connecticut residents to stay safe at home.

We ask that you support taxpaying Connecticut residents who have been excluded from federal disaster assistance by creating either:

- 1) A temporary wage replacement program for workers who paid into the system through an ITIN number, but are ineligible for federal funds due to their immigration status, to be administered by the Department of Labor; or
- 2) A disaster relief fund for state residents suffering economic harm but excluded from state and federal relief. Both the 9/11 fund and other disaster relief funds have included people regardless of their immigration status.

We, the undersigned, ask that you put \$20 million towards this effort immediately, to help taxpaying Connecticut residents, otherwise excluded from federal relief, to survive this crisis.

350 CT
ACLU of Connecticut
ACLU People Power – New Britain
AFSCME Council 4
All our Kin
American Federation of Teachers-CT
Brazilian Workers Center
Building One Community
Coalition of Residents and Immigrants in Solidarity
Connecticut Bail Fund
Connecticut Citizen Action Group
Connecticut Employees Union Independent
Connecticut Immigrant Rights Alliance
Connecticut Immigrant & Refugee Coalition
Connecticut Independent Drivers Guild
Connecticut Institute for Refugees and Immigrants
Connecticut Legal Services
Connecticut Women’s Education and Legal Fund
Connecticut Shoreline Indivisible
Connecticut Students for A Dream
Connecticut Working Families Organization
Embracing the Same Dream/Abrazando el Mismo Sueño
Greater Hartford Legal Aid
Hartford Deportation Defense
Immigration and Refugee Task Force – UU of New Haven
Integrated Refugee & Immigrant Services
IRIS – Integrated Refugee & Immigrant Services
Latino Advocacy Foundation of Fairfield County
Livingston, Adler, Pulda, Meiklejohn, and Kelly, PC
Make the Road Connecticut
Middlesex Immigrant Rights Alliance
National Domestic Worker Alliance
New Haven Legal Assistance
New Haven People’s Center
New Sanctuary CT
SEIU Local 32BJ
SEIU 1199 NE
SEMILLA collective of New Haven
Shea law, Inc.
Social Justice Council of the Unitarian Universalist Church in Meriden
UAW Region 9A
Unidad Latina en Acción
United Action Connecticut
Uniting For a Safe Inclusive Community-Manchester

Senator Julie Kushner
Representative Robyn Porter
Representative David Michel