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Contact: James Bhandary-Alexander, [jbhandary-alexander@nhlegal.org](mailto:jbhandary-alexander@nhlegal.org), (203) 215-5345

Frank Soultz, [fsoultz@seiu32bj.org](mailto:fsoultz@seiu32bj.org), (860) 471-5692

Immigrant Rights, Labor, Faith, and environment group release letter in support for a disaster relief fund for the state's taxpaying, undocumented, workers

45 Connecticut organizations call today on the Governor and state legislators to put \$20 million forward to help taxpaying, undocumented workers, who are otherwise excluded from federal relief programs.

The letter states, in part:

“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.”

“The coronavirus crisis has demonstrated the essential need to combat the pandemic by combatting the injustice on which it feeds,” said Juan Hernandez, Vice-President of 32BJ SEIU and head of the union in Connecticut. “We urge the governor to address the plight of undocumented immigrants, of our incarcerated brothers and sisters, and of all the least powerful member of our society who are most vulnerable to the pandemic. Without the bold action in these recommendations, everyone will needlessly suffer greater harm.”

“All working people need humanitarian relief during this crisis, and we are demanding that the state live up to that obligation. It's an economic issue but it is also a moral issue” said James Bhandary-Alexander, staff attorney at New Haven Legal Assistance, who represents low-wage workers. The letter recommends that the Governor instruct state agencies to set up a fund to provide \$20 million in economic relief to Connecticut residents who have been paying taxes with an ITIN number, but lack immigration status. The mayor of Chicago recently opened up \$100 million in aid to undocumented residents.