

The New Haven Board of Alders

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE Contact: Alder Eli Sabin

Friday May 22, 2020 203-980-0335

**IN LETTER, NEW HAVEN ALDERS ASK GOVERNOR LAMONT TO SUPPORT UNDOCUMENTED CITY AND STATE RESIDENTS DURING COVID-19 CRISIS**

24 members of the New Haven Board of Alders have written a letter to Governor Ned Lamont asking that the state dedicate $20 million to a disaster relief fund to support undocumented Connecticut residents during the COVID-19 pandemic.

“Immigrant workers are putting their lives on the line every day, but they are excluded from relief,” explained Carmen Lanche, a leader of the New Haven-based advocacy group Unidad Latina en Accion (ULA).

“Many of our immigrant neighbors are struggling right now, and I’m proud to stand with my colleagues to ask Governor Lamont to create a disaster relief fund for undocumented state residents, who so far have been shut off from nearly all government relief programs,” said Alder Eli Sabin (D-1). “Especially during this crisis, immigration status should not determine who in our state is able to put food on the table and take care of their family.”

In their letter to the governor, the alders wrote, “Undocumented Connecticut residents pay approximately $400 million in federal, state, and local taxes annually. More importantly, they are invaluable members of our communities. They are our neighbors and our colleagues. They are our kids’ classmates in school and our fellow parents on the PTA. They coach our kids’ sports teams and attend our churches, synagogues, and mosques. In New Haven, we are uniquely situated to understand the great harm that the COVID-19 pandemic has caused to immigrant families. That is why we are asking that you create a disaster relief fund for state residents who are suffering economic harm during this crisis but are excluded from state and federal relief programs.”

 “Thousands of immigrants in New Haven and across our state have lost their jobs or had their hours cut in recent weeks due to COVID-19,” said Board of Alders Majority Leader Richard Furlow (D-27). “I urge Governor Lamont to create a Disaster Relief Fund to assist our undocumented residents during this pandemic.”

James Bhandary-Alexander, a staff attorney at New Haven Legal Assistance who has coordinated the campaign for a disaster relief fund, said, “The Alders are saying loud and clear that the time is now for Governor Lamont to act, to do right by the tens of thousands of taxpaying New Haven residents intentionally excluded from economic relief by cruel, stupid, and racist, federal government policies. Thank you, Alders.”

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The full text of the letter is below:

**Letter to the Governor: Supporting Our Immigrant Neighbors**

To: Governor Ned Lamont

Office of the Governor
State Capitol, 210 Capitol Avenue
Hartford, CT 06106

Re: Supporting Undocumented Connecticut Residents and Their Families Through the Creation of a Disaster Relief Fund

We, the undersigned members of the New Haven Board of Alders, write to you regarding the immediate needs of immigrant families in New Haven and across Connecticut during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Connecticut is home to approximately 100,000 undocumented immigrant workers, and tens of thousands of U.S. citizen children in Connecticut have a parent who is undocumented. The state and federal response to this severe public health and economic crisis has so far explicitly excluded undocumented immigrant families by blocking them from receiving federal stimulus payments, state unemployment benefits, federal Pandemic Unemployment Assistance, and most temporary leave and disability payments. As a result, our immigrant neighbors in New Haven and across the state are suffering unnecessarily.

Members of our community who are undocumented are disproportionately likely to own small businesses and to work in sectors that have been hardest hit by COVID-related closures. With our state’s economy largely shut down, thousands of undocumented workers in our city and our state have lost their jobs in recent weeks and have no income to rely on. Meanwhile, tens of thousands more immigrant workers are risking their health and the health of their families on a daily basis in order to carry out essential services that ensure key components of our economy can continue to function.

Undocumented Connecticut residents pay approximately $400 million in federal, state, and local taxes annually. More importantly, they are invaluable members of our communities. They are our neighbors and our colleagues. They are our kids’ classmates in school and our fellow parents on the PTA. They coach our kids’ sports teams and attend our churches, synagogues, and mosques.

In New Haven, we are uniquely situated to understand the great harm that the COVID-19 pandemic has caused to immigrant families. That is why we are asking that you create a disaster relief fund for state residents who are suffering economic harm during this crisis but are excluded from state and federal relief programs. The 9/11 fund and other disaster relief funds have included people regardless of their immigration status, and California Governor Gavin Newsom recently committed $125 million to a COVID-19 relief fund for immigrants in his state.

We ask that you put $20 million towards this effort in order to help our immigrant neighbors, friends, and colleagues survive the current crisis.

Sincerely,

Alder Eli Sabin, Ward 1

Alder Frank Douglass, Ward 2

Alder Ron Hurt, Ward 3

Alder Kampton Singh, Ward 5

Alder Carmen Rodriguez, Ward 6

Alder Abby Roth, Ward 7

Alder Ellen Cupo, Ward 8

Alder Charles Decker, Ward 9

Alder Anna Festa, Ward 10

Alder Rosa Santana, Ward 13

Alder Paola Acosta, Ward 14

Alder Ernie Santiago, Ward 15

Alder Jose Crespo, Ward 16

Alder Jody Ortiz, Ward 17

Alder Sal DeCola, Ward 18

Alder Kim Edwards, Ward 19

Alder Delphine Clyburn, Ward 20

Alder Steve Winter, Ward 21

Alder Jeanette Morrison, Ward 22

President Tyisha Walker-Myers, Ward 23

Alder Evette Hamilton, Ward 24

Alder Darryl Brackeen, Jr., Ward 26

Majority Leader Richard Furlow, Ward 27

Alder Brian Wingate, Ward 29