

A Resolution of the Washington Democratic Central Committee

Regarding Hazard Pay for Essential Workers.

- A. WHEREAS, according to a California study (Chen, 2021) essential workers faced a 14% increase in mortality associated with the COVID-19 pandemic during the period March through October, 2020. Essential workers in food/agriculture, transportation/logistics, facilities, and manufacturing sectors experienced an increased mortality of 20%, which increased to 40% during reopening (Chen, 2021).
- B. WHEREAS, historically ignored and vulnerable populations in the same study were at even more risk. For example, the study found Latino workers faced a 36% increase in mortality and a 59% mortality increase in the food/agriculture sector during this time period. (Chen, 2021).
- C. WHEREAS, Washington County has a significant number of essential workers. In retail alone, Washington County has 36,488 workers (US Census Bureau, 2020). These workers are often some of the lowest paid workers in the county (Starbuck, 2019.) Furthermore, Washington County has a significant Latino population of 17.1% (US Census Bureau, 2021), which the California study demonstrated are even at higher risk due to historical inequities.
- D. WHEREAS, according to a Bureau of Labor Statistics study, turn-over has increased significantly among retail workers and essential workers in general (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2021). This threatens the ability for grocery and other essential workers to provide the essential services that Washington County residents rely on.
- E. WHEREAS, essential workers all over the county put their health aside and served their communities dutifully throughout this pandemic. Some essential workers were verbally and physically abused for upholding basic health guidelines. Many of them were especially isolated from families and friends and felt they couldn't risk seeing them due to their exposed nature. The State of Oregon failed to acknowledge this increased risk by placing essential workers last on the vaccine priority list, which was not within the guidelines of the CDC and made Oregon an outlier compared to most states in the country.
- F. WHEREAS, the party stands in support and solidarity with the SEIU 503, PCUN, Working Families, AFSCME, OSEA 6732, Oregon AFL-CIO, OEA, UFCW 555, and SEIU 49 in their endeavors to pass hazard pay.

THEREFORE, the Washington County Democratic Central Committee (WCDCC) resolves as follows:

- 1) WCDCC acknowledges the hardships that essential workers of Washington County have endured throughout the pandemic and stand in solidarity with efforts to pass hazard pay for essential workers.
- 2) WCDCC calls on Oregon State House and Senate members to reintroduce, sponsor, and vote in favor of a bill that will provide hazard pay for all essential workers, including farm workers.
- 3) WCDCC believes essential workers are those at risk of COVID-19 as an occupational hazard due to their inability to stay at home. This includes farmworkers and those who work in the food industry and should be included in a bill to provide hazard pay.
- 4) WCDCC we believe the passage of hazard pay for essential workers should be a priority in the 2022 legislative session. and urge our Washington County Delegation to introduce such legislation.
- 5) WCDCC calls upon the Democratic Party of Oregon to pass a similar resolution and to show their support for legislation to provide hazard pay for all essential workers.

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