



RECEIVED

2021 MAR 18 PM 4: 29

CITY CLERK
CITY OF PASADENA

March 17, 2021

Mayor Victor Gordo
Pasadena City Council
100 North Garfield Avenue
Pasadena, CA 91109
VIA EMAIL

Dear Mayor Gordo and City Council Members,

Please do not enact an ordinance requiring additional pay for workers in large grocery and pharmacy businesses.

Clearly, Pasadena is managing the response to the health crisis well and effectively.

At a time when infection rates are dropping substantially, hospitalizations are declining and fatalities are sharply diminished in Pasadena, requiring additional pay for workers in specified industries because of perceived health risks is not justified.

You should also be aware of the steps grocery stores have taken to safeguard workers, increase their compensation to reward them for working in difficult circumstances and provide support for healthcare needs. They have embraced safety protocols. They have provided PPEs. They have provided additional time off. They have accommodated workers who tested positive for COVID-19. And more.

Currently, Trader Joe's (not a Pasadena Chamber member and not a union shop) offers its workers health insurance, a generous retirement plan, paid time off and increased worker pay because of the pandemic.

Ralphs is a union shop and Chamber member that pays health benefits, contributes to a 401K and pays negotiated wages. They also pay an additional \$2 per hour to compensate for risks associated with working during the pandemic. They are also offering a \$100 bonus to workers who get vaccinated.

Target is paying a substantial bonus to employees who receive the COVID-19 vaccination, as well as increased pay for workers and providing accommodations for those who contract coronavirus.

Stater Bros. is paying an additional \$2 per hour for current workers as well as providing health and retirement benefits, per its agreement with the United Food and Commercial Workers Union.

Vons also paid \$2 per hour for grocery workers and provides healthcare and retirement benefits, per its contract with the union.

You should also consider the costs to customers. Grocery stores operate on relatively slim profit margins, 3% on average. If their labor costs increase by 20% to 30% and they are precluded from reducing worker hours, the added costs must come from increased prices. Those increased prices will be borne by all of your constituents.

I do not expect a 30% increase in prices, but 3% to 5% on many items is not unreasonable to expect. For a gallon of milk, that could mean increases of ten to fifteen cents each. For basic bread, it could be an additional four cents.

The average family of three in California, living frugally, pays \$468 per month for groceries. Increasing that by 3% adds \$14.04 to the monthly bill. For those who are food insecure already, that increase will mean fewer healthy foods on the table and more inexpensive fillers.

In Los Angeles and Long Beach we have seen stores that were pushed below profitability closed. Are you prepared for that to happen in Pasadena? When we have had empty grocery stores in the recent past it has taken years to find a replacement.

You also know that every city that instituted increases such as that being debated by the Pasadena City Council have been sued.

All of these are more than adequate reasons on their own to shelve and idea of implementing a forced wage increase for workers in grocery stores and chain pharmacies.

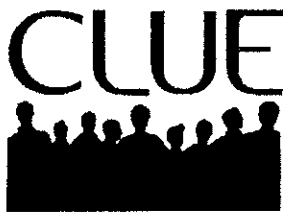
If you feel you must do something, at least consider giving credit for increases already implemented and benefits already paid.

Please do not further burden any industry in Pasadena with additional costs during these incredibly difficult circumstances.

Thank you for your service to Pasadena at this very difficult time.

Sincerely,

Paul Little
President and Chief Executive Officer



Clergy & Laity United
for Economic Justice

Board

Rev. Gary Williams
Saint Mark United Methodist
Church
Chair

Mary Stancavage
Meditation Coalition
Chair

Derek Smith
UFCW 324
Treasurer

Rabbi Dr. Stephen J. Einstein
Congregation B'nai Tzedek
Secretary

Vivian Rothstein
Santa Monica CLUE Committee
Chair of Personnel

Michael Soto
NUHW
Chair of Development

La Mikia Castillo
Castillo Consulting Partners

Rev. Dr. Sarah Halverson-Cano
Irvine United Congregational
Church

Griselda Mariscal
SEIU-UHW

Rabbi Daniel Mehlman
Temple Ner Tamid

Glynn Dana Shevlin
Disney Worker, UNITE HERE 11

Bishop Mary Ann Swenson
United Methodist Church (Ret.)

Melissa McCarthy
Episcopal Diocese of Los Angeles

Ali Tweini
Teamsters Local 2010

Jennifer Gutierrez
Museum of Social Justice

John Cager
Ward African Methodist Episcopal
Church

Staff

Michelle Seyler, J.D.
Executive Director

Jeremy Arnold
Program Director

Rev. Juan Carlos Durruthy
Faith-Rooted Organizer

Lucero Garcia
Faith-Rooted Organizer

Ashley Gonzales
Faith-Rooted Organizer

David Jaimes
Faith-Rooted Organizer

Pastor Cue JnMarie
Faith-Rooted Organizer

Adam Overton
Faith-Rooted Organizer

Riya Patel
HR/Admin Manager

Guillermo Torres
Director of Immigration

Jacki Weber
Development Director

As CLUE, we educate, organize, and mobilize the faith community to accompany workers and their families in their struggle for good jobs, dignity, and justice.

Monday, March 22nd, 2021

To Honorable Pasadena City Council Members,

Re: **CONSIDERATION OF HERO OR HAZARD PAY ORDINANCE**

On behalf of Clergy and Laity United for Economic Justice (CLUE) I would like to express our strong support for Agenda Item #12 CONSIDERATION OF HERO OR HAZARD PAY ORDINANCE for grocery and pharmacy workers in the city of Pasadena. CLUE has for decades stood with workers, immigrants and their families as they fight for dignity and justice in the workplace. We are grateful to the workers for their bravery during this pandemic and for continuing to serve their communities. We urge you as our elected leaders to take bold action and move hazard pay forward in Pasadena. Pasadena is counted among the major cities in LA County, along with Long Beach, Santa Monica, West Hollywood and Los Angeles, all of which have passed hazard pay policies.

This policy will make a difference for grocery and pharmacy workers at 37 stores in Pasadena who have been on the frontlines since the start of the pandemic, providing a lifeline for our communities during this unprecedented time. The majority of frontline grocery and pharmacy workers come from Black and brown communities which have been devastated by the Covid-19 pandemic. The industry is also disproportionately women, who are among the lowest paid workers in LA County overall.

Grocery and drug store corporations have seen their profits skyrocket during the pandemic. Meanwhile, grocery and pharmacy workers are counted as essential frontline workers facing a dangerous environment with a high probability of being exposed to the deadly virus. This is the right policy for this unprecedented time, and will cover major corporations who have 300 or more employees nationally. Target, Sprouts, Trader Joes, Rite Aid, Food4Less, Vons can all afford it.

As COVID-19 cases are still at alarmingly high levels, with new variants being discovered, hospital capacity is still at a critical point while a significant portion of the public and workers in this sector have yet to receive the vaccine leaving them at risk of infection. On behalf of CLUE I urge you to stand up for the dignity of our most vulnerable communities and working people.

Thank you,

Michelle Seyler J.D., Executive Director, CLUE

03/22/2021

Item 12

RECEIVED
CITY CLERK
MAR 22 PM 1:37