

Bakery, Confectionery, Tobacco Workers and Grain Millers International Union

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May 6, 2020

Dear Representative:

On behalf of the Bakery, Confectionery, Tobacco Workers and Grain Millers International Union (BCTGM), I write to urge your support for the COVID-19 Every Worker Protection Act of 2020 (H.R. 6559). We applaud Chairman Scott for introducing this crucial legislation.

This legislation is an urgent priority for BCTGM members and their families. Our members, deemed "Essential" workers in production facilities across the country, are working around the clock producing bread, buns and rolls, yogurt, sweet goods, cookies and crackers, snack products, cereal, baking mixes and sugar and flour to ensure that American families can put food on their tables.

It is tragic that the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) has utterly failed in its duty to protect working Americans during this pandemic. OSHA and the CDC have only provided employers with voluntary guidance for mitigating workplace exposure to COVID-19. Food processing companies may choose to implement or ignore these measures. The lack of an emergency standard that holds all employers accountable puts BCTGM members and their families at risk.

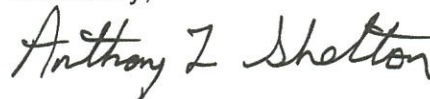
Rather than protecting workers, OSHA has done the exact opposite. It has relaxed employers' existing obligations and weakened reporting requirements. It is treating worker complaints informally and is not conducting workplace inspections. The lack of a standard means that employers are not required to provide the proper PPE, enforce social distancing, conduct temperature tests, and safeguard production lines.

The crisis in meatpacking and poultry plants illustrates how food processing plants, where workers are in close contact with one another, can spread the virus if the proper protections are not implemented. An emergency standard is necessary to force employers to ensure their workplaces are operating safely and fully protect workers to the highest degree possible.

It is imperative that Congress act immediately to protect American workers by supporting H.R. 6559, the COVID-19 Every Worker Protection Act.

Thank you for your consideration of our position on this important issue.

Sincerely,



Anthony L. Shelton
International President

ALS/mjs

cc: International Secretary-Treasurer David Woods