



Putting Workers First: Policies to Address the COVID-19 Pandemic

Protecting front line workers' safety and health

CWA members working on the front lines of the pandemic deserve swift government action to provide full protections for the safety of themselves and the public.

- Emergency OSHA standard for COVID-19 for all workers must be promulgated and enforced immediately
- Use of all available resources, including the Defense Production Act, for production and distribution of personal protective equipment (PPE) for health care and other essential workers and treatment equipment for patients

Employment and workplace policies and practices

CWA members and all workers in the U.S. need realistic policies and workplace protections reflecting the reality of the pandemic that will allow them to advocate for themselves through collective bargaining as well as protect themselves, their coworkers and the public.

- In order for workers to legally have a voice at work, the ban on the NLRB's ability to conduct union representation elections electronically must be lifted
- All essential workers in all sectors who are forced to work during the crisis must

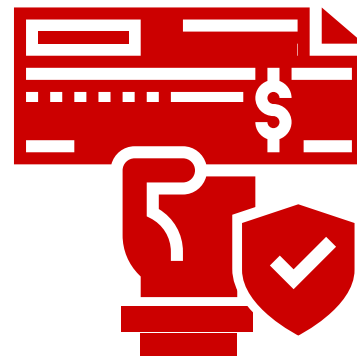
receive premium pay above and beyond what they're already guaranteed

- Enactment of the PAID Leave Act (S. 3513/HR 6442) to provide necessary paid sick and family leave
 - Until enactment of the PAID Leave Act, employers must adopt CWA's [model leave policy](#)
- Work-from-home availability and policies
 - Customer service representatives in call centers must be protected and provided the opportunity to work from home
- Customer interaction
 - Protections must be put in place to protect workers who must interact with the public during the pandemic
- Pay protection
 - Federal policy should more comprehensively protect full salaries and keep people on payroll, similar to many other countries
- Continuation of health coverage
 - During a pandemic, health care coverage is more critical than ever and workers must be allowed to remain on their health care plans
- UI should cover all workers out of work – including voluntary leaves done to help protect others on payroll
 - Automatic extension of UI expansions and enhancements if certain economic recovery thresholds are not met

Ensuring corporations and industries receiving taxpayer funds sustain family-supporting jobs

As the federal government takes steps to provide funds to struggling employers during the economic downturn resulting from the pandemic, employers availing themselves of taxpayer funds must be required to take the high road in employment practices and not use federal taxpayer funds to enrich Wall Street or corporate executives.

- Corporations that receive any form of federal assistance cannot use the bankruptcy process going forward to abrogate collective bargaining agreements
- Ban on stock buybacks for any company receiving federal aid for the life of the aid and 5 years after
- Limits on executive compensation
- \$15 minimum wage
- Neutrality in union organizing No layoffs, involuntary furloughs, or cuts to wages and benefits of workers



Safety net for workers during the economic fallout

Millions of workers in the U.S. will be dealing with the economic fallout from the pandemic for months to come. The federal government must provide protections to ensure that workers are protected as the economy recovers.

- Prevent those who are now unemployed and unable to pay rent or make mortgage payments from losing their homes
- Prevent those who are unable to pay their water or utility bills due to unemployment from having their service cut off
- Student loan payments should be deferred or based on an individual's means
- Expand Social Security

Ensuring state and local governments are able to continue providing needed services

The current and growing economic slowdown will have a major impact on the revenues of most states and local governments – many of which have to operate under unnecessarily stringent

balanced budget requirements. The federal government will need to step in to assure that critical services provided by local and state governments continue during and following the pandemic and economic slowdown.

- Federal funding for state and local governments to prevent elimination of critical services
- Funding for higher ed institutions to continue operating

Strengthening key sectors of the economy

The economic fallout from the pandemic means the long term survivability of certain sectors are now in doubt. In addition, federal steps to stimulate the economy are needed.

- **Telecommunications infrastructure**
 - The pandemic has highlighted the critical need for an extensive and high quality national broadband network. This infrastructure however does not reach everyone and everywhere. Federal funds must be used to expand access to this critical infrastructure.
 - Expand funding for all USF funds – Lifeline, e-rate, rural broadband, high-cost fund
 - Address the homework gap – federal funding for laptops/tablets, free broadband, hotspots for low income kids.

- Any federal funds need to include high road labor language to ensure that the funds are creating good, quality jobs, as [proposed by CWA](#).
 - Lift data caps for all users
- **Media Industry**
 - The pandemic has highlighted the importance of local media to share breaking information at the local level. However, the precipitous decline in advertising revenue due to the economic slowdown jeopardizes their ability to continue functioning.
 - The federal government should establish a publicly-financed fund to support newsrooms and media workers to prevent layoffs.
 - Any employer taking public funds must remain independent from partisan influence.
 - In the interest of supporting and advancing diversity, any employer taking public funds should be required to implement plans intended to advance diversity across their staff and report their annual diversity statistics.
 - The Small Business Administration should make available an indefinite program of no-interest loans for the creation of news start-ups, including nonprofits and employee-owned co-ops.
 - The federal government should provide incentives for local ownership to encourage chains to sell to local owners and community interests.

- The federal government should establish a nationwide advertising purchasing program to promote public health, participation in the federal census and other topics of national interest.

Voting/Elections

The pandemic has highlighted how important it is for states to prepare to hold elections in different manners.

- \$4 billion in additional funding is needed to help states prepare for these changes
- Require states to adopt policies to increase the ability to vote by mail, expand early voting and online registration, and increase the safety of voting in-person by providing additional voting facilities and more poll-workers.

