

July 1, 2020

Governor Brown and Members of the Legislature,

While we applaud the important steps you took to provide COVID-19 relief to Oregonians and initial steps to address police accountability during last week's Special Session, critical policies to protect Oregon's frontline workers and their families remain untaken.

Throughout this pandemic working people have consistently been asked to choose between their economic security, their personal safety, and that of their families. This burden has been even greater for Oregon's Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) families. This is unacceptable. We must come together as a state and do more to center Oregon's response to the Coronavirus on those who are impacted most.

Workers need strong and meaningful protections and economic support now more than ever, not the sort of race-to-the bottom workplace standards a blanket corporate immunity law would produce.

Corporate immunity would create a system that disincentivizes employers from protecting their workers. This policy removes all accountability for employers and has a direct negative impact on workplace safety and public health. Business interests have been seeking to lock workers and consumers out of court for decades, through both limitations on lawsuits and forced arbitration provisions. The Coronavirus crisis is merely their latest pretext.

Corporate liability immunity and bottom-level standards will further exacerbate our current public health crisis and lead to new hot spots across sectors that spread across communities. We know this is true because that's [exactly what we've seen in Republican-led states like Utah](#) that have already waived immunity.

Instead, Oregon should reject this ALEC proposal, and future calls from the business community to roll back protections and instead take swift action at all levels of government and industry to ensure everyone - no matter how old they are, the color of their skin, where they were born, their immigration status, or how much money they make - is informed and protected, and that resources are able to reach all who have been affected.

As you continue your work to respond to this crisis, please stay focused on centering working people and racial justice. There is no economic recovery if workers cannot safely return to work and our economy of the past, which left BIPOC families behind, should remain there.

We urge you to act immediately to:

- Invest in a community-led reimagining of safety and resiliency efforts
- Establish a robust and comprehensive infectious disease standard
- Enact an inclusive COVID-19 Workers' Compensation presumption

- Ensure protected paid quarantine and sick time
- Enact protection to ensure that immunocompromised workers and their families aren't forced to choose between exposing themselves to COVID-19 and maintaining their economic security
- Invest COVID-19 Relief Funds in small businesses and working people to help economy recover

We look forward to working closely with each of you on this set of policies that reflect the vital need of Oregon's working families. This is just the beginning of our work together to restructure our economy to work for working people.

Sincerely,

Causa Oregon  
 Disabilities Rights Oregon  
 Fair Shot Oregon  
 Family Forward Oregon  
 Latino Network  
 Momentum Alliance  
 NARAL Pro-Choice Oregon  
 Next Up Action Fund  
 Northwest Workers' Justice Project  
 NW Carpenters Union  
 Oregon & Southern Idaho District Council of Laborers  
 Oregon AFL-CIO

Oregon AFSCME Council 75  
 Oregon Center for Public Policy  
 Oregon Education Association  
 Oregon League of Conservation Voters  
 Oregon School Employees Association  
 Oregon State Building Trades Council  
 Oregon Tradeswomen  
 Oregon Trial Lawyers Association  
 Oregon Working Families Party  
 PCUN, Oregon's Farmworker Union  
 SEIU Oregon  
 UFCW Local 555  
 Urban League of Portland