



March 19, 2020

The Honorable William P. Barr
Attorney General
U.S. Department of Justice
950 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20530

Mr. Michael Carvajal
Director
Federal Bureau of Prisons
320 First Street, NW
Washington, D.C. 20534

Dear Attorney General Barr and Director Carvajal:

National emergencies require us to move beyond business as usual and come together as a nation. Our government must act with urgency. And leaders of the largest, most powerful corporations must look past their bottom lines to do what's right for all working people.

On behalf of millions of service and healthcare workers on the front lines of this crisis, we demand immediate action by major industries and corporations to secure the health, safety, and long-term economic well-being of America's workers, regardless of where they work, their race, their immigration status, or current healthcare coverage.

1. **Fully-funded, accessible healthcare for every worker, including paid leave and 100%-paid testing and treatment for COVID-19.** Corporations must provide full healthcare coverage to direct and franchise employees and contractors. Any uninsured person should automatically be enrolled in Medicaid. Every worker must be covered by permanent, comprehensive paid leave policies, providing immediate access to 12 weeks' leave at full pay for workers who are sick, mandated to stay home, or caring for loved ones.
2. **Job, wage, and economic security for every worker.** Establish industry funds to fully reimburse wages lost by workers whose hours or jobs have been cut or cut back. These funds must cover direct and franchise employees and contractors, compensate tipped workers at a rate of at least \$15 an hour, and provide regular payments. Industries must provide easily accessed emergency child care funds, debt-relief, and housing assistance.
3. **Immediate investment in the health and safety of every worker.** Provide emergency relief for states to hire and train healthcare workers and first responders, and expand healthcare, long term care, and child care coverage. Corporations and industries should take aggressive, immediate measures to ensure clean, safe, sanitary work environments and protection from infection during this health crisis, with continuing access to personal protective equipment and training.
4. **Working families at the center of every emergency relief package.** Elected leaders of every party must act to put the health, safety, and financial well-being of workers first. Any industry relief or bailout must prioritize healthcare and financial support for workers over executive pay, shareholders, or profits. Relief efforts must directly address the disproportionate impact of economic and health crises on Black, brown, Asian Pacific Islander, and immigrant workers.



To more fully address the needs of workers in the Corrections industry, we are calling on you specifically to address:

- While measures are being taken in cities and countries across the world to limit social interaction and refrain from personal contact, security within correctional facilities is not a measure that can simply be reduced, cut or postponed. The staff and officers who continue to put their health, safety and lives at risk every day deserve to be honored, respected and celebrated for the work they do, not just in times of crisis, but 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year.
- As visitations, programming, education, and other services are cut it is important to remember this is not being done as a punitive measure but solely to protect the health and safety of those inside as well as for the safety and health of those visitors, teachers and volunteers. Other alternatives should be utilized such as tele-visits, to enable the continuation of outside contact with loved ones. Steps should be taken to ensure the availability of hand washing, disinfection and social distancing for inmates as well as corrections staff.
- While understaffing and overcrowding have long been a crisis for those living and working in prisons, the recent pandemic is a time when these issues are further exacerbated; as we get through this current crisis it should be a reminder that issues such as overcrowding and understaffing are of vital concern and a priority that must be addressed with any prison reform efforts moving forward.

Protecting all workers is the patriotic and moral requirement of this moment, and always.

Signed,

Mary Kay Henry, International President
Service Employees International Union

CC: Andy Potter, Executive Director
Michigan Corrections Organization
Chair of SEIU Corrections Council