PROTECT MD WORKERS

1. Safe & Hygienic Working Conditions

☛ PROBLEM:

Maryland Essential Workers are forced to perform their duties outside of their homes, often without protocols, procedures, or proper protective equipment to ensure their health and safety.

FACT: Roughly 56% of MD Covid-19 deaths have occurred in Long Term Care facilities due to a lack of Personal Protective Equipment. Employers must be required to provide PPE and set clear safety protocols, procedures, and standards to ensure safe work environments for frontline workers.

SOLUTION: Establish statewide standards and protocols for every industry to follow which must be enforced by OSHA. Proper PPE must be provided for all frontline workers.

2. Hazard Pay & Healthcare Assistance

☛ PROBLEM:

Workers who put their lives, and the lives of their families at risk are not being adequately compensated and often are not provided—or cannot afford the healthcare coverage they need.

FACT: There are nearly 300,000 uninsured Marylanders. The majority of these uninsured adults work low wage frontline jobs that put them at higher risk of contracting Covid-19.

SOLUTION: Pay frontline employees $3/hour hazard pay, in addition to base pay, for shifts worked during a 'State of Emergency'. Employees must also be provided opportunities to enroll in Maryland's Health Exchange to help prevent community spread and help maintain workplace continuity.

3. Emergency Action Plans

☛ PROBLEM:

No one was prepared for a major catastrophic event like Covid-19. There were no procedures in place for logistics, shift changes, telework, safety or sanitation.

FACT: The lack of mandated safety guidelines has led to increased MOSH worksite complaints and higher levels of Covid-19 contraction outside the home. Guidelines have been set, however guidelines aren't enough without enforcement.

SOLUTION: Employers must submit comprehensive plans to the state which address workplace safety, PPE procedures, telework capacity, and any changes in pay.

4. Universal Health & Bereavement Leave

☛ PROBLEM:
The CDC recommends workers who've been exposed or infected to quarantine, which forced workers to use personal leave or go unpaid. Some workers have had to quarantine on multiple occasions.

FACT: There are over 253,000 positive cases, over 5,300 deaths, and roughly 25,000 people hospitalized in Maryland since March of 2020. Existing leave policies under the Maryland Healthy Working Families Act are insufficient.

SOLUTION: Due to the increased health complications/ death employees experience from COVID-19, employers must provide fourteen days of paid quarantine leave and three days of paid bereavement leave to grieve the loss of immediate family members.

5. Right to Refuse Dangerous Work

☛ PROBLEM:
Too often, workers are forced to engage in dangerous work in unsafe conditions following guidelines. If the employee refuses to participate in these dangerous situations, they are retaliated against or fired.

FACT: Although workers have the right to refuse work, MOSH regulations nor any current local laws ensure workers can securely turn down work. MOSH submitted a letter to State Legislators that they've received 492 complaints since March 1, 2020, but has conducted an on-site inspection in only 30 cases. Nearly 1/3 of cases are referred to county health departments where they lack the resources to take action.

SOLUTION: Essential employees will have the right to refuse to engage in unsafe work. Employers shall not be allowed to retaliate against any employee once refusal occurs. All incidents will be investigated by MOSH.

6. Free Testing and Reporting of Positive Test Results

☛ PROBLEM:
One of the number one hot-spots for contracting Covid-19 for Marylanders is the workplace. Often, workers are exposed at work and are not informed by their employer.

FACT: 1-in-33 Marylanders have been diagnosed with Covid-19. There currently is no existing platform which records cases across industries to track workplace infections. Existing OSHA regulations leave workers behind due to certain workplaces being carved out of records enforcement.

SOLUTION: Employees must be notified of any positive cases by their employer. Positive test results must be reported on a statewide dashboard across industries. Testing for frontline workers should remain free to avoid cross contamination.