



CITY OF HOUSTON

Sylvester Turner

Mayor

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March 14, 2020

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker of the House
1237 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Senate Majority Leader
317 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Speaker Pelosi and Majority Leader McConnell:

The rapid spread of COVID-19 is a national health crisis and clearly demonstrates the value of paid sick leave. All Americans are put at risk when an infected person continues going to work because they can't afford to lose the income. Low-income and part-time workers are especially likely to be uncovered by paid leave policies.

Political and business leaders nationwide are demonstrating bold leadership by canceling mass events in order to "flatten the curve;" to slow the spread of the COVID-19 virus so our health care system can keep pace. However, these efforts are undermined when vulnerable workers continue going to work, potentially exposing others when they exhibit symptoms of illness.

Here in Texas, approximately 40 percent of workers lack paid sick leave, according to the Institute for Women's Policy Research.

Nearly 80 percent of our residents involved in food preparation and food serving-related occupations are currently uncovered by paid sick leave.

Personal care aids and child care workers are also unlikely to be covered. COVID-19 has been especially lethal for the elderly, putting our most vulnerable citizens in direct and regular contact with workers who can't afford to take time off.

During a public health emergency, businesses should be required to offer 14 days of paid leave. I strongly support the Emergency Paid Leave Act of 2020. I urge our leadership in Washington D.C. to find a way to work together in this time of national crisis to pass policy that directly helps Americans.

Sincerely,

Sylvester Turner
Mayor