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Senate of Pennsylvania

1 April 2020

Mr. Alex Baloga
President & Chief Executive Officer
Pennsylvania Food Merchants Association
P.O. Box 870
Camp Hill, PA 17001-0870

Dear Mr. Baloga,

We in the Senate Democratic Caucus notice many grocery employees do not wear personal protective equipment while on the job. These employees are on the front lines of the COVID-19 outbreak that health officials confirm is spreading rapidly across the state. We are extremely concerned for the safety of these employees and the customers they serve.

Your stores provide a necessary service to the community during this difficult time. Grocery workers never intended to be in a position where they are required to put themselves in physical danger every day. In addition, most of these employees are hourly workers who make at or above minimum wage. These individuals heavily depend on that income and feel pressure to show up at work if they feel sick. Moreover, they know they are responsible for life-sustaining services during this crisis. They must be protected.

We all have our part to play to fight this virus. Though the Capitol is closed, the Senate Democrats are working proactively through the pandemic to respond to several issues arising as a result of COVID-19. We are developing a variety of policy reforms, some addressing protections for workers like yours:

- The American Working Family Relief Action Plan for front-line worker protections (Collett)
- Protecting workers during public health emergencies (Santarsiero)
- COVID-19 Food Worker Safety Act (Tartaglione)
- COVID-19 Grocery Store Worker Safety Act (Tartaglione)
- Payment of contract services in schools (Iovino)
- Child care assistance (Schwank)
- Emergency expansion of the Family Medical Leave Act (Farnese)
- Crisis grants for volunteer fire and EMS companies due to COVID-19 (Brewster)
- Eviction protection for all disaster emergencies (Farnese)
- Coronavirus disease and schools: allowing for online instruction (Dinniman)

These legislative initiatives will take some time to advance, but workers need assistance today, not later. Therefore, for your members, immediate action should be taken to provide grocery workers with, at minimum, protective masks, gloves and hand sanitizer. While some stores may provide this now, all your members must know how to access personal protective equipment. This is imperative to protect the workforce as they provide essential services to the community, in addition to mitigate the community spread of COVID-19.

Thank you for your efforts during this public health crisis. If you would like to discuss this further, you may find our contact information at <https://www.legis.state.pa.us/>.

Sincerely,



Senator Jay Costa, 43rd District



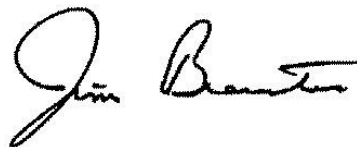
Senator Vincent Hughes, 7th District



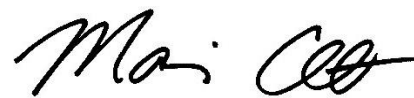
Senator John Blake, 22nd District



Senator Lisa Boscola, 18th District



Senator Jim Brewster, 45th District



Senator Maria Collett, 12th District



Senator Andrew Dinniman, 19th District



Senator Larry Farnese, 1st District



Senator Wayne Fontana, 42nd District



Senator Art Haywood, 4th District



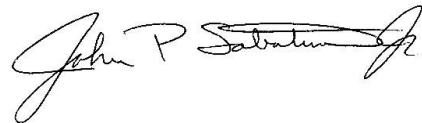
Senator Pam Iovino, 37th District



Senator Tim Kearney, 26th District



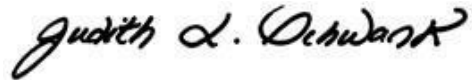
Senator Katie Muth, 44th District



Senator John Sabatina, 5th District



Senator Steve Santarsiero, 10th District



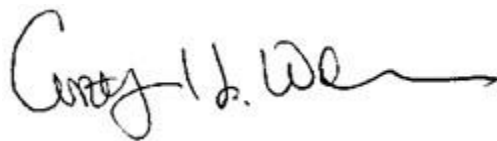
Senator Judy Schwank, 11th District



Senator Sharif Street, 3rd District



Senator Christine Tartaglione, 2nd District



Senator Anthony H. Williams, 8th District



Senator Lindsey Williams, 38th District