



Legislation Text

File #: R-377-20, **Version:** 1

Council Member Gadus

Supporting an Essential Workers Bill of Rights.

WHEREAS, the City of Toledo has been under the grips of a raging pandemic that has mercilessly spread across our nation, taking lives and livelihoods without warning or recourse for thousands of workers and families; and

WHEREAS, since the beginning of the crisis, heroes have emerged from within our community, dutifully continuing to do the work that is needed to keep our country and our communities afloat, to care for us and our loved ones, to keep us fed, to educate and care for our children, to keep our lights on, and to give all of us the ability to live, work, and learn; and

WHEREAS, because these workers were needed to keep our country, our State of Ohio, our City of Toledo, from complete collapse, these workers have been designated by the government as “essential workers,” giving them the ability to continue to go to work despite lock-down orders that were put in place around the country because it was not safe for people to go out; and

WHEREAS, essential workers are us, of and essential to our communities; and

WHEREAS, essential workers include, but are not limited to, domestic workers, farmworkers, first responders, doctors, teachers, nurses, home care workers and other healthcare workers, grocery store and drug store employees, food service workers, federal, state, and municipal employees, janitorial staff, delivery drivers, warehouse workers, transportation workers, construction workers, frontline financial workers, and child care workers; and

WHEREAS, even as essential workers have been celebrated by the people, communities, policymakers, and institutions that depend on and benefit from their labor, too many of them are low-wage workers, who: face risks to their health and safety at workplaces that continue to be unprepared, often lacking workplace controls, protocols, and personal protective equipment; face higher rates of getting sick or dying from COVID-19; experience long-standing workplace inequities and injustices due to a lack of enforcement of even the most basic legal protections; and who have no guarantee of basic, legal, health and economic security, including but not limited to a minimum wage, living wage, overtime pay, fair scheduling, paid sick leave and health benefits, and the right to unionize; and

WHEREAS, essential workers at the greatest risk and with the fewest protections disproportionately include women of color and immigrants; and

WHEREAS, many essential workers have been excluded from the benefits of coronavirus relief and the existing safety net, and are falling further behind due to exorbitant medical bills, bankruptcy, and the high cost of housing, among many other factors; and

WHEREAS, this crisis has revealed with acute clarity the costs and moral bankruptcy of these vast and tragic long-standing inequities impacting essential workers and provided the opportunity for building a better world; NOW THEREFORE,

Be it resolved by the Council of the City of Toledo:

SECTION 1. That Toledo City Council will pledge to transform our laws and standards, and call on our State and Federal governments to transform its laws, to ensure equity, security, and benefits for workers that are worthy of their labor and their dignity, including but not limited to enforceable protections for the essential workers exposed to additional risks from their work during the pandemic, by providing for all workers, regardless of status:

1. Health and safety protections at work.
2. Robust premium compensation.
3. The honoring of commitments regarding job quality standards, including collective bargaining agreements for union members.
4. Truly universal paid sick leave and family and medical leave.
5. Protection from retaliation for whistleblowers.
6. An end to carve-outs and loopholes in our labor laws that misclassify workers and exclude others from basic labor protections altogether.
7. Health care security.
8. Affordable childcare available for every working family.
9. Treatment of workers as experts.
10. Accountability for companies that shirk their responsibilities to their workers.

SECTION 2. That this Resolution shall take effect and be in force from and after the earliest period allowed by law.

Adopted: _____: yeas _____, nays _____.

Attest: _____
Clerk of Council

President of Council

Approved: _____

Mayor