



AFL-CIO

AMERICA'S UNIONS

**American Federation
of Labor and
Congress of Industrial
Organizations**

815 16th St. NW
Washington, DC 20006

202-637-5000

aflcio.org

EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

RICHARD L. TRUMKA
PRESIDENT

ELIZABETH H. SHULER
SECRETARY TREASURER

TEFERE A. GEBRE
EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT

Michael Sacco
Robert A. Scardelletti
Harold Schaitberger
Clyde Rivers
Cecil Roberts
Leo W. Gerard
Fred Redmond
Matthew Loeb
Randi Weingarten
Fredric V. Rolando
Baldemar Velasquez
James Bolland
Bruce R. Smith
Lee A. Saunders
Terry O'Sullivan
Lorretta Johnson
James Callahan
DeMaurice Smith
Sean McGarvey
David Durkee
D. Taylor
Kenneth Rigmaiden
Stuart Appelbaum
Harold Daggett
Bhairavi Desai
Paul Rinaldi
Mark Dimondstein
Cindy Estrada
Sara Nelson
Marc Perrone
Eric Dean
Joseph Sellers Jr.
Christopher Shelton
Lonnie R. Stephenson
Richard Lanigan
Robert Martinez
Gabrielle Carteris
Mark McManus
Elissa McBride
John Samuelson
George E. McCubbin III
Vonda McDaniel
Gwen Mills
Charles Wozkanek
Bonnie Castillo
Paul Shearon
Warren Fairley
Ernest A. Logan
Capt. Joe DePete
James Slevin

March 16, 2020

Dear Trade Unionist:

On April 28, the labor movement will once again observe Workers Memorial Day to remember workers killed or injured on the job and to renew the fight for strong safety and health protections.

The Occupational Safety and Health Act and Mine Safety and Health Act promise workers the right to a safe job. Unions and our allies have fought hard to make that promise a reality—winning protections that have made jobs safer and saved lives. After years of struggle, we won new rules to protect workers from deadly silica dust and beryllium, a stronger coal dust standard for miners, and stronger anti-retaliation protections for workers who report job injuries.

Now, corporate interests have taken over safety agencies under the Trump administration—the administration has used their “deregulatory” agenda to stall, weaken and repeal key protections that keep us safe at work, has slashed safety agency budgets and staff and has appointed their big business friends to run the agencies instead of leading experts. Under the Trump administration:

- The government has targeted weakening workplace regulations on beryllium, mine safety examinations, injury reporting and child labor protections.
- There has been no meaningful action on critical safety and health protections against workplace violence, infectious diseases such as the novel coronavirus, heat illness and silica in mining.
- They have ignored workplaces and workers when assessing chemical exposures in our communities.
- They have attacked anti-retaliation protections that protect all workers who speak up about unsafe working conditions.
- The agency charged with protecting workers—OSHA—is rudderless and still without a full-time director.
- There are fewer workplace inspectors today than at any other point in history.

Our nation is currently facing a public health crisis due to the COVID-19 pandemic. As the virus continues to spread, many employers are woefully unprepared. Guidance from federal authorities has been inconsistent at best and dangerous at worst. OSHA was making progress on a permanent infectious disease workplace standard that would have provided employers both the tools and the mandate to protect workers from infection. However, as a part of this administration’s pattern of

Trade Unionist
March 16, 2020
Page Two

reckless and dangerous deregulations, President Trump halted that effort once taking office. The labor movement has trained, educated and equipped our members with the tools they need to be safe on the job for decades. We are demanding the federal government provide protective guidance instead of bad advice that leaves workers at risk. Working people are doing our part in the face of the COVID-19 outbreak. Now our government must do the same by issuing strong enforceable protections for all workers at risk during this pandemic.

Together, along with Democrats in the U.S. House of Representatives, we have had new opportunities to oppose these anti-worker attacks, hold the Trump administration accountable for their actions and demand stronger worker protections. Last year, unions and our members helped pass the Workplace Violence Protection for Health Care and Social Service Workers Act in the House and won permanent compensation for those made ill by the 9/11 attacks. We fought and won for emergency training grants to train frontline workers to protect themselves from COVID-19, and Democrats joined our call for an OSHA standard to protect workers from infectious diseases. We also are fighting for laws that would protect workers from preventable heat illness and asbestos exposures.

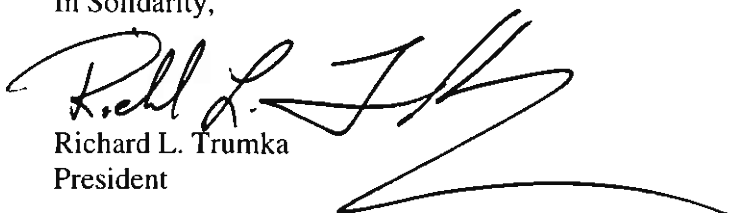
The theme of this year's Workers Memorial Day is "Protect Our Rights. Speak Up for Safe Jobs." During this national crisis, it is even more important that we stand together against the ongoing attacks on workers' rights and protections. Every worker has the right to a safe workplace. When workers are punished for speaking up against unsafe working conditions, everyone's safety is at stake. A climate of fear impacts everyone's lives at work.

We urge you to get involved and organize actions, activities, observances or digital campaigns in your workplaces and communities to highlight the toll of job injuries and deaths and call for action to protect our right to a safe job. We will stand united against the ongoing attacks on workers' rights and protections and every worker must be protected to speak up when elected officials put corporate interests above workers' well-being. We must and we will protect the right of every worker to a safe job and fight until that promise is fulfilled.

Enclosed are materials with ideas and information to assist you. Please let us know what you are planning by posting your event on the AFL-CIO's Workers Memorial Day website or filling out and returning the enclosed form to the indicated address. For additional information and to order copies of materials, please visit the AFL-CIO website at www.aflcio.org/WorkersMemorialDay, or contact the AFL-CIO Safety and Health Office at 202-637-5305 or oshmail@aflcio.org.

Please join us this Workers Memorial Day, April 28, to honor the victims of workplace injury and illness and to keep fighting for the promise of safe jobs for all workers.

In Solidarity,



Richard L. Trumka
President

Enclosure