



BERKELEY CITY COUNCILMEMBER
TERRY TAPLÍN
DISTRICT 2

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Berkeley City Councilmembers Introduce Proposal for Grocery Worker Hazard Pay.

BERKELEY, CA—Councilmembers Terry Taplin, Rigel Robinson, Ben Bartlett, and Mayor Jesse Arreguín have introduced a [proposal](#) to guarantee an additional \$5 in hourly hazard pay for employees of large grocery stores. The City Council will vote on the proposal on January 19. According to UFCW Local 5, which represents grocery store workers throughout the San Francisco Bay Area, over 600 union workers have contracted COVID-19. However, these workers have not received additional hazard pay with their wages since last spring.

“These heroes are risking their lives on the front lines in the most dangerous days of the pandemic, but with pre-pandemic wages,” said **Councilmember Terry Taplin** (District 2). “While many of us can work safely from home, grocery store workers should be paid more for the essential service of literally putting food on our tables.”

“Grocery workers are truly essential workers, ensuring we have food on our tables,” said **Berkeley Mayor Jesse Arreguín**. “We must protect and support them in the same way we protect other essential workers, such as healthcare workers.”

“The U.S. Department of Labor says ‘hazard pay’ is warranted when a workplace hazard cannot be addressed with protective equipment. Despite everything that grocery stores and employees have done, the ongoing number of illnesses and deaths among essential grocery workers is a clear indication that hazard pay in grocery stores is justified,” said **Liz Ortega-Toro, Executive Secretary-Treasurer of the Alameda Labor Council AFL-CIO**. “While many businesses are experiencing pandemic related economic hardship, the grocery industry has increased sales and profits as more people prepare more of their meals at home.”

“Grocery and drug stores must do their part,” said **John Nunes, President of UFCW Local 5**. “They have raked in record profits. We know there are ample profits to compensate essential grocery and drug store workers for placing their health and that of their families at risk. If executives refuse to act, then local government must step in and legislate hazard pay mandates for all grocery workers during today’s COVID-19 emergency.”

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