PROTECT HEALTH & SAFETY OF IMMIGRANT WORKERS

Background
The American Friends Service Committee is another partner of the Plymouth Welcoming Migrants Committee. AFSC Iowa has worked to serve and empower the immigrant community in Iowa since 1995. They provide low-cost immigration legal services, develop effective organizing strategies to address local concerns, and build leaders and coalitions to bring about positive systemic change.

Following a virtual panel discussion and listening session several weeks ago with family members and workers at the Perry Tyson meatpacking plant, AFSC developed the following list of requests to address immediate health and safety concerns of immigrant workers and all low wage workers. Please note the requests specific to Iowa legislators and other items specific to city and county elected officials.

Time is of the essence. The Legislature re-convenes Wed., June 3 and we’ve been told, will only consider policy issues June3-5. Please contact your House and Senate representatives BYJUNE 3 to make sure your voice is heard! Our migrant and refugee neighbors need us to be their voice at this critical time.

Action Steps
1) Contact your state legislator by June 3. See requests below.

   Find your state senator or representative and other elected officials.

   House Switchboard: 515.281.3221
   Senate Switchboard: 515.281.3371
   Legislative Emails: FIRSTname.LASTname@legis.iowa.gov

2) Contact your city and county officials. See below.

   Polk County Board of Supervisors: 515-286-3120
   Des Moines City Council: 515-283-4500

3) Write a letter to the editor calling for worker protections.

State legislators:
- Provide wage replacement or other alternatives to unemployment insurance (UI) for those who are ineligible for existing options.
- Provide free or subsidized childcare to workers in essential industries.
- Disaster SNAP (D-SNAP) initiation during a disaster declaration.
- Request Pandemic EBT for students who would be eligible for free or reduced-price meals.
- Expand state Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) programs to support all taxpayers, including those who use an Individual Taxpayer Identification Number (ITIN).
• Define testing and treatment for symptoms of COVID-19 as emergencies within emergency Medicaid.
• Use presumptive eligibility to provide testing and treatment through Medicaid.
• Enact a pandemic occupational health and safety law.
• Enact or expand state laws providing access to paid sick leave and paid family and medical leave.
• Extend labor protections to farmworkers and domestic workers.
• Extend whistleblower protections for workers who notify others about public health risks and unsafe working conditions.
• Repeal Iowa’s English Only law to ensure efficient communication during disasters.
• Enact a “sensitive location” directive that prohibits immigration enforcement activities at health centers.

**County & City leaders:**

• Provide options for local relief and support of immigrant and refugee workers, their families and communities
• Establish disaster response funds to provide financial support to people who, because of loss of work or health problems, need help immediately (Community Development Block Grants (CDBG), etc.).
• Take steps to ensure that everyone can feel safe seeking health care to fight the pandemic and clearly stating that hospitals are considered “sensitive locations” where Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) should not be conducting enforcement activities.
• Create transportation plans utilizing unused school buses or paratransit services to safely transport workers to their places of work while maintaining social distancing recommendations.
• Establish safe quarantine spaces for individuals, in addition to homeless persons, who are sick and need a space to stay. (Churches, hotels, university campuses, fair grounds, etc.)

*Thank you for taking action today!*