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McDONALD'S: PROTECT YOUR WORKERS

May 21, 2020
Mr. Chris Kempczinski, CEO
McDonald's Corporation
110 N. Carpenter Street
Chicago, IL 60607

Dear Mr. Kempczinski:

We are deeply disturbed by McDonald's failure to adequately protect the safety of employees and consumers during the COVID-19 pandemic. Reports by McDonald's crew members and media outlets reveal a pattern of severe shortcomings by McDonald's under your leadership to fully comply with the highest standards for safety and hygiene at a time when such failures can have deadly consequences for workers, their families, their communities, and your customers.

We are aware of scores of cases of COVID-19 positive workers in at least 19 states across the country. Time and time again, McDonald's has failed to swiftly close and disinfect stores following confirmed reports of COVID-19 among employees. To make matters worse, your restaurants have also failed to promptly inform workers of exposure to the virus and to provide pay during quarantine.

Across the country, McDonald's has been slow to provide protective equipment. In a recent survey of over 800 McDonald's workers, nearly half reported limited or no availability of gloves, and one quarter reported the same for cleaning supplies needed to disinfect work surfaces, bathrooms, counters, and other areas. Shockingly, nearly one in four workers reported being told not to wear masks and gloves by McDonald's management because it "scares customers," and four in ten reported that social distancing was very difficult to impossible in your stores. Workers in San Francisco, for example, filed a complaint with the city's Health Department alleging managers told them not to worry about a lack of masks in the store, suggesting that they could use coffee filters instead. Providing PPE, reorganizing workplaces to support social distancing, and immediately informing workers of exposure are all basic principles of public health protection during this pandemic, together helping to form the foundation of our nation's efforts to emerge from the epidemic as quickly—and as safely—as possible. Faced with an opportunity to meet this challenge, McDonald's has instead chosen to flout even the most basic degree of responsibility.

McDonald's has also failed to enable sick McDonald's workers to stay home with adequate paid sick leave. Instead, McDonald's successfully lobbied the White House for a sick leave formula that it knew would exclude more than half of McDonald's restaurant workers from coverage. That may explain why 22 percent of McDonald's workers reported that they went to work feeling sick during the pandemic because of a lack of paid sick leave or out of fear of being disciplined, losing hours, or otherwise being penalized by management for not showing up to their shift.

McDonald's has particularly failed employees in COVID-19 hot spots like Los Angeles, the Bay Area, New York, New Orleans, Detroit, and Chicago, where its workforce is predominantly Black and Latino. Shamefully, your company has continued to hide behind its franchise model, disavowing responsibility for hundreds of thousands of workers who wear the McDonald's uniform.

At McDonald's locations around the nation, workers have walked off the job to demand that they be provided essential health and economic protections that must go along with being essential employees in this pandemic. As leading public health experts, we support these workers' demands.

As the unmistakably largest and most profitable fast-food company in the world and as the second-largest private-sector employer in the United States, McDonald's is the standard setter in the industry. What you choose to do matters.

As the nation moves to reopen its economy, we look to corporate leadership like yours to show the rest of the food and retail industries the importance of doing the right thing for their employees, customers, and communities.

Respectfully submitted,

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