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March 31, 2020

Ms. Loren Sweatt

Assistant Secretary of Labor

U.S. Department of Labor

Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA)

200 Constitution Avenue, N.W.

Washington, D.C. 20210

Dear Ms. Sweatt,

We are writing on behalf of the League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC), the largest and oldest Latino civil rights organization in the United States. LULAC advances the economic condition, educational attainment, political influence, housing, health and civil rights of Hispanic Americans.

We are deeply concerned about the COVID-19 pandemic and its impact on essential workers including those in the meat packing industry. Meat and poultry workers have always played an essential role in the American society and economy, yet at a time when they are labeled “essential” they are being exposed with little recourse. As millions are filing for unemployment, meatpackers continue to do grueling shoulder-to-shoulder work even when sick, for fear of losing their jobs. While the recent stimulus bills passed in Congress are steps in the right direction, they are inadequate in matching the urgency and demands of this moment. For example, the sick-time bill recently signed by President Trump does not cover most meat and poultry workers because companies with more than 500 employees do not qualify. This is putting hundreds of thousands of lives at risk, thus the federal government needs to deploy all of its resources to protect them.

We are asking OSHA to **provide clear and uniform guidelines — including appropriate safety equipment, paid sick days and regular health checks**— for the companies under your purview in regards to employees safety and health. Among the 4,000 slaughterhouses and processing plants nationwide, there are no universal guidelines for how employers need to be reacting to this pandemic. Some companies have taken it upon themselves to take some steps such as temperature checks and offer bonuses to incentives workers to continue working. However, this is not enough. Given their status as essential workers, meat and poultry workers need to be protected and their safety and health a priority.

The Latino community is unduly impacted given the fact that they make up a significant number of workers in these industries. In addition, many of them are undocumented and have little access to healthcare and financial help.



## *League of United Latin American Citizens*

The Latino/ immigrant population is essential to the meatpacking industry. This is not the time to allow companies to put lives at risk. The steep increase in the number of COVID-19 cases is further evidence that we need swift action to protect the American public. We look forward to your prompt action and courteous response.

Together We Rise,

Domingo Garcia  
LULAC National President

Sindy M. Benavides  
LULAC Chief Executive Officer