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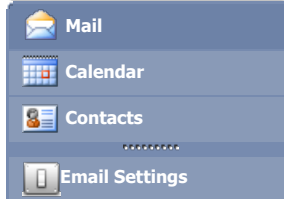
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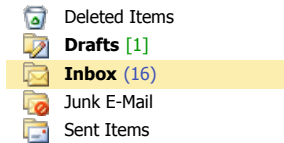
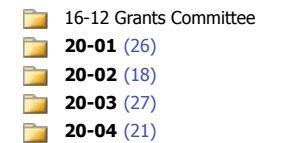
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As Workplace Infections and Deaths Rise, Rep. Adams and House Democrats Introduce Bill to Protect Workers from COVID-19

Alma Adams Press [sam.spencer@mail.house.gov]

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As Workplace Infections and Deaths Rise, Rep. Adams and House Democrats Introduce Bill to Protect Workers from COVID-19

WASHINGTON – Today, Workforce Protections Subcommittee Chairwoman Alma Adams (NC-12), Education & Labor Committee Chairman Robert C. “Bobby” Scott (VA-03), and Congresswoman Donna Shalala (FL-27) introduced legislation to protect U.S. workers from COVID-19 in response to disturbing, widespread reports of unsafe workplaces leading to preventable illnesses and deaths. **The COVID-19 Every Worker Protection Act** would require the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) to issue an Emergency Temporary Standard that establishes a legal obligation for all workplaces to implement infectious disease exposure control plans to keep workers safe during the COVID-19 pandemic.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, more than 16,000 U.S. health care workers have been infected with COVID-19. Outbreaks have been reported at a wide range of workplaces across the country, including one meat processing plant where more than 500 workers were infected with the virus.

“Essential workers on the front lines of this pandemic – and future pandemics – shouldn’t be made to feel like they’re expendable,” said Congresswoman Adams. “When these workers go home, they go home to families, pets, and children who are all vulnerable if the Department of Labor does not take action. That increases the spread of the disease and makes all of us more vulnerable. The COVID-19 Every Worker Protection Act would change that by strengthening protections for frontline workers and requiring employers to treat the essential workers who serve us every day with humanity and dignity.”

“Over the past few months, we have seen the tragic consequences of the Department of Labor’s failure to take urgent action to protect frontline health care workers and other essential employees. Without an enforceable workplace safety standard to protect workers against COVID-19 infection, nurses, doctors, first responders, grocery store workers, food processors, delivery workers, and many others will continue to suffer alarming rates of infection that have already led to thousands of preventable illnesses and deaths,” said Chairman Scott. “The COVID-19 Every Worker Protection Act directs OSHA to issue a standard that would clearly define employers’ responsibility and establish accountability to maintain a safe workplace for employees.”

“Thousands of essential workers are going to work every day despite the risk of being infected by a disease unlike any we have witnessed in our lifetimes. We need to do more to make sure that these brave men and women have the necessary protections in place to keep them safe,” said Congresswoman Shalala. “This legislation will make sure that OSHA quickly develops a workplace standard to keep essential personnel healthy and working to combat this virus.” Although the CDC issued guidance to protect workers, the guidance is not binding and OSHA currently has no enforceable standard to protect workers from airborne infectious diseases, leaving the nation’s workers at an elevated risk of exposure to the coronavirus at a time when they are needed most.

The Occupational Safety and Health Act gives the Department of Labor the authority to issue an Emergency Temporary Standard if employees are exposed to grave danger from new hazards. However, despite repeated calls from Committee Democrats to issue an Emergency Temporary Standard, the Department has made no effort to establish enforceable safety standards to protect workers from COVID-19.

The COVID-19 Every Worker Protection Act directs OSHA to issue an Emergency Temporary Standard within seven days that sets requirements for how workplaces must safeguard workers against the spread of the coronavirus. The legislation expands on a previous proposal, included in the Take Responsibility for Workers and Families Act (H.R. 6139), by requiring OSHA to issue a standard covering all U.S. workers, including workers in health care facilities, warehouses, grocery stores, and food processing plants.

The bill is also cosponsored by Representatives Joe Courtney (CT-02), Eleanor Holmes Norton (D-DC), Frederica S. Wilson (FL-24), Joyce Beatty (OH-03), Brenda L. Lawrence (MI-14), Marcia L. Fudge (OH-11), Donald Norcross (NJ-01), Susan Wild (PA-07), Bonnie Watson Coleman (NJ-12), Eliot L. Engel (NY-16), Suzanne Bonamici (OR-01), Max Rose (NY-11), Abby Finkenauer (IA-01), Emanuel Cleaver II (MO-05), Steve Cohen (TN-09), Lori Trahan (MA-03), Andy Levin (MI-09), David Trone (MD-06), Lucy McBath (GA-06), Pramila Jayapal (WA-07), Joseph D. Morelle (NY-25), Mark Pocan (WI-02), Tom Suozzi (NY-03), Jahana Hayes (CT-05), Ilhan Omar (MN-05), Joaquin Castro (TX-20), and Raul M. Grijalva (AZ-03).

To read the bill text for the COVID-19 Worker Protection Act of 2020, click [here](#).

To read a fact sheet for the COVID-19 Worker Protection Act of 2020, click [here](#).

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Sam Spencer
Deputy Chief of Staff | Communications Director
Congresswoman Alma S. Adams, NC-12
2436 Rayburn House Office Building Washington, DC 20515
Phone: 202-225-1510 Fax: 202-225-1512

Connect with us



Office of Congresswoman Alma Adams | 801 E. Morehead St, Suite 150, Charlotte, NC 28202
Phone: 704-344-9950

[Unsubscribe sjohnston@tuesdayforumcharlotte.org](mailto:sjohnston@tuesdayforumcharlotte.org)

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