

May 13, 2020

ATTORNEY GENERAL RAOUL URGES AMAZON AND WHOLE FOODS TO STRENGTHEN WORKER PROTECTIONS DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Raoul, 12 Attorneys General Seek Assurances on Compliance with State Laws and Federal COVID-19 Guidance

Chicago — Attorney General Kwame Raoul today joined a coalition of 13 attorneys general calling on Amazon and Whole Foods to strengthen measures to protect the health and safety of their workers during the COVID-19 pandemic.

In a letter sent to the companies, Raoul and the coalition request updated information on several outstanding issues raised in a previous letter Raoul and the coalition sent March 25 that urged the companies to improve their paid leave policies. Today's letter asks Amazon and Whole Foods to provide the states with details of health and safety measures they have adopted, data about infections and deaths among their workers, and evidence of their compliance with states' paid sick leave laws.

"As millions of Americans rely on the services provided by the employees of Amazon and Whole Foods, workers need protections that will help them stay safe during this unprecedented time," Raoul said. "These companies must take additional steps to ensure the safety of their workers and provide for leave policies that allow workers and their families to stay healthy."

Raoul and the attorneys general write that they are alarmed by recent media reports and complaints by employees of both companies alleging inadequate safety measures and sick leave policies, insufficient data about infections and deaths among their workers, and retaliation against workers who call attention to unsafe workplace conditions. In the wake of these ongoing concerns, Raoul and the coalition urge the companies to provide the following:

- A written response showing how the companies are complying with guidance and recommendations from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Occupational Safety and Health Administration to prevent the exposure and transmission of COVID-19, including by providing workers with adequate personal protective equipment, hand washing and hand sanitizer, and social distancing policies.
- A written response demonstrating how the companies are complying with state paid sick leave laws.
- A state-by-state breakdown for each company on the number of their workers who have been infected with and died from COVID-19.
- A description of policies and procedures for notifying consumers and public health authorities of COVID-19 infections and deaths among Whole Foods employees. Many of the states' consumer protection laws already require businesses to provide this information to consumers.
- Assurances that Amazon and Whole Foods workers will not be retaliated against for raising concerns about workplace health and safety issues with management, the media, coworkers or by filing complaints with relevant government agencies, and that all reports of retaliation will be investigated by the companies.
- An extension of the companies' existing unlimited unpaid leave policies for as long as a state or federal state of emergency exists in each of the states.
- Generous paid leave policies, as outlined in the states' March 25 letter, that align with requirements in the federal Families First Coronavirus Response Act and provide up to 12 weeks of paid leave for

workers who must stay at home to care for children due to school closures, or for themselves and family members if experiencing COVID-19 symptoms, diagnosed with COVID-19, or quarantined.

Amazon and Whole Foods play an important role during this crisis by providing groceries and necessary supplies to millions of Americans who now rely on online shopping more than ever before. Raoul and the coalition write that due to the services Amazon and Whole Foods provide across the country, these companies have an even greater obligation to ensure their employees stay safe and healthy while working throughout the pandemic.

Joining Raoul in sending the letter are the attorneys general of Connecticut, Delaware, the District of Columbia, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, New Mexico, New York, Oregon, Pennsylvania and Washington.