



April 6, 2020

The Honorable Gavin Newsom
Governor of California
State Capitol, Room Suite 1173
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: Protective Supplies and Equipment for COVID-19 Response

Dear Governor Newsom:

The 700,000 members of Service Employees International Union (SEIU California) write to request urgent action to meet frontline workers' needs - and the needs of the public - during this global COVID-19 outbreak. We request your immediate intervention to increase the supply of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and to ensure it is distributed in a coordinated and equitable fashion that relies upon information and input from frontline workers. Immediate and decisive action is needed from your Administration to ensure workers have the supplies we rely upon to protect ourselves while we fight on the front lines of this epidemic.

Every level of government must take every possible step to increase the supply of PPE. We project that we need billions of masks, gloves, gowns, and face shields to protect the workforce; without them, our lives and the lives of the people we care for will be put in grave danger. While we appreciate the recent equipment California received from the National Strategic Stockpile, it has become clear that we can't rely upon the federal government to solve this problem. We need you to continue to lead.

The frontline workers of SEIU ask that the State of California:

- **Immediately direct California's manufacturing capacity to the production of PPEs and ventilators.** Without an adequate supply of PPE and ventilators, our healthcare system could potentially collapse and many healthcare workers and patients will die. We call on you to use your emergency powers and legal authority immediately to direct the production of PPEs.
- **Create, promote, monitor, and utilize an active feedback system to gather reports on safety conditions from frontline workers.** CalOSHA's online reporting link has been removed, a step in the wrong direction - but what is needed is far more proactive than that. Having a well-publicized, easy-to-access reporting process for frontline workers provides a real-time assessment of supplies and equipment from workers on the ground and creates a map of where shortages are occurring.
- **Provide regular reports on the current inventory of PPE and the status of those supplies.** Regular reporting on the status of California's inventory can help us better identify needs in order to solve PPE and ventilator shortages. This is especially important because the supply numbers from the federal government are often inflated, and many of their supplies are expired.

- **Create a supply chain strike force and designate them as a single point of contact to coordinate the expansion of PPE supply and ensure a comprehensive and equitable distribution process.** Our projected demand will outstrip our supply without intervention. The strike force should be tasked with facilitating collaboration between public and private sectors to ensure health care workers have the supplies and resources they need to respond. California's current response could be enhanced by having a single point of contact where the hospitals, clinics, pharmacies, nursing homes, and the organizations representing those workers can coordinate our response by increasing the supply of PPE and ventilators.

Frontline workers have answered your call; we are working tirelessly and at great personal risk to ourselves and our families to fight COVID-19, protect the public, and care for the sick; however, we need protection ourselves. One SEIU nurse recently reported that his co-workers have begun using garbage bags for protection because of a lack of protective clothing - and this is well before the expected surge. "So this is a real thing on night shift," he wrote. "It's 'Make Your Own PPE Day.'"

All workers deserve better - and all patients deserve better. Together, we know we can rise to this moment and take the steps necessary to save the lives of workers and our community members.

We look forward to continuing to partner with you in achieving our shared goals, and we appreciate and support your compassionate, tireless, and clear-sighted leadership during this time of crisis.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bob Schoonover". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Bob" being more prominent and the last name "Schoonover" written in a continuous script.

Bob Schoonover
President, SEIU CA State Council