



April 16, 2020

Mayor Faulconer  
Council President Gomez  
City of San Diego Councilmembers

## **It's time to protect and uplift each other**

Dear officials:

The COVID-19 pandemic has made evident the existing inequities in our healthcare system, workplaces, housing, governmental services and policies. Previous policy decisions have created systems that have resulted in low-wage workers, immigrants, communities of color, as well as unsheltered and incarcerated individuals, being the hit hardest by this public health crisis. The actions our City government takes now can set a better course for the future of our communities. Our fates rise and fall together.

You must take every possible action to contain the spread of COVID-19, and alleviate the health and financial burden on working families and our most vulnerable community members. We, the undersigned, call on you to act immediately. We would like to meet with you as soon as possible and expect an action plan to adopt these priorities by **Thursday, April 30<sup>th</sup>**.

### **Housing For All**

1. **Use the full extent of your power to immediately:**
  - a. Create a Rent Registry and Tenant's Board to ensure implementation of local protections for renters. The lack of enforcement infrastructure and limited resources allocated for legal protection of renters, has exacerbated the impact of the pandemic for tenants in this region.
  - b. Allocate funding to support and expand the operations of local organizations who are currently providing tenant assistance and legal services during this time.
  - c. Strengthen the tenant moratorium ordinance by: **1)** prohibiting rent increases **2)** removing the 30% threshold for loss of income **3)** extending the notification period to be no less than 30 days for renters to provide hardship letters and documentation to landlords, **4)** penalizing landlords that violate the moratorium with a minimum fine of \$1000 OR cost of rent (whichever is greater) per violation, and **5)** extend the payback deadline to Jan 2021.
2. **Advocate at the county level** to proactively outreach to unsheltered individuals and families, and ensure the provision of safe shelters (such as hotel and housing vouchers) for all, indefinitely.
3. **Advocate at the state level** to cancel mortgage and rent debt to prevent future evictions, homelessness and death.

### **Economic Relief for Working Families**

1. **Use the full extent of your power to immediately:**
  - a. Adopt universal paid sick leave of at least 15 days (120 hours) for everyone who works in the City of San Diego.

- b. Establish a right of recall by seniority, so workers who have been laid off can secure employment when the crisis subsides.
  - c. Establish a “just cause” provision to prevent unjust firing.
  - d. Establish a worker retention provision when contracts and/or businesses change ownership.
  - e. Require all employers asking for and receiving fee waivers, subsidies, contracts, etc., to agree to adhere to all new and existing paid sick leave policies, even if the business is exempted from such policies by state or federal law.
  - f. Ensure workers have additional breaks to wash their hands.
  - g. Provide all City employees with safety training.
- 2. Direct Minimum Wage Earned Sick Days (MWESD) enforcement office to address emergency needs for worker protections:**
- a. Ensure all workers in the City of San Diego have proper workplace health and safety measures, including access to supplies, masks, gloves, sanitizers, handwashing stations, and other personal protective equipment.
  - b. Reassign City staff to support and expand the functions of MWESD office.
  - c. Direct City staff to proactively enforce worker protections by: **1)** convening and working closely with key community partners to conduct outreach and enforcement efforts **2)** prioritizing proactive outreach and enforcement based on an assessment that uses best practices and expertise of community partners to identify high risk/low complaint industries **3)** conducting robust outreach to employers and employees about workers’ rights.
- 3. Support Small Businesses:**
- a. Expand the Small Business Relief Fund (SBRF) program to include home-based businesses with at least one year of revenue and increase the amount of available funds with prioritization of small businesses in the San Diego Promise Zone.
  - b. Begin to design, with deep community engagement, a “Small Business Re-Start Up” grant and loan program to help small businesses who closed temporarily during the crisis to reopen and re-hire employees previously laid off due to COVID-19. A requirement for participation in the program must include a right of recall.
- 4. Advocate at the state level for:**
- a. Expansion of the amount of unemployment insurance to 100% of salary for workers earning under \$80k per year.
  - b. Expansion of the unemployment compensation system to allow the rapid processing of new unemployment applications, in all languages needed.
  - c. Unemployment insurance or equivalent aid (food security, rent/mortgage and utility assistance), to be immediately accessible for all workers who have been laid off, had their hours cut or otherwise cannot work, regardless of employment classification or immigration status.

**Protect our Values, Safety and Voices**

- 1. Protect and support some of our most vulnerable City residents:**
- a. Create a cash assistance fund for all undocumented workers, individuals and families.
  - b. Create an emergency assistance fund, specifically for working parents who have lost jobs or income in order to care for their children while schools have transitioned to online learning.
  - c. Provide free, reliable broadband internet access to low-income residents.
  - d. Create a proactive Emergency Resource Ambassador Program that employs youth to communicate with their peers about available resources and services.

- e. Make sure government documents, press releases, press conferences and websites are in multiple languages including but not limited to Spanish, Vietnamese, and Somali.
  - f. Use the City's MTS votes to: **1)** ensure bus routes in transit-dependent communities, and routes for essential workers and trips continue to run **2)** continue rear-door boarding on all buses and **3)** formally suspend fare collection during the outbreak.
  - g. Instate no-cost transit fares for all youth during COVID-19 recovery.
  - h. When advisable by public health officials, ensure that parks, trails, and beaches reopen and are accessible to the public for responsible outdoor recreation that promotes safety, health and wellbeing.
- 2. Ensure our broken "criminal justice" system does not exacerbate the pandemic:**
- a. Direct SDPD to cite and release individuals with misdemeanors.
  - b. Direct SDPD to release youth (age 25 and younger) and pregnant people who do not have serious charges or convictions.
  - c. Direct SDPD to stop ticketing individuals with a \$1000 fine and/or jail time for alleged violations of the shelter in place directive.
  - d. Direct and ensure SDPD officers wear face masks, gloves, and maintain social distancing to the greatest extent possible in the course of their duties.
  - e. Work with the County to ensure early release from jail for people who are within 6 months of their release date.
  - f. Work with the County to provide housing vouchers for individuals who are released.
  - g. Reform the Community Review Board on Police Practices in order to institute greater accountability on the San Diego Police Department by putting it on the 2020 November ballot.
- 3. Protect immigrants and asylum-seekers:**
- a. Release asylum-seekers and immigrants being held in detention centers by San Diego Immigration Custody.
  - b. Provide safe housing to migrants released from detention facilities, taking into account the specific needs and conditions of elders, children and women.
  - c. Prohibit SDPD from asking about immigration status and collaborating with Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), including in raids, joint task forces, and ICE access to jails or information sharing. Sanction officers who put our communities in danger by collaborating with ICE.
- 4. Advocate at the federal level** for student loan debt forgiveness.

## Healthcare For All

- 1. Work with County officials to:**
- a. Ensure universal access to healthcare, including free COVID-19 testing and treatment regardless of documentation, insurance status or background. Proactively outreach to and prioritize services to Black, Indigenous, People of Color and communities with disabilities, who are being disproportionately harmed.
  - b. Coordinate with agencies to expand the network of food and supply distribution centers that provide access to healthy food options, and to ensure no-cost menstrual products are available at those centers.
  - c. Provide no-cost digital and telephonic mental health counseling and *mentorship* to youth.
- 2. Advocate at the state level** to expand Medi-Cal coverage to all uninsured workers and their families (including those who lose job-based health insurance due to layoff) without regard to immigration status.

Sincerely,

*The Aja Project*  
*Alliance of Californians for Community*  
*Empowerment (ACCE)*  
*AFSCME 127*  
*American Federation of Teachers Local 1931*  
*American Friends Service Committee- USMBP*  
*Asian Solidarity Collective*  
*Bikes del Pueblo*  
*Center on Policy Initiatives*  
*City Heights CDC*  
*City Heights Youth For Change*  
*Climate Action Campaign*  
*Dig Down Deep*  
*Emerald Hills Neighborhood Council*  
*Environmental Health Coalition*  
*Green New Deal at UC San Diego*  
*Interfaith Worker Justice*  
*Justice for James Lacy*  
*Justice for Jonathon Coronel*  
*Latino Outdoors San Diego*  
*Logan Heights CDC*  
*Mid-City CAN*

*Muslim American Society-Public Affairs and Civic*  
*Engagement (MAS-PACE)*  
*NAACP San Diego Branch*  
*Outdoor Outreach*  
*Parent Voices*  
*Planned Parenthood Action Fund of the Pacific*  
*Southwest*  
*Pilgrim United Church of Christ*  
*Pillars of the Community*  
*Public Bank SD*  
*Pueblo Planning*  
*Samuel Lawrence Foundation*  
*San Diego 350*  
*San Diego Building & Construction Trades Council*  
*The San Diego LGBT Community Center*  
*San Diego Tenants Union*  
*Stonewall Citizens' Patrol*  
*Stop Terrorism and Oppression by Police coalition*  
*(STOP)*  
*United Domestic Workers*  
*Workers Fund San Diego*  
*Youth Will*