

March 3, 2020
General Public Comment, Open Session
Regarding: Hero Pay for Retail Workers in South Pasadena

On January 20, 2021, the Council approved a motion by Mayor Pro Tem Cacciotti for staff to draft an ordinance providing hero pay to our city's retail workers. The ordinance has not been returned to the Council to date.

In other jurisdictions around California, cities and counties are moving ahead with hazard pay for retail workers. The cities of **Long Beach, Montebello, West Hollywood, Irvine, Oakland, Berkeley, and San Francisco** have enacted hazard pay ordinances, as has the **County of Los Angeles** for unincorporated areas. The cities of **Los Angeles, Santa Monica, Palm Springs, Coachella, San Jose, Santa Ana, Santa Clara and San Mateo** are all considering hazard pay ordinances to compensate retail workers for the added risks burdening them during the pandemic.

The momentum behind local hazard pay ordinances is growing due to congressional stalemate and **brehtaking profits by major retailers**. According to the Brookings Institution, in 2020 retailers averaged 40% profit increases compared to 2019.¹ Brookings found that in 2020, **Kroger's profits were up 90%, up \$962 million** from 2019.² **Albertsons' profits were up 153% over the previous year, from \$344 million to \$871 million.**³

Meanwhile, economic insecurity for workers is high and retail workers risk coronavirus infection each day they work. Some retailers offered hazard pay early in the pandemic, and some, including Trader Joe's,⁴ are still paying a modest wage premium. The Brookings Institution report found that, when available, hazard pay makes a meaningful difference for low-wage retail workers, particularly for women and people of color. The authors determined that **retailers could increase the amount of hazard pay they offer substantially while still earning record profits.**⁵

South Pasadena should not retreat from good policy in fear of the grocery associations' intimidation tactics to beat back local ordinances. On February 25, a federal district court denied the California Grocers Association's motion for a preliminary injunction to temporarily overturn the Long Beach hero pay ordinance. Kroger's decision to close two retail locations in Long Beach has been widely pilloried as retaliation against essential workers. In sum, **the grocery associations are coming up short in courts of law and public opinion.**

The COVID-19 pandemic has infected and killed Black and Latinx Americans at vastly disproportionate rates. The pandemic's racial and ethnic disparities are caused, in part, by the

¹ Kinder, Molly, et al. *Windfall Profits and Deadly Risks: How the biggest retail companies are compensating essential workers during the COVID-19 pandemic*. Brookings Institution. November 2020. Available online at <https://www.brookings.edu/essay/windfall-profits-and-deadly-risks/>

² Kroger's is the parent corporation of Ralph's.

³ Albertson's is the parent corporation of Vons.

⁴ Trader Joe's announced it is cancelling annual raises because it is offering hazard pay.

⁵ Kinder, Molly, et al. *supra* n. 1.

heightened risk of infection to essential workers, such as grocery store workers who are more likely to be Black and Latinx.⁶

Here in South Pasadena, residents enjoy lower rates of COVID-19 transmission and higher rates of vaccination than the County average.⁷ Residents also benefit from the convenience of six grocery options from major retailers within our city's three-and-a-half square miles, which have been open continuously throughout the pandemic. As South Pasadena addresses its history as a sundown town, it must consider concrete measures to remedy racial inequities affecting people who work here for low wages. Requiring retailers to give a modest pay bump to the workers who assist South Pasadenans every day is one such concrete measure the city can take.^{8,9}

We urge South Pasadena to put teeth behind its widespread yard signs thanking essential workers for their service. ***Agendize an urgency hazard pay ordinance for the March 17 City Council meeting.***

Signed,

- | | |
|------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1. Alana Adye-Jones | 23. Janna Conner-Niclaes |
| 2. Jennifer Alano | 24. Laura Copeland |
| 3. Ahilan Arulanantham | 25. Melinda Creps |
| 4. Alexander Aquino | 26. Isa D'Arleans |
| 5. Martin AuYeung | 27. Matthew Defulgentis |
| 6. Anne Bagasao | 28. Steven Anthony Diez Jr. |
| 7. Dr. Paula Bagasao | 29. Grace Dennis |
| 8. Kerrie Barbato | 30. Frederick Eberhardt |
| 9. Matthew Barbato | 31. Richard Elbaum |
| 10. Chris Becker | 32. Owen Ellickson |
| 11. Robin Becker | 33. Alan Ehrlich |
| 12. Sierra Betinis | 34. Justin Ehrlich |
| 13. Katrina Bleckley | 35. Stephanie Ehrlich |
| 14. Erin Bonz | 36. Sarah Erlich |
| 15. Felicie Borredon | 37. Judy Evind |
| 16. Laurent Borredon | 38. Tzung-lin Fu |
| 17. Jessica Bradford | 39. Lorena Gomez |
| 18. Matthew Brown | 40. Luca Goodrich |
| 19. Colin Burgess | 41. Dean Gordon |
| 20. Tony Butka | 42. Rachel Hamilton |
| 21. Ivan Cabrera | 43. Sharon Hannah |
| 22. Beth Clendenin | 44. Tanya Henderson |

⁶ Kinder, Molly, et al., *supra* n. 1.

⁷ Lin, Rong-Gong and Luke Money. "COVID-19 vaccine rates in Brentwood, Santa Monica twice as high as poorer L.A. County areas." *Los Angeles Times*, March 2, 2021. <https://www.latimes.com/california/story/2021-03-02/covid-vaccine-rates-wealthy-la-areas-double-poor-areas>

⁸ Logan, Erin. "Californians broadly back COVID-19 hazard pay, protections for farmworkers, poll finds." *Los Angeles Times*, February 23, 2021. <https://www.latimes.com/california/story/2021-02-23/latino-and-indigenous-californians-are-disproportionately-impacted-by-covid-19>

⁹ Kinder, Molly, et al. *supra* n. 1.

45. Alec Henderson
46. Will Hoadley-Brill
47. Eric Hoffman
48. Tracey Holder
49. Kelly Hom
50. Laboni Hoq
51. Che Hurley
52. Ella Hushagen
53. Phung Huynh
54. Amber Jaeger
55. Sam Jaeger
56. Adeline Jasso
57. Marion Johnson
58. Ryan Jones
59. Monica Kelly
60. William Kelly
61. Afshin Ketabi
62. JuHee Kim
63. Sunyah Kim
64. Kristen Kuhlman
65. Caitlin Lainoff
66. Ahn Leng
67. Melissa Lien
Jacinta Linke, elected delegate AD41
LACDP
68. Tony Lockhart
69. Sofia Lopez
70. Vivian Ly
71. Casey Macgregor-Toshima
72. Jan Marshall
73. Demetra Mazria
74. Laura McSharry
75. David Melford
76. Robin Meyer
77. Sean Meyer
78. Julia Moreno Perri
79. Jacob Morris
80. Jenny Muninnopmas
81. Paola Munoz
82. Tudor Munteanu
83. Elizabeth Murillo
84. Andrea Nagata
85. Ayaka Nakaji
86. Anna Nakhienchanh
87. Robyn Nedelcu
88. Katie Neuhoff

89. Anna Newell Brown
90. Raf Niclaes
91. Joanne Nuckols
92. Suzanne Noruschat
93. Carla Obert
94. Gayle Oswald
95. John Oswald
96. Steve Pattenson
97. Chris Patterson
98. Cole Patterson
99. Ry Patterson
100. Victoria Patterson
101. Georgina Paul
102. Kelly Pedersen
103. Sarah Perez-Silverman
104. Sherry Plotkin
105. Natasha Prime
106. Jose Quiguer
107. Melissa Quilter
108. Myron Dean Quon
109. Alexandra Ramirez
110. Eray Rea
111. Zahir Robb
112. Aliza Rood
113. Jason Rosner
114. Shawn Ross
115. Shari Sakamoto
116. Daniel Saunders
117. Allie Schreiner
118. Barrett Schreiner
119. Andrea Seigel
120. Alexandra Shannon
121. Katherine Siew
122. Glafira Silva
123. Sean Singleton
124. Alison Smith
125. Chris Smith
126. John Srebalus
127. Levi Srebalus
128. Mark Stepro
129. Ryan Stone
130. Nancy Tam
131. Noemie Taylor-Rosner
132. Kathleen Telser
133. Andrew Terhune
134. Cassandra Terhune

- 135. Amy Tofte
- 136. Cambria Tortorelli
- 137. Helen Tran
- 138. Elizabeth Wendorf
- 139. Gwen Wong

- 140. Kathleen Wong
- 141. Maya Yahoun
- 142. Rita Yee
- 143. Jean Yu