

STATE CAPITOL
P.O. BOX 942849
SACRAMENTO, CA 94249-0059
(916) 319-2059
FAX (916) 319-2159

DISTRICT OFFICE
ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICES WEST
700 EXPOSITION PARK DRIVE
LOS ANGELES, CA 90037
(213) 744-2111
FAX (213) 744-2122

E-MAIL
Assemblymember.Jones-Sawyer@assembly.ca.gov

Assembly California Legislature

REGINALD BYRON JONES-SAWYER, SR.
ASSEMBLYMEMBER, FIFTY-NINTH DISTRICT

COMMITTEES
CHAIR: PUBLIC SAFETY
AGRICULTURE
BUDGET
GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATION
LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT
SUBCOMMITTEE
BUDGET SUBCOMMITTEE NO. 5 ON
PUBLIC SAFETY

April 10, 2020

Honorable Gavin Newsom
Governor, State of California
State Capitol
Sacramento, 95814

Dear Governor Newsom,

Thank you for your work with my legislative colleagues and me to ensure that we are able to minimize the damage done to constituents during this COVID-19 pandemic. The work to re-open St. Vincent's Hospital in Los Angeles and others throughout the state was a great relief for our hospital system and, more specifically, provides greater access to healthcare for people in my district. However, despite our continued efforts, many undocumented residents across California remain extremely vulnerable during this health and economic crisis.

As you are aware, over two million California residents are undocumented, with an estimated 813,000 residing in Los Angeles, many of which live my district. Furthermore, according to the Public Policy Institute of California about one in ten California workers are undocumented individuals, contributing over \$3 billion in taxes to our state. Undocumented residents often work in low-wage sectors of our economy or, like street vendors in the 59th Assembly District, are entrepreneurs who depend on in-person business. While the Shelter in Place Order is the right and necessary policy choice, many individuals simply cannot afford not to work, or to work reduced hours.

An Economic Policy Institute report found that approximately one in six Latino workers are able to work from home. This statistic, coupled with the inability for undocumented individuals to receive unemployment insurance, or even a federal stimulus check, means that many residents in my district and across California will be among those most affected by the economic fallout of this pandemic. In fact, a recent study by the California Budget and Policy Center found that excluding ITIN filers from the federal stimulus results in a loss of almost \$10,000 in state and federal benefits for a single mother earning minimum wage, like those in South Los Angeles, based solely on citizenship status.

I respectfully request that a "Disaster Relief Fund," established within the Employment Development Department, be created to assist undocumented

workers during this COVID-19 pandemic. I ask that the fund use only state dollars to help those undocumented workers who are unable to work due to COVID-19 or a Shelter in Place Order, have been laid off from work, have had hours reduced, or are caring for their child due to the loss of childcare.

California has taken the lead in protecting and expanding the rights of undocumented residents. Your recent efforts in the budget to expand healthcare access to this community go a long way in ensuring health and safety. However, given that the federal government has ignored the needs of our residents, we must continue to act. A fund to cover basic needs, meet financial obligations, or ease debt pressure for those without access to federal aid is the type of bold proposal that typifies the "California Way."

We look forward to working with you to develop and implement this program.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Reginald Byron Jones-Sawyer, Sr." The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'R' and 'B'.

Reginald Byron Jones-Sawyer, Sr.
Assemblymember, 59th Assembly District