

## Governor Issues Executive Order Establishing COVID-19 Workers' Compensation Presumption



After months of relentless advocacy on behalf of essential workers led by the Connecticut AFL-CIO, Governor Lamont finally issued an [executive order establishing a workers' compensation presumption for COVID-19](#) today. After receiving nearly 1,000 emails from workers and being lobbied by the Democratic leaders of the State House of Representatives and the State Senate, the Governor realized he could delay no longer. The order will allow essential workers to collect the healthcare and wage replacement they have earned more quickly and easily.

Connecticut's workers' compensation statutes require workers to demonstrate that they have acquired an illness at work in order to be eligible for healthcare, wage replacement and other benefits. Requiring a worker to prove exactly how and when they contracted COVID-19 is nearly impossible. [Executive Order 7JJJ](#) issued this morning, creates a presumption that exposure to COVID-19 is work-related for essential workers between March 10 and May 20. It still allows the employer the opportunity to prove that infection happened elsewhere, but moves the burden of proof from the worker to the employer. It also eliminates the need for employees to go through a protracted appeals process through the Workers' Compensation Commission, which could take months.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, our state's public health and safety have depended heavily on the efforts of frontline workers. While the number of COVID-19 cases skyrocketed, these dedicated workers continued to care for patients, stock grocery store shelves, answer emergency calls, staff prisons, operate public transit systems, care for children and ensure taxpayers have continued access to other essential services. They continue to perform their jobs under difficult circumstances and in extremely dangerous conditions.

Connecticut AFL-CIO President Sal Luciano issued a [statement](#), "We are grateful to Gov. Lamont for signing an executive order that will help hundreds, and possibly thousands, of essential workers who were stricken with COVID-19. In the middle of a pandemic and an outbreak in Connecticut, the state expected essential workers to continue to go to work and keep us safe. And they delivered. The least we can do is to make sure we take care of them when they get sick because all they did was go to work."

"The Connecticut AFL-CIO is also extraordinarily thankful to [Senator Julie Kushner](#), [Senator Matt Lesser](#), [Representative Robyn Porter](#), [Representative Sean Scanlon](#), and all of the legislative leaders that helped make this happen," Luciano continued. "They understood the sacrifice our state's essential workers made and they did not rest until they were afforded basic health and job protections."

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