

Coordinating Committee  
Poor People's Campaign, Rhode Island  
401.871.1289  
rhodeisland@poorpeoplescampaign.org

March 1, 2021

Members of the House Committee on Labor  
HouseLabor@rilegislature.gov

Honorable members of the House Committee on Labor:

On behalf of the Coordinating Committee of the Poor People's Campaign in Rhode Island, I am writing to let you know that we support HB 5721, which would provide hazard pay for essential workers.

Essential workers are exactly that: essential. Many of them work for poverty wages. Stark is the contrast with CEOs who make \$100 million per year. What we have here is an example of the *poverty and inequality* prevalent in this country and in Rhode Island.<sup>1</sup> To end *poverty and inequality* is one of the demands of the Poor People's Campaign, a national call for moral revival.

*Systemic racism* is a second one of these interlocking injustices. Indeed, essential workers are the ones who take biggest risks. Among this group, Indigenous, Black, Pacific Islander and Latino Americans are the groups who have experienced the highest death rates from COVID-19.<sup>2</sup>

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "M. P. Nightingale". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Peter Nightingale,  
for the Coordinating Committee of  
the Poor Peoples' Campaign Rhode  
Island

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<sup>1</sup>Poor People's Campaign, *A moral agenda Based on Fundamental Rights*

<sup>2</sup>APM Research Lab, *The color of corona virus: COVID-19 deaths by race and ethnicity in the U.S.*