



Fresno City Council President Luis Chavez  
2600 Fresno Street  
Room 2097  
Fresno, CA 93721

2/26/2021

**Re: Emergency Ordinance Related to Grocery Store Hazard Pay**

Dear Council President Chavez-

After a review of this proposed ordinance, I'm writing to inform you that our organization must respectfully oppose it. The issue for us is not whether frontline essential workers deserve excellent pay- they certainly do. The main issues from our point of view are that the city level of government is the wrong place to legislate wage and employment matters and that all levels of government should apply rules equitably.

It is our belief that enacting a policy of this sort at the city level rather than the state or federal level will create undesirable externalities. Specifically, it creates a major expense for a specific class of employers in Fresno not borne by their competitors in Clovis, Madera, Sanger, etc. It naturally follows that during the life of this ordinance, not only will groceries be cheaper in neighboring communities, but the stores that sell them will also be more profitable than the ones located here. Sales tax issues notwithstanding, we believe these likely outcomes will be bad for our community.

Further, we believe the singling out of grocery stores and grocery workers is not equitable. There are many types of businesses that have been classified as "essential" during the pandemic. What message does this ordinance send to sanitation workers, restaurant workers, people who work at home improvement stores, and the workers in countless other industries that it does not cover? This morning's Fresno Bee article by Brianna Calix on the topic quotes you as saying "If a company is raking in record dollar amounts in profits, they should share those profits with its employees" [sic] as a justification for the ordinance. While there is nothing wrong with this statement on its face, we believe it is a very slippery slope for a city council to monitor profits for individual industries within a municipality and then create special legislation based on those observations. Our city council should not be in the business of choosing which frontline workers are the most valuable based on the profits of their employer.

At the Fresno Chamber, we pride ourselves on our predisposition for moderate positions and our ability to work with diverse stakeholders for the general betterment of our community. From our point of view, this ordinance is not right for our city at this time, but I hope and believe we'll be working hand-in-hand on another important issue in the near future.

Sincerely,



Scott Miller  
President/CEO