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June 2, 2020

The Honorable Andrew M. Cuomo
Governor
Executive Chamber
State Capitol
Albany, NY 12224

Dear Governor Cuomo:

On behalf of the 150,000 members of the Transport Workers Union, I write to respectfully urge you to create a presumption that frontline and essential workers who contract COVID-19 were exposed in the workplace. Doing this will allow these workers and their families access to workers' compensation benefits that their employers have already paid for. A presumption would not create a new benefit, it would simply prevent insurance carriers from denying otherwise valid claims.

Working men and women performing essential jobs outside their homes are risking their lives and the well-being of their families in order to keep their fellow New Yorkers healthy, safe and fed during the pandemic. It is unquestionable that as a direct result of their jobs, they are at a far greater risk of exposure to and the contraction of COVID-19 than those with the luxury of social distancing.

Thirteen other states have acted to create COVID-19 workers' compensation presumptions while New York lags behind. The Workers' Compensation Board has the authority to establish a presumption. However, they have failed to act. You can ensure these workers receive the comp benefits to which they are entitled by enacting S.8266/A.10401.

Governor, time and again, New York has set the standard in this country on issues of worker rights, protections and justice. That is a true testament to your leadership. On this issue, at this time, New York can once again claim the mantle of standard bearer for the needs and concerns of working men and women. Your sheer will and commitment can make that a reality.

We cannot further burden these workers by allowing insurance carriers to shirk their responsibilities, denying them health care, wage replacement, and death benefits.

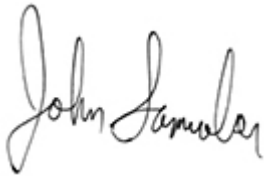
Workers are becoming ill and, in far too many cases, dying. The workers' compensation coverage that their employers have paid for, and they have been

promised, should not be in question. To allow coverage to be denied now, calls into question the very foundation of the workers' compensation system.

I ask you to treat these workers and their sacrifice with the dignity and respect they deserve enacting S.8266/A.10401.

As always, I and my staff are available to discuss this issue further, but for the workers risking their lives, there is simply no time to waste.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John Samuelson". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

John Samuelson
President
Transport Workers Union