

To the New Haven, Connecticut Board of Alders:

Our names are Chelsea Connery and Fatima Rojas. We are delivering this testimony on behalf of the Semilla Collective, a grassroots collective formed in the Fall of 2019 to fight side by side with immigrant and working families, and to host cultural events in our community. With the onset of the pandemic, we in the Collective had built a network of mutual support. Neighbors and friends, many of whom undocumented, have worked together to help each other throughout this crisis. We have collected food, money and other resources to redistribute among families in our communities who lost income due to the pandemic; many of them do not have access to stimulus checks, nutritional assistance, nor housing assistance from the federal government. However, our efforts have been far from enough. While we have had over 600 families in our network, there are thousands of families living precariously as the crisis drags on. Our city must also step up to protect its residents. That is why we are pleased to see this ordinance in front of the Legislation Committee today. This ordinance is an essential part of ensuring that low-income people of color in our city recover from this crisis - critical to the city's overall recovery and stability.

Hotel workers have faced some of the worst layoffs of this economic crisis. Hotel workers are also disproportionately immigrant women of color. These workers, many of whom have spent their lives working for New Haven hotels, deserve to be treated with respect. They do not deserve to be cast aside by hotels and major hotel owners. They do not deserve to lose their health insurance in the middle of a pandemic. Time after time, wealthy corporations have profited from economic recessions, and governments have rushed to bail them out. Meanwhile, marginalized people have been left to fend for themselves. This very economic inequality has left our community unprepared for the pandemic and ensuing recession. Today, as we face not just economic collapse but also a public health crisis, we must demand better for our neighbors. Policymakers must prioritize safeguards for our working class. This bill is a first step to a just recovery from COVID. On behalf of Semilla Collective and our members, we urge the Board of Alders to pass this legislation.

We support the "Worker's Right to Recall" ordinance and hope the Board will vote favorably.

Thank you for your time,
Chelsea Connery and Fatima Rojas
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