



May 6, 2020

Dear Governor Baker and members of the Reopening Advisory Board,

The primary basis for deciding whether it is safe for people to return to work is worker safety, assessed on the basis of sound science. A safe and fair reopening of the economy will be run by the workers who are the backbone of our Commonwealth's economy and infrastructure. It is crucial that at a minimum, the following protocols are strictly put in place indefinitely, and thoroughly adhered to:

- (1) Effective and stringent health and safety protections, informed by science and designed with meaningful input by workers, unions and occupational safety and health experts.** There must be strong and enforceable guidelines that incorporate firmly established science on the coronavirus, such as the recognition of airborne transmission, and longstanding occupational health and safety practices. The hierarchy of controls is the system for eliminating or minimizing exposure using the most effective and feasible controls, including redesigning workplaces, increasing the availability of sanitary facilities, telecommuting and other forms of social distancing. Employers should discontinue production and service standards if those standards prevent work from being performed safely so as to avoid viral transmission. For example, rules that limit workers' time for handwashing and proper sanitation should be eliminated.
- (2) There must be personal protective equipment for workers currently on the job—and for those returning to the job.** A fresh and ample supply of necessary protective equipment, such as respirators and gloves, must be available for all at-risk workers. The use of personal protective equipment must be accompanied by training; fit testing; safe don and doff process, including locations and procedures; disposal or sanitation protocols; and enforcement of OSHA's respiratory protection standard (1910.134).
- (3) A planned, detailed and enforced system of screening, testing, contact tracing, proper isolation and epidemiological surveillance.** People who are found to be infected or potentially exposed must be informed, and appropriately removed from the workplace. There must be a presumption that COVID-19 is a work-recordable illness for all workers. There must be real-time reporting of infections from the workplace to state and local health departments, coordinated with the federal government. At the same time, there must be appropriate safeguards in place for the protection of worker data and privacy.
- (4) People who cannot work due to COVID, whether because of infection, vulnerability, or lack of child care, should be protected from the loss of income, benefits and employment.** The old phrase "nobody should have to choose between the family that they love and the job that they need" has never been truer. Nobody should lose their job, the ability to pay their bills,

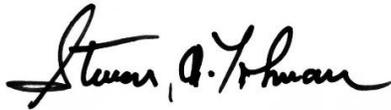
or their health care because they become infected with COVID and cannot work, or because their children's school is still closed and they are unable to find care.

(5) Workers must have stronger protections against retaliation and the right to refuse to work if they fear exposure to the virus. There must be stronger protections for workers who speak up to their employer, public entities, social media or the press about unsafe working conditions; who bring a more protective level of equipment to work than their employer provides; or who test positive for the virus. Similarly, there should be an expansion of anti-discrimination, disability and accommodation protection for workers who have recovered but have sustained health impairments, for pregnant workers, and those who are in high risk categories.

(6) Strong, clear and enforceable workplace health and safety standards must be in place. Under the law, employers are responsible for ensuring worker safety, and the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) is responsible for setting and enforcing standards to hold many employers accountable. However, under the Trump Administration, OSHA has been gutted and little is being enforced. That's why the state must develop and implement an infection control plan, conduct worksite inspections to enforce existing standards and the infectious disease standard, and issue clear enforcement directives to ensure that employers are protecting workers in every sector.

You will hear additional recommendations from dozens of unions representing hundreds of thousands of families, as well as occupational safety and health experts, about what it will take to make the workplaces in each specific sector safe for both the workers and the people those workers serve. We expect these recommendations to form the foundation of what the reopening of our Commonwealth looks like. Thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Steven A. Tolman". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "S" and "T".

Steven A. Tolman,
President