

Congress of the United States  
House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515  
April 6<sup>th</sup>, 2020

Mr. Jeff Bezos  
Amazon Headquarters  
410 Terry Ave, N  
Seattle, WA 98109

Dear Mr. Bezos,

I am writing to express my concern for the safety of workers at Amazon’s warehouses, fulfillment centers, and other workplaces during the coronavirus crisis. While I am grateful for the work that fulfillment centers do to provide food and supplies for families across the country, it is important to ensure this work is done without putting workers and their families at high risk of the coronavirus (COVID-19).

Over the course of this crisis, Amazon workers have raised concerns about the safety of their working conditions. Many workers fear that Amazon’s workplace policies encourage the spread of the pandemic throughout the workplace. These include a work incentive model that discourages hand-washing and other sanitary practices, and a policy of “stand-up meetings,” during which employees must stand closer than recommended.<sup>1</sup> According to Amazon’s website, the company has ended stand-up meetings and allowed workers to wash their hands without consequence, but details are lacking.

There have also been reports that Amazon has not been transparent with its workers about COVID-19 cases within the workplace. One warehouse worker learned that another worker at her facility had been infected with coronavirus only after asking the human resources staff.<sup>2</sup>

Employees need this information to make vitally important decisions impacting themselves and their families – the worker in question has children who are immunocompromised and at greater risk for the virus; she made the decision to take time off from work to protect her children. However, this decision could have been made much sooner if Amazon had been transparent about coronavirus cases in the workplace, ensuring that this individual and all employees have the information they need to make informed decisions about their health.

It has also been reported that Amazon is firing employees who speak out against those working conditions. Two amazon employees were fired, allegedly for speaking out about workplace conditions during the coronavirus,<sup>3</sup> and another – who resigned and gave notice because of his

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.washingtonpost.com/technology/2020/04/30/amazon-earnings-coronavirus/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.washingtonpost.com/technology/2020/03/24/amazon-warehouse-workers-coronavirus-positive/>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.seattletimes.com/business/amazon/coronavirus-risk-and-environmental-justice-campaigns-unite-amazon-tech-warehouse-workers/>

objections to workplace conditions, was asked not to come into work.<sup>4</sup> Earlier this week, an Amazon vice president resigned in protest of these firings, not wishing to give his implicit consent to the company's actions.<sup>5</sup>

As you may be aware, a staff member at the Amazon fulfillment center in Tracy, California passed away last week from complications due to COVID-19. This was not the first death of an Amazon employee from the pandemic, and Amazon will need to work much harder to prevent illnesses in the future. In the interest of protecting essential workers in the Central Valley, please respond to the following questions:

- How does Amazon plan on improving transparency during instances in which a worker tests positive? Will Amazon agree to let their employees know whenever a worker at their worksite tests positive?
- Does Amazon believe that the firing of employees who speak out against adverse working conditions is beneficial to worker safety at the company? Do you intend to listen and respond to any of the concerns of the staff who were let go or resigned?
- How is Amazon ensuring that there are adequate essential supplies at their facilities, including disposable gloves and masks as well as essential supplies like hand sanitizer and disinfectant wipes?
- In detail, please describe how Amazon has altered its workplace policies and incentive models to encourage hand-washing and other sanitary practices.

Sincerely,



Josh Harder  
Member of Congress

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<sup>4</sup> <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/14/business/stock-market-covid-coronavirus.html#link-b8bac86>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.businessinsider.com/amazon-engineer-resigned-treatment-warehouse-whistleblowers-2020-5>