

Honorable Governor Tim Walz,

On behalf of our 43,000 members of AFSCME Council 5, we wanted to express our deep gratitude for extending the Stay at Home order and urge you to continue extending the order, if warranted, in order to save the lives of our neighbors. Public health and safety must remain our top priority. You and your Administration are leading the nation for your collaborative, thoughtful, and science-based approaches to the public health threat of COVID-19. While groups are protesting around the country and in our state against these fact-based orders, please know that our union stands with you!

Public, private, and non-profit sector employees have truly stepped up during this time of unprecedented crises. We are fully prepared to continue working alongside you and your Administration as we craft and implement policies to protect workers, strengthen access to PPE, and improve the economic security of Minnesota's working families.

Our members are often on the front-lines and cannot work from home. They work in hospitals, clinics, correctional facilities, group homes, child and adult protection departments, district courts, and more. Like all of us, they are scared that they may contract COVID-19 as a result of their work which also puts their family members at risk. Their dedication, integrity, and selfless sense of service is truly inspirational and gives all Minnesotans hope for a better tomorrow.

AFSCME Council 5 appreciates your evidence-based public health guidelines, daily press availabilities and your commitment to getting workers' compensation legislation across the finish line, extending unemployment insurance benefits, providing paid COVID leave for our state employees, banning price gouging of essential products, and standing up for our Asian American and Pacific Islander communities during this time of heightened attacks on them and many other Minnesotans.

We are very lucky to have you, a former teacher and soldier, directing and standing with our members on the front-lines in this battle against an invisible enemy.

Together, we will defeat COVID-19.

In solidarity,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Julie Bleyhl".

Julie Bleyhl
Executive Director
AFSCME Council 5, AFL-CIO