

# AFL-CIO

## LEGISLATIVE ALERT

July 26, 2022

Dear Representative:

I am writing on behalf of the AFL-CIO to urge you to support the Asuncion Valdivia Heat Illness and Fatality Prevention Act of 2021 (H.R. 2193). This bill, sponsored by Rep. Judy Chu (CA-27), would direct the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) to issue a federal standard on the prevention of excessive heat in the workplace for outdoor and indoor workers.

The need for enforceable standards to ensure employers are implementing the proper controls to protect workers in high-heat conditions is greater than ever. As the global temperature rises, workers are even more at risk for occupational heat exposures. Employees working in hot and humid conditions, outdoors and indoors, are subject to heat stress, heat exhaustion, cramps, heat rash and heat stroke, which can result in severe illness or death. In 2020, the most recent data, 56 workers died from exposure to environmental heat, a 30% increase from the previous year. More than half of occupational heat fatalities occur during a worker's first few days of working in hot conditions. But the true toll of workplace injuries and illnesses from heat exposures is unknown due to significant underreporting.

An OSHA standard under H.R. 2193 would protect workers by requiring employers to develop and implement a heat-illness prevention plan, tailored to their specific workplace and worker population. Preventing heat illness is straightforward; employers must have a plan to provide water, rest and shade when conditions are hot. A standard would require employers to, among other things, meaningfully work with employees to develop and implement the plan, provide paid breaks in cool environments for those exposed to high-heat conditions, provide access to water, and limit how long workers are exposed to extreme-heat conditions.

The requirements for a heat-illness prevention plan are based upon existing recommendations from OSHA, NIOSH and professional associations, and scientific studies have found these guidelines to significantly reduce the incidence of heat illnesses and injuries. Similar measures have been adopted in a number of states and implemented by some employers.

We strongly urge you to support and vote for H.R. 2193 to help protect indoor and outdoor workers from unnecessary illness, injury and death due to excessive heat exposures.

Sincerely,



William Samuel  
Director, Government Affairs