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July 21, 2026

The Honorable Tim Walberg

Chairman - Committee on Education and
Workforce
U.S. House of Representatives

The Honorable Bobby Scott

Ranking Member - Committee on
Education and Workforce
U.S. House of Representatives

Dear Members of Congress:

The undersigned organizations urge the House Committee on Education and Workforce to reject H.R. 6213, the Heat Workforce Standards Act, at markup this Tuesday. The bill would prohibit the Secretary of Labor from finalizing, implementing, or enforcing a federal heat injury and illness prevention standard, or any substantially similar measure.

In the wake of a nationwide heat dome that sent workers to emergency rooms across the country just three weeks ago, the Committee is now considering legislation that would permanently prohibit federal workplace heat protections. Data from the Centers for Disease Control's Heat and Health Tracker show that emergency department visits for heat-related illness rose sharply across the Midwest and Mid-Atlantic during the first week of July. Postal carriers, delivery drivers, warehouse workers, and manufacturing employees were hospitalized, and in some tragic cases, lost their lives.

By advancing this legislation, the Committee would permanently remove the federal government's authority to address a workplace hazard that is already resulting in worker fatalities. The Bureau of Labor Statistics recorded 55 worker deaths from heat exposure in 2023, a number that safety researchers widely consider to be an undercount due to frequent misclassification or underreporting of heat-related illnesses and fatalities. More broadly, heat-related deaths in the United States have more than doubled since 1999, and extreme heat now claims more lives each year than any other weather-related hazard.

H.R. 6213 would permanently prohibit the Department of Labor from finalizing, implementing, or enforcing a federal heat standard. The bill includes no sunset provision, no mechanism for future reconsideration, and no opportunity for action as heat-related injuries and fatalities continue to increase.

This approach is especially difficult to justify considering the extensive process OSHA has already undertaken. The agency's proposed heat injury and illness prevention standard is the result of research, stakeholder engagement, public hearings, and review of over 43,000 public comments. OSHA estimates the rule would protect approximately 36 million workers, and Public Citizen has previously estimated that a comprehensive federal heat standard could prevent at least 50,000 heat-related injuries and illnesses each year.

Supporters of H.R. 6213 argue that OSHA's proposal would impose significant burdens on employers. However, the proposed standard establishes essential baseline protection while



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providing employers with flexibility in how they achieve compliance. Instead of mandating a single nationwide approach, the rule allows employers to tailor heat illness prevention programs to their specific operations and workforce. Employers with effective programs already in place would experience minimal additional requirements. The bill would prevent the establishment of a basic national standard for employers who currently offer no meaningful heat protection.

Workers have no control over extreme heat, and many are unable to refuse hazardous assignments without jeopardizing their livelihoods. Congress should not respond to an escalating occupational hazard by permanently removing the Department of Labor's authority to address it.

For these reasons, the undersigned organizations urge the Committee to reject H.R. 6213 and to allow OSHA's heat injury and illness prevention rulemaking to proceed. Thank you for your attention to this critical matter. We are available to provide any additional information, data, or testimony that may assist the Committee in its deliberations.

Sincerely,

International Organizations

American Federation of Teachers (AFT)
Injured Worker Justice Project
Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC)

National Organizations

American College of Occupational and Environmental Medicine (ACOEM)
American College of Preventive Medicine
American Public Health Association
Association of Occupational and Environmental Clinics (AOEC)
BlueGreen Alliance
Concentra
Earthjustice Action
Farmworker Justice
Food Chain Workers Alliance
HEAL (Health Environment Agriculture Labor) Food Alliance
Healthy Work Campaign, Center for Social Epidemiology
National Council for Occupational Safety and Health (National COSH)
National Nurses United
Occupational Health Systems
Strategic Consulting
Union of Concerned Scientists
United for Respect



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State & Local Organizations

American Association of Occupational Health Nurses
Bluegrass Occupational & Environmental Health Consulting, LLC
CATA Farmworkers Support Committee
Connecticut Citizen Action Group (CCAG)
Chicago Jobs with Justice
Children's Hospice and Palliative Care Coalition
Colorado House of Representatives District 03
Colorado House of Representatives District 11
Colorado House of Representatives District 13 – Speaker of the House
Colorado House of Representatives District 23 – House Majority Leader
Colorado House of Representatives District 25
Colorado House of Representatives District 27
Colorado House of Representatives District 28
Colorado House of Representatives District 32
Colorado House of Representatives District 33
Colorado House of Representatives District 41
Colorado House of Representatives District 57
ConnectiCOSH
Council Member Anil Pesaramelli (Erie, Colorado)
Earth Action, Inc.
Massachusetts Coalition for Occupational Safety and Health
Midstate Education and Service Foundation
National Association of Letter Carriers Branch #3
Nebraska Appleseed
New Mexico House of Representatives District 46
NH Healthy Climate
Nuestras Manos
Orange County Labor Federation
Orley Physician Services
PASO - West Suburban Action Project
PhilaPOSH
Physicians for Social Responsibility Texas
Physicians for Social Responsibility Maine
Public Citizen
Rapid Anthropology Consulting
San Francisco Bay Physicians for Social Responsibility
Suffolk University
Sur Legal Collaborative
United Automobile, Aerospace, and Agricultural Implement Workers of America Local 230
UTHealth Houston
WisCOSH, Inc.
Workers Center of Central New York
Workforce Health System PLLC



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WorkSafe