



A Letter of Support from a Union Brother during the COVID-19 Crisis

Dear Brother Joe Geiger- EST,

I hope my greetings find you in good health and well-being. This has undoubtedly been an extreme challenge of events for our fraternity, our city, and our nation. I would like to first Thank You for the leadership you have been able to provide in our time of uncertainty. You and the rest of the District Council's team have been able to simultaneously keep our offices and services operating, while also informing our membership of important information regarding our work and our safety. This is no small task and you have been successful in being able to lay out a workable design for this demanding event.

During my interactions with other members over the last week, there has been great debate about our need to work or not work during this crisis. It has been determined that our profession is considered an essential service. I believe we are essential. Our city will need us to answer a call to service, just like our brotherhood answered a similar call on 9/11 and for various tragedies since. We firmly exhibit that "Labor Conquers All".

Due to the uniqueness of this crisis, many of the membership need to first take steps to protect the health of vulnerable members of their families. This will need to be their priority. Many more brothers and sisters are ready, willing, and able to labor for the great cause ahead of them. Personally, I am at home under self-quarantine because a fellow carpenter on our crew tested positive for the virus and we have all been sent home from the job site.

I agree that essential work is essential. Having said that I also find that non-essential work should stop in order to protect the members families and the public. There is a conceivable solution-- the Out of Work List. We can create a special OWL for members who are ready and eager to work. It can utilize the same profiling according to members certifications, skill, and expertise. We can ensure the right carpenters are going to the right job. This approach also allows those who cannot work to do so with dignity while allowing those able to work the ability to easily present themselves for duty. This will also allow our Council the ability to address the needs of both categories of our membership during this pandemic.

To further the importance and necessity of our membership, perhaps our negotiating team can arrange something with our contractors to firmly establish a best practice of health and safety for our job sites with guidelines and advice for organization such as the NY Department of Health, CDC, WHO, or an equivalent body. The Carpenters can lead the industry by pushing for the best standards of health we can attain during this work and mitigating some of the risk involved.

I love our union and our profession. I felt it was important to pitch in. This is a way I feel I can help as I am confined to my home with my family. So far, I am well and hopefully will remain so.

Fraternaly yours,

Joshua Glick, Local I57