

**Eloy Wood**  
**before**  
**Minnesota Frontline Worker Pay Working Group**  
**Minnesota Legislature**  
**July 28, 2021**

Members and Commissioners, my name is Eloy Wood and I live in Long Prairie. I am here today to voice my support for providing frontline worker pay for meatpacking workers.

I have lived in Minnesota with my wife and four kids for ten years. I have been a member of the UFCW since 2012 and have worked at Long Prairie Packing for nearly ten years. We package beef and muscle cuts and work in the slaughterhouse. I work as a saw operator on beef heads or carcasses where I have to make up to 18 cuts a minute and process 185 heads in an hour. Meatpacking workers were designated as essential in March of 2020 and I have had to work in person since the COVID-19 pandemic began.

Working in a meatpacking plant has always been hard work. During the pandemic we worked even harder, we went from having every other weekend off to working six days a week in twelve-hour shifts. After the pandemic hit, I became scared to go to work. I have a breathing disorder, which would make me more susceptible to catching COVID and having worse side effects. But more terrifying for me, would be to spread it to my family, when two of my children have pre-existing conditions. Long Prairie Packing gave us PPE, installed plastic shields on the line and posted signs in the breakrooms to social distance. Still, more than half of my co-workers contracted COVID during the pandemic.

I support frontline worker pay for meatpacking workers because we have worked to keep this state fed and exposed ourselves and our families to extreme risk in doing so. I was forced, under doctor's orders to take six weeks off during the pandemic and I was only paid for two weeks of that time off. One of my co-workers contracted COVID and gave it to his wife and she was in the hospital for several weeks. Another co-worker could not walk for some time after their battle with COVID and hospital stay.

This extra money would really help us take care of some of the hardships we have faced this last year with medical bills and loss of income from forced time away from work because of COVID.

Please include meatpacking workers as an eligible industry for frontline worker pay and thank you for the opportunity to comment today.