

Good afternoon,

My name is June Israel, and I'm a Customer Service Specialist Intermediate (CSSI) with Driver and Vehicle Services in Duluth. I process requests for driver's license renewals, DWI payments, license and tab fees, among other tasks with the Department of Public Safety. I'm speaking on behalf of myself and my colleagues at DVS from AFSCME Local 3142. I hoped to testify in person earlier on, but unfortunately I was in St. Paul when the committee was only meeting remotely. I'm asking you to please compensate frontline workers like us that took on the risks of COVID.

We serve over millions of Minnesotans every year (including yourselves) with driver and vehicle services so that you can get to work and maintain your vehicle. We work hard, day in and day out, to make sure that everything that affects your driving can be taken care of quickly, so you can get to everything else that is important in your lives. We did this in person since April of 2020, working with thousands of people a day in offices around the state. Some appointments took a few minutes; others took hours to finish. And despite the best efforts of the department to protect us with plastic partitions and masks, we faced the risk of exposures every day.

I myself contracted the virus. I can assure you that it is real. And I want you to know that many of my colleagues were affected as well. Some also got COVID, others were exposed through their families, and others had to stay home and prioritize their children while they were distance learning. A lot of us had to use COVID leave, and some had to leave state employment altogether because of COVID affecting their health. We were exposed all the time.

There were certainly times that customers lied to us about their health status because they wanted to get their license or pay for their tabs. We had a health screening system, but it was mainly the honor system beyond a checking temperatures for a fever. There wasn't much we could do about it. A coworker of mine told me that she watched a customer sneeze in line with his mask below his nose. It's just frustrating, and it continues to be frustrating after all of this time.

I could go on and on, but I just want to say that the reality is that frontline workers should be better appreciated! Whatever amount is given is appreciated, but it isn't worth our lives!

Thank you,

June Israel