



Congresswoman Cori Bush

In December 2021, workers at an Edwardsville, Illinois Amazon facility were forced to work through a tornado, and six people lost their lives. Soon afterwards, a nearby Amazon warehouse failed to prepare workers when multiple tornadoes touched down in the St. Louis Metro Area.

As climate disasters become increasingly common, a pattern has emerged of workers being made unsafe because of insufficient worker health and safety protections, at Amazon and elsewhere. There have been accounts of forced work during Hurricanes Sandy and Ida, flooding in St. Louis, wildfires in California, and the Pacific Northwest heatwave, to name a few. The deaths in Edwardsville and since were tragically not an aberration but part of a pattern.

The Worker Safety in Climate Disasters Act would prevent workers from being fired for seeking shelter during disasters and offer paid time off for workers affected by those disasters. This crisis is impacting communities across our country and the federal government must do more to protect workers from unsafe working conditions, especially during climate disasters. There are many accounts of people being fired post-disaster because they couldn't access transit, are watching kids who can't get to school, or cannot safely drive through floods to get to work.

The Worker Safety in Climate Disasters Act will:

- Offer paid time off (PTO) when an employee is unable to work due to a climate disaster
- Ensure that employees seeking shelter or using PTO during a disaster are not punished
- Require employers to monitor climate disasters and notify employees about them

A 2021 study of California workers by the Institute of Labor Economics found that injuries and accidents increased by 9% when temperatures were in the 90s and 15% when they reach the 100s.¹ Moreover, low-income workers are disproportionately affected by this issue due to their increased rates of employment in manual labor jobs and underinvestment in infrastructure. The same study found that a worker in the bottom 20% of earners is five times more likely to be injured on a hot day than one in the top 20% of earners.²

The Worker Safety in Climate Disasters Act is supported by the Missouri Workers Center, Communications Workers of America, National Partnership for Women & Families, Athena Coalition, IUE-CWA, Our Revolution, St. Louis DSA, Resilience Force, Taproot Earth, GreenLatinos, Green Workers Alliance, United for Respect, National Employment Law Project, Center for Biological Diversity, SEIU HCIIMK, Awood Center, and Food & Water Watch.

¹<https://www.latimes.com/environment/story/2021-07-16/study-finds-hotter-temperatures-increased-workplace-injuries-in-california>

² Ibid.