

February 8, 2021

The Honorable Lori Lightfoot
Mayor of Chicago
City Hall
121 N. LaSalle St., 4th Floor
Chicago, IL 60602

Dear Mayor Lightfoot:

You have been very consistent in your assertion that the Chicago Public Library system should remain open to patrons during the course of this pandemic. While we are aware that a number of measures have been taken to limit the spread of COVID-19 among both library employees and patrons, we have heard from many of our constituents who do not believe those measures are sufficient.

For nearly a year now, a number of us-- along with AFSCME Council 31 which represents library employees-- have been trying to convince CPL of the need for additional measures to protect these employees against the threat posed by the coronavirus.

Many other libraries across our state and around the country have closed their facilities to patrons and relied on curbside pick-up to continue to allow circulation of reading materials. Yet CPL has refused to even pilot such a program. Instead, our libraries are open to all with inadequate security to enforce the protective measures that have been put in place, such as wearing of masks. Employees work under constant stress as they must cope with children unaccompanied by parents, homeless persons seeking shelter, and some individuals who simply refuse to abide by COVID protection policies.

Despite these conditions, your administration has continued to insist that libraries must remain open to the public because they are so essential to the well-being of our communities. If that is truly the case, then how can you now maintain that library employees are not sufficiently "essential" to qualify for Phase 1b of the City's vaccination program—a category intended to ensure vaccination priority for those who interface regularly with the public—which, of course, CPL employees do every day.

We are writing you now to urge that CDPH immediately act to ensure that all CPL employees are included in Phase 1b and recognized as "essential frontline" employees for purposes of receiving the COVID-19 vaccine. It is not accurate, as your administration has alleged, that such designation is prohibited by federal or state guidelines. In fact, a

number of library systems in our own state have already acted to include their employees in Phase 1b.

CPL employees have been on the frontlines for many months now, risking their health and that of their families, to serve our communities. They deserve the recognition and respect that vaccination priority would provide.

Sincerely,

Howard Brookins
Walter Burnett
James Cappelman
Felix Cardona
Stephanie Coleman
Derrick Curtis
Jim Gardiner
Maria Hadden
Leslie Hairston
Sophia King
Daniel La Spata
Raymond Lopez
Roberta Maldonado
Matt Martin
Emma Mitts
David Moore
Samantha Nugent

Matt O'Shea
Carlos Ramirez-Rosa
Ariel Reboyras
Michael Rodriguez
Rossana Rodriguez-Sanchez
Roderick Sawyer
Michael Scott
Byron Sigcho-Lopez
Debra Silverstei
Michele Smith
Nicholas Sposato
Silvana Tabares
Chris Taliaferro
Jeanette Taylor
Andre Vasquez
Gilbert Villegas
Scott Waguespack