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For Immediate Release

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Wisconsin AFL-CIO Statement on OSHA’s 2021 Emergency Temporary Standard on Emerging Infectious Diseases

(June 14, 2021, MILWAUKEE, WI) – Stephanie Bloomingdale, President of the Wisconsin AFL-CIO, released the following statement on the OSHA Emergency Temporary Standard on Emerging Infectious Diseases announced on June 10, 2021.

“For over a year, American workers have shown up to our places of employment with little to no enforceable federal protections against a deadly and highly infectious disease. Many workers fell ill and died due to workplace exposure to covid-19. On June 10, 2021, OSHA issued a long-overdue Emergency Temporary Standard (ETS) on Emerging Infectious Diseases which requires employers in the healthcare industry to take preventative steps to protect workers from infectious diseases in the workplace. This is the first OSHA emergency temporary standard issued since 1983.

While the Emergency Temporary Standard on Emerging Infectious Diseases is a step forward in creating safer workplaces, it’s adamantly clear that more needs to be done to protect workers. We are deeply troubled that millions of workers, including those who have served our communities since day one of the pandemic in grocery, retail, food processing, education, corrections, construction, and manufacturing, are left out of the new OSHA protections.

This pandemic is not yet over and every worker deserves a safe workplace. We must develop and create long-lasting enforceable OSHA standards on infectious disease spread in the workplace so that our country remains better prepared to protect all workers from covid-19 as well as future contagions.”

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