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UNITED STATES
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

ROSA L. DELAURO

3RD DISTRICT, CONNECTICUT

December 7, 2018

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The Honorable Loren Sweatt
Deputy Assistant Secretary of Labor
Occupational Safety and Health Administration
United States Department of Labor
200 Constitution Avenue, NW, Room S2315
Washington, DC 20210

Dear Deputy Assistant Secretary Sweatt:

I write regarding the disturbing findings of a recent Guardian news investigation published on November 26 concerning workplace safety conditions at Sanderson Farms poultry plant in Bryan, Texas. I urge your agency investigate the reported allegations and take immediate steps to enforce current law per the Occupational Safety and Health Administration's (OSHA) sanitation standard.

Specifically, it has been reported that workers on the processing lines are being denied the right to use the bathroom, a clear safety and human rights violation. When workers are on the processing lines, it is often for 4 to 5 consecutive hours. According to this article, the company pressures supervisors to deny bathroom breaks and, as a result, some workers have accidents on themselves. Moreover, it reports that some workers are refusing to drink any water, despite the grueling nature of the work, in case they might have to use the restroom.

In May, I met with workers from the Bryan plant who expressed the same concerns about the denial of the right to go to the bathroom in violation of OSHA's standard.

In addition, the reported allegations are consistent with findings in a recent GAO report, which found the workers in meat and poultry workers feel intimidated about reporting health and safety violations, particularly about their access to bathrooms in their plants. In that report, published in December 2017, GAO stated: "Workers we interviewed in all five states said their requests to use the bathroom are often delayed or denied, and workers in two states said they fear punishment if they ask to use the bathroom too frequently or complain about lack of bathroom access to their supervisors or to OSHA. One industry representative told us they believe some supervisors in meat and poultry plants deny bathroom access in order to maximize production output." That same GAO report recommended OSHA inspectors interview workers anonymously and outside of the workplace to get a more accurate assessment.

I urge the agency to investigate these claims in the plant in Bryan Texas and to conduct an inspection where compliance offices speak not only with management, but workers and their

representatives. All workers have the right to a safe workplace and no worker should have to sacrifice their health for a paycheck.

Thank you for your attention to this critical matter, and I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,



ROSA L. DeLAURO
Member of Congress