



THE CITY OF NEW YORK  
OFFICE OF THE COMPTROLLER  
SCOTT M. STRINGER

March 2, 2021

Dr. Mitchell Katz  
President and Chief Executive Officer  
NYC Health + Hospitals  
125 Worth Street  
New York, NY 10013

Re: Unitex and H+H's Essential Laundry Workers

Dear Dr. Katz:

First, I am writing to express my deep appreciation for your leadership through the COVID-19 pandemic, which has been instrumental in helping our city confront the overwhelming challenges posed by the pandemic, especially in communities of color that rely so heavily on H+H facilities. That said, I am also writing to urge you to extend your managerial focus to help resolve an ongoing labor dispute between the laundry workers who provide clean linens to H+H patients every day and their employer, Unitex.

These essential workers, mostly Latinx immigrants, have worked bravely throughout the pandemic, risking their own safety to clean, process, and deliver linens for patients at hospitals and nursing homes across New York City, including H+H hospitals. They deserve a fair contract – one which includes a commitment to COVID-19 safety, a modest wage increase, and the continuation of the pension plan for current and future employees.

Sadly, it is my understanding that instead of rewarding workers for their sacrifices during the pandemic, Unitex has refused to commit to basic COVID protections in its laundry processing facilities and is also demanding an end to a modest pension benefit for future employees that would cost just 30 cents an hour. Unitex is also under investigation by Region 22 of the National Labor Relations Board for numerous alleged violations of federal labor law, including illegally threatening to fire workers for striking.

As you know, Unitex benefits from a lucrative sole-source contract worth up to \$50 million over three years between Sodexo and H+H, wherein Unitex is the subcontractor processing the laundry for H+H hospitals. While H+H is not a party to the current contract talks, I believe a strong statement from the leadership of H+H that expresses support for the workers of the Laundry Distribution & Food Service Joint Board of Workers United/SEIU – and their right to fair working conditions – would go a long way toward driving an amicable resolution to the current situation.

We have all borne witness to the heroism of our frontline medical workers this past year – no one more so than you – but we need to make sure that our collective appreciation extends to those less visible, like our laundry workers, who make sure that hospital staff and patients have clean linens, garments and other supplies they need to do their jobs to the best of their abilities.

Thank you for your attention to this matter, and I look forward to your reply.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Scott M. Stringer". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Scott" being more prominent.

Scott M. Stringer  
New York City Comptroller