Dear Members of the New York State Legislature,

We are writing to express our strong support for the Warehouse Worker Injury Reduction Act (s5081/a3309), which would protect workers doing manual warehouse work from injury resulting from poorly-designed work equipment and tasks. We are fighting for $5 million in the 2024 NYS Budget to ensure that the DOL is fully prepared to protect NY warehouse workers. This bill is the natural follow up to the Warehouse Worker Protection Act, passed in 2022, which addresses warehouse work pace quotas. Even if the most abusive workplace quotas are regulated, workers will still experience injury when lifting and moving loads unsafely. In the absence of federal or state ergonomics standards, the Warehouse Worker Injury Reduction Act is the essential next step to protecting tens of thousands of warehouse workers in New York as well as our communities and overburdened health care system.

The New York State Department of Labor (DOL) projects that the warehouse industry will grow faster than any other in the state between 2018 and 2028. At the same time, warehouse workers are injured at three times the average rate for all New York workers. The majority of these injuries are serious, causing workers to miss time or need a job transfer. The most common injuries reported in the warehouse sector are musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs) such as muscle strains, sprains, tendinitis, and repetitive strain injuries, which often require workers to miss work and can force them permanently out of the job or even the workforce.

These injuries are mostly preventable through better job design, such as reducing stressful postures and providing appropriate equipment. The most effective way to reduce or eliminate these risk factors is to implement a process that includes well-informed analysis of the worksite; solutions to reduce dangerous risk factors; and professional medical management, training, and employee involvement. The Warehouse Worker Injury Reduction Act accomplishes this through the following:

1. **Worksite evaluation to identify and address hazards**
   A qualified ergonomist will evaluate each job, process, or operation of work activity and provide a written report identifying hazards which have or are likely to cause musculoskeletal disorders.

   The New York Department of Labor would be tasked with creating a certification standard for qualified ergonomists and hosting a searchable database of certified ergonomists to ease company compliance. DOL already certifies workplace safety professionals to provide safety evaluations in high-risk worksites as required by the state’s workers compensation law.

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2. **Comprehensive worker training**
   All employers must provide training to all workers (including temporary workers) handling materials and performing tasks at the warehouse.

3. **Improved on-site medical care**
   Any on-site medical office or first aid station must be staffed with medical professionals operating within their legal scope of practice and equipped to see warehouse workers with symptoms of musculoskeletal injuries so that proper treatment is not delayed.

As other states model legislation after the Warehouse Worker Protection Act, New York should continue to lead the nation in protecting workers by passing the Warehouse Worker Injury Reduction Act (s5081/a3309). Become a co-sponsor, raise the bill in conference, and vote yes when it comes before you.

Signed,

ACT-UAW Local 7902
ALIGN
Amazon Labor Union
American Economic Liberties Project
Athena Coalition
Center for Popular Democracy
Citizen Action of New York
Coalition for Economic Justice (CEJ Buffalo)
Committee of Interns and Residents
Community Voices Heard
Fight Corporate Monopolies
Finger Lakes Occupational Health Services
For The Many
Jobs With Justice
LDFS Workers United
Make the Road New York
Metro Justice
Mount Sinai Selikoff Centers for
Occupational Health
NABET-CWA 51022
National Employment Law Project
New York Communities for Change
NYCOSH
PowerSwitch Action
Pride at Work AFL-CIO - Rochester Finger Lakes Chapter
Public Employees Federation Region 3
Rochester and Genesee Valley Area Labor Federation AFL-CIO
Rochester Fire Fighters Association, IAFF Local 1071
RWDSU
Teamsters GCC 503
Teamsters Joint Council 16
Teamsters Joint Council 18
Teamsters Joint Council 46
Teamsters Local 118
Teamsters local 294
Teamsters Local 804
Tompkins County Workers’ Center
UAW local 1097
United Auto Workers Region 9A
Western New York Council on Occupational Safety and Health
Worker Justice Center of New York
Workers United NY NJ Regional Joint Board