

**The Office of the Attorney General DC**

**Moderator: Attorney General Racine  
March 20, 2020  
11:00 a.m. ET**

OPERATOR: This is Conference # 2388608.

Operator: Thank you for calling the ANC Commissioner Tele-Town Hall. I will now turn the call over to Aurelie Mathieu, who will moderate the call. Aurelie, you may begin.

Aurelie Mathieu: Good morning, everyone. I want to thank you for your patience in the queue. This call is being recorded. My name is Aurelie Mathieu, I'm an attorney on the Policy and Legislative Affairs team and the Office of the Attorney General and I'll be moderating today's discussion.

I'd like to thank our ANC commissioners and community leaders for joining us this morning. OAG is hosting this town hall style conference call in response to the COVID-19 public health emergency and community concerns about scam, fraud and price gouging. Our goal during this call is to equip you with information about legal protections for district consumers, workers and tenants and also any information on how to report price gouging, scams and discriminations.

Now, Attorney General Karl Racine will provide welcome remarks. Once he has concluded, I will introduce each individual speaker before they begin their presentation. Without further ado, please join me in welcoming Attorney General Racine.

Karl Racine: Thank you very much Aurelie. And let me thank each of you for joining. I believe by last count, there were 31 individuals who I'm just going to assume are ANC representatives and commissioners on the call.

With everything going on, I want to thank you for making the time to join us and for your leadership and all that you're doing to help your neighbors. I also want to wish a speedy recovery to any members of our community or your families who are battling the corona's infection and/or who are suffering from understandable anxiety and fear. We also of course, want to express gratitude to the first responders, the doctors, the nurses, the healthcare staff, emergency services, personnel, the police and others who literally are putting themselves at risk every day as their jobs do not allow for them to telemarket – or telecommute, excuse me.

As we all know, this virus isn't just making people sick and straining our healthcare system, it's having a devastating impact on our economy. It's disrupting our lives and it's threatening our most vulnerable residents more than we know. Businesses have shifted to teleworking or have been forced to close. People lack hours of work. They've lost their jobs altogether.

School closures had force children to remain at home and some kids, as we know, are able to access the internet and have the appropriate devices to continue to study. Other kids as we know do not. I want you to know that we're working really hard to try to help bridge the digital divide, both in terms of accessing more WiFi, broadband, as well as trying to access contributions and donations so that we can provide the kids who don't have the hardware technology to get online and study, to allow them to do that.

Also, I want to note that the immigrants in our community are valued. And of course, so many of our immigrants are afraid even more now. And they're afraid to even go to the doctor, in the hospital, because of course, the administration continues to target them for deportation. We want to also be a resource to them.

People need help in this moment of so much change and uncertainty. But we have unfortunately, a dearth of federal leadership in our government. Indeed,

the President has denied any responsibility for the crisis and he's stoking the flames of racism and xenophobia. I'm not even going to tell you what he's calling this virus but, you know, he is slandering an entire peoples of the world by blaming them for the virus.

And we know when we've heard and we've seen throughout the country, including Washington D.C., that others are amplifying the President's hate. I think it's a time for you as leaders to make clear that Asian-Americans, Chinese-Americans, are absolutely not the cause of the virus, that they deserve our respect, our support, and indeed, our love.

So leadership is leadership that brings people together, not divides us. In fact, that's what you do every day. You're where the rubber meets the road. And that's why we're hosting this call. Your community needs you to help them meet their needs, and help them with important information that will make them manage this crisis even better.

You're not alone. And this is what I want to emphasize. The district government's standing by you. OAG, may be teleworking, but rest assured, we're open for business. And I've got to tell you, I don't think that my colleagues, lawyers and professional staff have worked any harder than what how hard we've been working over the last two weeks, I can guarantee you that we'll continue this pace. We're open for business Monday through Monday, 24/7.

If you need any support, please feel free to reach out to. Let's going to make sure that we give you the contact information at the end of the call. But just know, you can always rely on us.

With a note that the council and the courts are also working together as well as the executive, I want to let you know that the OAG is also partnering with the U.S. Attorney's Office to identify and investigate and take criminal and civil actions against scammers and fraudsters. And of course, I'm going to let you know that I'm talking to my state attorney general, colleagues, Democrat and Republican every day to try to understand what the problems are and how we can solve them.

Today, some of OAG's extremely talented lawyers will walk you through important protections that district residents had, and the legal tools we're using to enforce them and protect them. We'll also offer tips and resources on where you can go to get the help that your neighbors need.

Our focused on the call, and Aurelie kind of gave you a highlight are the problems. Number one, we're going to talk about the price gouging laws now in effect, and the other consumer protections. I want to let you know that we're monitoring the gouging.

And indeed, yesterday, we issued our first cease and desist letter to a convenience store that was absolutely engaged in gouging our consumers. We've also proactively reached out to stores where we were suspicious, and they've immediately changed their ways. We're also monitoring the action and conduct of the larger retailers as well as the large platforms.

We're going to also talk about evictions and rent assistance, paid sick leave and unemployment insurance, as well as civil rights and addressing discrimination. One thing we want you to take away from this call, again, is that we're here to help. And we want to partner with you, ANC commissioners and team because, again, you were where the rubber meets the road.

Here's our contact information. Our consumer protection line is 202-442-9828. Our civil rights line is 202-727-3400 and the USAO, that's the U.S. Attorney's Office criminal fraud hotline is 202-252-7022. You can always check the OAG website for further updates. Just go to [www.oag.dc.gov/coronavirus](http://www.oag.dc.gov/coronavirus).

There's no doubt we have a serious challenge. And it may take some time to return to normalcy. But if we're willing to make share sacrifices, we're going to get there faster and we're going to save lives. I do want to implore you to familiarize yourself with exactly what the core of what the CDC as well as the DOH is saying. And the most important advice is, folks should stay home or when they're out, make sure they keep a fair distance that has been defined as six feet away from another individual.

Yesterday, I was out (Nebagamon) town. And to my horror, I saw people playing soccer, playing basketball, holding hands walking on the mall. Otherwise, sitting very closely together. I really implore you to admonish, you know, professionally and kindly your neighbors to stay at least six feet away.

As some of you know, I was born in Haiti. Haiti is a country of extraordinary problems as well as interesting things. Haiti is a country that is not the wealthiest country but its people have a wealth of spirit. When you see a typical Haitian and even the poorest Haitian and you ask that Haitian, how are you doing? What they normally respond by is they say the following, (m'ap de bouye). What (m'ap de bouye) means is I'm getting through.

I asked you to put your head up, put your arm up, six feet away from another person and help them get through.

Let me now turn it back over to Aurelie.

Aurelie Mathieu: Thank you, Attorney General Racine. I'd now like to invite Ben Wiseman to speak. Ben is the Director of OAG's Office of Consumer Protection.

Ben Wiseman: Hello, everyone. Thank you very much for joining us. I will try to be quick because I know there's a lot of information that we want to provide you today. I'm going to cover three quick topic areas. The first is a brief overview of the district's price gouging laws. Second, I want to briefly discuss some of the emergency legislation that was passed to the council this week, and finally address fraud and scams.

The mayor entered an emergency declaration on Wednesday, March 11th, and that triggered the district's price gouging consumer protection laws. We want to make sure everyone has fair access to the essentials that they need during this crisis, things like hand sanitizer, disinfecting products. It is important that people have access to those products across the city.

And the district's price gouging laws make it illegal to charge more than normal average retail price for those products and services. For a service, average retail prices defined as no more than 10 percent higher than the prices

that were in place 90 days before the mayor's declaration. For good and merchandise, retailers can increase their markup over wholesale costs.

We have put together a rapid response team that is working in coordination with DCRA to investigate complaints around price gouging. We encourage you to – if you see this in stores, or online, please contact our office using the consumer protection hotline that Attorney General Racine identified earlier, that's 202-442-9828 or [Consumer.Protection@dc.gov](mailto:Consumer.Protection@dc.gov).

The Attorney General mentioned we have been out in the community investigating complaints. We've already issued one cease and desist letter to a retailer that was marking up the cost cleaning wipes. We are also in coordination with other states, working with online retailer platforms with national brands to make sure that we have points of contacts with those companies and make sure they are taking appropriate steps to keep their supplies ongoing and make sure that prices at their local stores are not exceeding the legal limits.

Second, I want to briefly address the emergency legislation passed in the council today. In terms of the consumer protections that were added in the legislation, companies, individuals are now prohibited also from illegally stockpiling essential items. Our office may bring an action against companies that are found to be in violation of the stockpiling prohibitions in addition to the price gouging prohibition, and violations of those laws are now subject to a \$5,000 penalty.

In addition, the legislation provided that utility services such as gas, electric and water may not be disconnected during the time period of the emergency. And then if an individual's utility services are disconnected, our office again is unable to enforce these laws through our Consumer Protection Act. If you are aware of anyone who has been disconnected from a utility service, please call our Consumer Protection hotline or send us an e-mail at the [Consumer.Protection@dc.gov](mailto:Consumer.Protection@dc.gov) e-mail address.

And finally, a warning about frauds and scams. We have been fortunate that we have not seen a significant number of frauds and scams regarding the

coronavirus in D.C. Although we expect in the days and weeks to come that we will see more and more of those. Scammers could be taking advantage of individuals who want to get tested. People – charities may be soliciting donations – fake charities may be trying to solicit donations to help victims, but instead are looking to steal money or steal personal information.

Please just be aware of anyone claiming to be from the Center of Disease Control or any other federal or local health agency. Go to those organizations' websites for the most up to date information. Always consult your medical professional. There is no cure or vaccine available at this time. And if you have questions about symptoms or treatment, please talk to a medical professional first. And again with charities, beware of any charities that are soliciting donations. Please just do your own research before donating any specific charity.

I direct you to a – if you go to our blog, we issued a consumer warning a week ago on fraud and scams. We also are partnering with the U.S. Attorney's Office in the district that have an ongoing collaboration to investigate and root out any fraud and scams that are happening in the district. Thank you for your time.

Karl Racine: Hey, Ben, this is Karl.

Aurelie Mathieu: Thank you, Ben.

Karl Racine: I'm going to interject, I'm sorry Aurelie.

Aurelie Mathieu: No worries.

Karl Racine: I'm going to interject on one point that you made. Ben, indicated that thus far we're not seeing, you know, a lot of fraud around the alleged, you know, cure for the virus. Here's the point, though. We don't know all that's going on, because all we see is what people complain about.

It's really important to tell you, the residents, neighbors, in your ANC areas that they can feel free to complain. In fact, that's why we have an Office of

Consumer Protection. We actually encourage, enjoy and love receiving complaints. So please tell your folks to complain freely to us.

Aurelie Mathieu: Thank you. I'd now like to invite Jen Berger to speak. Jen is the section Chief of OAG Social Justice section.

Jen Berger: Good morning and thank you for your attention today. I'm going to talk about local protections for tenants, the payment of rent and issues around that and HUD guidances for tenants. In terms of local protections for tenants, the District of Columbia COVID-19 Response Act provides new protections for district tenants during times the mayor declares a public emergency.

Landlords may not serve new eviction cases, called summonses on residential or non-residential. In other words, commercial tenants. The Superior Court Landlord-Tenant Division is not open as it stands right now through May 15th, 2020. In response to the COVID-19 crisis, I encourage you to look at the court website at [dccourts.gov](http://dccourts.gov) for updates on Port Information.

Landlords may not evict residential tenants during the public health emergency. Tenants intended associations have a 30-day extension to exercise their rights in the context of the Tenant Opportunity to Purchase Act and condominium conversions. In terms of payment of rent, landlords cannot charge late fees when rent is paid beyond five days after the payment is due during this time period of public health emergency.

The – because the landlord-tenant court will be closed, tenants who were paying their rent into the Registry of the Court should now pay those rents to their landlords. The chief judge ordered this will not give up any claims the tenant may have against their landlord in the court case that led to the protective order. In terms of rental assistance, there's a lot of information on the [dhs.dc.gov](http://dhs.dc.gov) website. If you Google emergency Rental Assistance Program and D.C., DHS, you will find a lot of helpful information about agencies that are offering rental assistance.

To give you a little bit of guidance as to the eligibility for rental assistance. The person needs to be a District of Columbia resident. They need to have income, 125 percent of the poverty level, the federal poverty level, and they



have to have households with children, elderly individuals or people with disabilities. And rental assistance payments can only happen one time per year. The amount is up to five months of overdue rent, or \$4,250. In cases of disability or households with seven or more children, the limit is \$6,000.

The Emergency Rental Assistance Program also helps with security deposits up to \$900 a month, either security deposits or first month rent. In terms of national protection for tenants, the Families First Coronavirus Response Act is silent regarding assistance to individuals who are experiencing homelessness or at risk of homelessness. There was a Senate proposal regarding home – housings – robust housing supports, including increased emergency rental assistance funds, eviction prevention and resources for homeless service providers. Keep posted on the – any developments on the federal front that may add those kinds of protections.

It's important to know that if people are in public housing or they have vouchers, HUD did issue a guidance for those residents and also individuals who live in other federally subsidized housing. Inspections can be postponed. If there's an inspection because of life or property threat, the inspections will be done by trained inspectors who will follow CDC guidelines.

Rental payments, they don't need to be in person, they could be online. Teleconference calls can be online for recertification of income, and HUD also needs to – will support and pay for as operating expenses. Any efforts that properties need to undertake to clean properties relating to the COVID-19 emergency.

In terms of evictions, HUD encourages local housing authorities as well not to evict but we have local protections anyway. If you have any questions about your tenants' right, please get in touch with us at 202-727-4904. We are working and we're retrieving those messages. Thank you so much.

Aurelie Mathieu: Thank you, Jen. Next up, I'd like to invite Randy Chen. Randy is an Assistant Attorney General in our Social Justice section.

Randy Chen: Hi, everyone. Thanks so much for making the call today. Like Aurelie said, I'm Randy Chen. I'm an attorney who handles wage theft enforcement at

OAG. And today I just want to talk about three things that I'm hopeful will give you a clear picture of some workers – worker rights in the wake of this really, really terrible situation.

First, I'm going to talk about the district's Sick and Safe Leave Act. That's the law that have been on the books for some time that our office enforces. Second, I'm going to talk about the D.C. Council emergency legislation that some of my colleagues had mentioned today, and what worker protection law is. And then finally, I'm going to talk a bit about a recent federal legislation called the Families First Coronavirus Response Act that was signed by the White House on Wednesday. And I can just get some pretty brief notes about what protections that (law) is as well.

So to start with district's Sick and Safe Leave Act, this is a law that's been on the books for several years that requires employers to provide employees with paid sick leave, and employees can use paid sick leave to care for themselves or for family members that become sick. This includes COVID-19 of course. Generally, this paid sick leave is earned based on hours worked, and basically the number of paid sick days you can earn per year depends on the size of your employer. So if your employer has over 100 employees, you max out at seven sick days per year. If it's between 25 and 29 employees, you max out at five sick days per year. And if your employer has less than 25 employees, you max out at three paid sick days per year.

I want to make a quick note on termination. Paid sick leave is a right under district law and employers cannot fire or discipline employees for taking paid sick leave. However, the one thing I will note just because of what's happening during this time is when an employer lays off an employee and terminates them, the Sick Leave Act applies to employees. And once terminated, unfortunately, generally employees are not able to access that leave.

Point two that I want to talk about, the recent D.C. Council emergency legislation. The council recently passed an emergency law that provides two main worker protections. First, the law expands unemployment insurance to cover workers who are unemployed due to COVID-19 or who no longer have

hours to work because their employers business or revenues have plummeted significantly in the wake of the shutdown.

And second law all also permits workers affected by COVID-19 to take extended family and medical leave. The district has a Family and Medical Leave Act that provides several weeks of leave to care for yourself or a family member due to medical issue. And this leave, it's longer, it's in the week, but it may be unpaid. But the emergency legislation expands this law to cover workers affected by COVID-19.

Finally, just a note on the federal legislative developments. On Wednesday, Congress passed and the White House signed into law the Families First Coronavirus Response Act, and the act is two major things among the sick leave issue. It provides workers, full-time workers with 80 hours of paid sick leaves who – to workers who were affected by COVID-19. And it also allows parents caring for children whose schools have closed due to COVID-19 to take an additional leave up to 12 weeks. And some of this is paid at a reduced rate, but not all of it.

Congress is – this bill notably has several major exceptions. And, for example, employers with over 500 employees are exempted from the law. And employers with under 50 employees can also seek an exemption. So there are several moving parts to be aware of here. Congress is continuing to work on further legislation addressing the COVID-19 fallout, and we are monitoring these developments.

Now, finally, I just want to echo what all my colleagues have said. And what Attorney General Racine said that we really do want to hear from you. We value the insights into your communities that you all have as ANC commissioners. And if you hear reports of employers who aren't following the law, or employees who aren't getting the paid sick leave that they earned under district law, we want to hear about it.

Like Ben said, we are collecting these complaints at [Consumer.Protection@dc.gov](mailto:Consumer.Protection@dc.gov) and 202-442-9828, and we are monitoring those lines and we are intending to act very swiftly if we hear of misconduct

by employers. And I can say that we have already heard a few complaints in those lines that we are following up as we speak. Thank you.

Aurelie Mathieu: Thank you, Randy. Next up, we'll invite Michelle Thomas to speak. Michelle is the section Chief of the Civil Rights section at OAG.

Michelle Thomas: Thank you everyone and thank you for participating in this very important town hall meeting. Today I'm going to talk to you about some of the pressing civil rights issues that affect district residents during this public health emergency. But first, let me tell you about some of the protections district residents have as it relates to their civil rights.

As you may know, the district has one of the most expansive civil rights law in the country. The district Human Rights Act or what we call the HRA, is our first line of defense against discrimination in the district. And it protects individuals against discrimination for up to 21 different traits in almost every area of our lives, including at work, at school, and even when we go outside to obtain services, such as groceries, transportation, and even services at hospitals. What's important to know about the HRA is that it applies during a public health emergency, just as it applies during any other time period.

Now, you'll hear a lot about these 21 different traits. But the ones that I want to focus on today, the ones that I've heard a lot about during this pandemic is discrimination based upon race, national origin, age, family responsibilities and disability. So what are these protected traits have to do with the workplace? It means that you can't fire, demote, or otherwise adversely affected employee based upon one of these protected traits.

And we've been hearing a lot about fearmongering. You heard from A.G. Racine about comments such as blaming Asians or Asian-Americans for the pandemic, and then suspending them from work or denying them equal access to work opportunities such as teleworking. This is unlawful discrimination.

Similarly, suspending older workers, nine work hours or even applying blanket policies that allow that only older workers or maybe only parents can work from home is illegal. For those who are working and becoming – and who become ill, the HRA, as well as federal laws allow you to obtain

reasonable accommodations to address your illness. And some of those accommodations may be policy changes. They may be things such as allowing telework or participating in important meetings over the phone rather than in person.

Employers should look at each situation individually and identify the availability of a reasonable accommodation, noting that what's reasonable may have changed in light of the changes that have been made and how we all do business. Employers should also make sure that they're not considering race, age or any other protected traits, and how they provide access to work opportunities, including who gets work hours and who doesn't.

Similarly, when obtaining services or housing in the district, businesses cannot refuse to provide public services to individuals based upon their protected traits. So this means things like people cannot refuse to provide public transportation to a person based upon their race or their national origin because they believe they may have caused the pandemic or any other reason. People should not deny housing to older people because they think they may be more susceptible to the virus. And even service providers cannot accommodate a patient's request for maybe a non-Asian nurse or maybe a younger doctor or a different cashier because of their fear.

Even as it relates to schools, while many schools have closed or converted to online or distance learning, the HRA and federal law still protect you from discrimination and harassment.

Phrases such as calling COVID-19, the Chinese virus or activities such as denying access to classes or participation in groups based on race or national origin or even age can create a hostile educational environment which is actionable under the HRA.

So what to do if you experience these things or as ANC commissioners, if someone informed you of these things, contact our Civil Rights Section. We're still open for business and we remain committed to protecting the civil rights of district residents. A.G. Racine gave you our main line, which I'll repeat again, it's 202-727-3400. And you can leave a tip or you can e-mail us at [oagcivilrights@dc.gov](mailto:oagcivilrights@dc.gov).

If you have an individual complaint of discrimination, the Office of Human Rights is the primary district agency that investigates individual complaints that are particular to one person. You can go to OHR online and file a complaint at [ohr.dc.gov](http://ohr.dc.gov).

Now we also recognize that our civil rights have fundamental rights and that they're fundamental to our collective safety, peace and livelihood. So in addition to leaving a tip or filing a complaint, we encourage everyone to share accurate information about the pandemic.

We know that COVID-19 does not discriminate against people and neither should we. We know that people who wear masks are not necessarily ill, and that they may be taking extra precautions to prevent illness. We ask that you speak up if you see or you hear discriminatory comments or behaviors, because we all have a hand in creating the culture we want to live in. And we ask that you show compassion to those around you, as we all adjust to this new normal.

I'll be on after all of the presentations to answer any questions you may have about our civil rights here in the district. Thank you.

Aurelie Mathieu: Thank you, Michelle. We're going to hear from some legal service representatives on the resources they provide. First, we have Leah J. Myers. Leah is the Manager for the Legal Hotline of AARP's Legal Counsel for the Elderly.

Leah J. Myers: Hi everyone, this is Leah. And I want to thank everyone for joining the call and thank the Office of the Attorney General for inviting us to join. Legal Counsel for the Elderly is an affiliate of AARP and we provide legal services to D.C. residents who are over the age of 60. And as I think all of us are aware this particular public health emergency is especially dangerous for seniors and for folks who have preexisting medical conditions, as they are the most susceptible to serious illness and are most in need of social distancing and staying away from potential sources of infection.

Legal Counsel for the Elderly is open for business. Our – all of our staff are working remotely but our phone lines are open. For those of you who may have access to our services in the past, you will find one differences that we're handling everything by voicemail now, because we're not able to answer those hotline calls live as they come in. So I would encourage you if you're trying to seek services from our office or helping someone else who is trying to seek services to please go ahead and leave a message and we will call you back.

At this point, we are not conducting any in-person appointments. The good news is that almost all of our intake is and has been by phone for many, many years. So for most clients, the initial experience contacting our office will not be different. So please go ahead and call our office, continuing representation in matters that we had taken on before the public health emergency began, and we are accepting new cases for representation.

A few changes will be that we will be meeting with people by phone initially rather than in person and we'll be handling most paperwork by mail or messengers, if needed. If you are working with somebody who cannot access legal services by phone for whatever reason, I would encourage you to call and leave a message on their behalf and I can follow-up with you to try to accommodate that person's needs as best as possible.

The – as some of you know, the office of the Long-Term Care Ombudsman for the District of Columbia is also located within Legal Counsel for the Elderly. And the Ombudsman oversees the quality of care in long-term care facilities and for home and community based services. And the Ombudsman is also continuing services during this time. However, because of visiting restrictions on long-term care facilities, a lot of that work is now happening by phone. So again, please continue to call, make reports of complaints, of concerns about quality of care or inappropriate discharges to the Long-Term Care Ombudsman's hotline.

A few things to keep in mind that – and we are looking out for during this time are in particular issues with continuation of public benefits. Many of our clients are receiving personal care services in their homes and the continuation of those services is quite important to their health and safety. And so, if you

are identifying anyone who's having problems with continued receipt of those services or any other public benefit, I would encourage you to please call us so that we can talk with them and see if there's anything we can do to assist. And I'll also be on the line at the end for any questions.

The best way to contact us is by calling our legal hotline which is 202-434-2120. Our services are available in English and Spanish, and we can accommodate any other language through the use of language (line). Thank you.

Aurelie Mathieu: Thank you, Leah. Next up, we have Rachel Rintelmann. Rachel is a Supervising Attorney at the Legal Aid Society of the District of Columbia.

Rachel Rintelmann: Hi, thank you so much for the opportunity to participate today. I'm just going to provide some updates on Legal Aid's operating status as well as some particular issues that were on the lookout for during this very unusual time. Our offices are much like (LCS) close to the public, but our staff are still working full time remotely and continuing to serve our client communities.

We're open for intakes in all of our regular practice areas, including family and domestic violence, consumer housing, public benefits and appellate. We've now moved entirely to telephone and online intake and I'll share at the end of my description of our services our phone number and our website. But, you know, folks are encourage to reach out to us through either of those two means.

In addition to accepting intakes in our standard practice areas, we've set up a special tenant hotline to answer questions for tenants with pending eviction cases, even where we would not otherwise provide full representation. So people with any questions relating to those cases, including about the courts current operating status are invited to call us and select the option in our phone tree menu for tenants who have questions about eviction cases.

You should feel free to refer tenants to us even if they only have one or two quick questions. We've been able to, at this point, have everyone's legal assistant and/or an attorney depending on the circumstances and we are



prepared to take a number of phone calls so you should feel free to refer people liberally.

In the area of family law, we wanted to remind people about the TPO process. If a (D.V.) survivor needs help, they should call 911 or the Safe hotline. Either way, they will get referred to Legal Aid for assistance. Also, people need emergency help with a custody, and either we would encourage them to call our main number or go online and we'll do an expedite and take as soon as possible.

In the area of consumer law, we've already been hearing stories of some phone debt collectors insisting that people have to come to court or else judgment will be entered against them and using that pressure to try to persuade people to sign payment plans. A lot of folks, as we know, aren't aware that all of the court dates have been continued and postponed. And so, folks who may be afraid of leaving their homes and coming to court for good reason, may feel that pressure to enter into this advantageous payment plan. If we hear – if you hear about anyone in this situation, or if you talk to anyone who has any questions about small claims or foreclosure case, we would encourage them to call us or can do a phone intake or apply for assistance online.

And then finally, in the area of public benefits, we do have an unemployment insurance practice and we'll continue to take intakes in that area in light of the changes in the emergency legislation. Additionally, we do believe that some people may be having challenges submitting applications for benefits, and other documents at service centers and they should reach out to Legal Aid for help with these matters.

Our main number is 202-628-1161. We can be reached online for online intake through [legalaiddc.org](http://legalaiddc.org). And the number for Safe, if you're talking to any (D.V.) survivors is 800-407-5048. Thanks.

Aurelie Mathieu: Thank you, Rachel.

Before we open up this call to questions, I'd like to invite you to join us every Friday in the foreseeable future for our webinar series. We will have different

topics to discuss every week. In addition, we can all agree that social distancing is a new experience for many of us, and it can be difficult. So join OAG for Twitter chat on Tuesday, March 24th from noon to 1:00 p.m. as we discuss tips and strategies for families that will help resolve conflicts lasting at home. Our Twitter is @agkarlracine.

We're now going to open up this call for questions. If your question is for a specific speaker, please be sure to mention that.

Operator: OK, at this time, I would like to remind everyone, to ask a question, you'll need to press star one on your telephone keypad. To withdraw your question, press the pound key. Please stand by while we compile the Q&A roster.

OK, we do have a question from the line of Dorothy Douglas. Dorothy, your line is open. Please state your ANC or affiliation.

Dorothy Douglas: I'm ANC 7D03, in Ward 7. I was calling in reference to the (worker's comp) insurance I had people to call, but no one is answering that line. It's out of work now. So where did they go from that to get that assistance that they need? They said apply online, and went to (DOES) website but there's no one responding to that. I'll even accepted that type of information input. Trying to get some unemployment benefits consumers.

Randy Chen: Yes, that's a great question, Dorothy. Thank you for asking. This is Randy, I'm the attorney who handles wage theft enforcement. So OAG just sort of – like you mentioned, unemployment insurance is handled by the Department of Employment Services. I'm really sorry that the call volume seems to be quite high right now.

I do know that they have a website that you can access that allows you to apply for unemployment insurance online. And that website is [does.dc.gov](https://does.dc.gov), G-O-V. And I'm hopeful that that will provide an avenue to apply for an unemployment insurance if the phone lines are tied up. If you continue to have concerns, we're happy to listen and take it back with them, though I imagine that the technological strain is much higher now than it had been in the recent past.

Dorothy Douglas: All right, thank you very much.

Aurelie Mathieu: We'll take the next question.

Operator: OK. You do have a question from the line of Charles Wilson. Charles, your line is open. Please state your ANC or affiliation.

Charles Wilson: Hi, good morning. Charles Wilson, ANC 8B03 I really like to thank Attorney General Karl Racine and staff and the city for putting out and giving us this opportunity, the information that it has, and all the rest of the first responders particularly who are involved in this.

My question relates to the – how the time frame for catch up, if I can use that term, for a lot of people who will need to get back to stability when this crisis is over. That is, for example, if my rent is back because of the emergency, a month, a month and a half, how much or what kind of time frame is there for me to – or will I be allowed to catch up on that?

And the second question was, in the event that this thing really, you know, drags on and takes a long time, are there any provisions or, you know, future I guess, provisions, you're considering, that will allow churches or grocery stores to distribute necessary resources? And at what, I guess, cost or condition to the individual families that might need those? If you take the answer of – yes, please. Thank you.

Jen Berger: This is Jen Berger. In terms of the rent catch up question that you have, the – if somebody hasn't been sued already, no summons is going to be filed during the public health emergency. So it would take a while for any first court date to happen if the public health emergency ends and then they file – the landlord files a nonpayment of rent case. So there is some catch up time woven into that.

And then I want to emphasize similar to what Michelle Thomas was talking about. There are accommodations that can be made based on disability. So it's really important to seek legal counsel to get help with negotiating with your landlord.

Aurelie Mathieu: Thank you.

Rachel Rintelmann: And (Corey) before we move on, I think we need to add David Mayorga and Karl back.

Aurelie Mathieu: I think they're back in.

Rachel Rintelmann: OK.

Karl Racine: We're back.

Rachel Rintelmann: Thank you.

Aurelie Mathieu: Awesome.

Operator: I was about to say they are back, they just rejoined. And we do not have any further questions at this time.

Aurelie Mathieu: OK. Maybe we should wait one more minute.

Operator: OK. Charles Wilson has a follow-up question.

Aurelie Mathieu: Awesome.

Operator: Charles, your line is open.

Charles Wilson: Again, Charles Wilson. I also had a follow-up question and that just didn't apply to the catch up time I mentioned earlier, that it just doesn't apply to rent but utilities and other kind of essential that, you know, the household might be responsible for, and the possibility of any assistance from churches, other organizations in the community that could be distribution centers, if you will, for resources that the community might be able to go to and the kind of conditions or circumstances or mounts for those given the length of this emergency and extend out.

Aurelie Mathieu: OK. Charles, it sounds like we'll have to follow-up with you. You can reach out to us at [oagcommunity@dc.gov](mailto:oagcommunity@dc.gov). And we'll see how ...

Karl Racine: We'll keep Charles's phone number as well. Very good.

Aurelie Mathieu: Yes. Do we have any other questions, (Corey)?

Operator: Yes.

Karl Racine: Charles, let me just give you the phone number because I didn't hear it. It might have been on my line. Give us a call back ...

Aurelie Mathieu: OK.

Karl Racine: ... at 202-442-9828. You raise an excellent point about our places of worship. And to that end, I'm going to ask my team to convene another call. Certainly not – probably not today, but early next week with our faith-based counsel, a group of faith-based, you know, churches and places of worship, and we can certainly invite you all to join. But obviously, you know, they're going to also be right at the point of the sphere, just as you all are where folks go to them for help and we should all be connected here.

Operator: OK, your next question comes from the line of Charles Elkins. Charles, your line is open. Please state your ANC or affiliation.

Charles Elkins: Hi, this is Chuck Elkins, ANC 3D01. Excellent briefing but I'm – so much information and I would like to post a lot of this on the local LISTSERVs but I'm thinking I'm not sure whether I took good enough notes and I don't want to give people the wrong information. And I know you guys are overburdened but if you could send out some of this maybe in separate e-mails like one on civil rights, one on tenants' rights or whatever, then I think many of us would be able to more accurately pass this on to all the people that we're in touch with, and we won't mislead them.

So, that's more ...

Karl Racine: That is an excellent suggestion.

Charles Elkins: ... but it would be helpful.

Karl Racine: So here's what we're going to do. We're going to do two things. One, we planned one – I'm not sure we did, but we can ask, Aurelie or David Mayorga.

The thing that we had planned is, this is a recorded line and so we're going to put it out as something that people can listen to.

I think what you're asking is also reasonable. And then that request is that we essentially transcribe the recorded conversation for – that we've had for the last almost hour now. And we will do that. That's going to take us a couple of days or so. We may bleed into early next week, but we'll do that and we'll break it down into the subject matters consistent with the conversation. That is an excellent suggestion.

David Mayorga: Attorney General, this is David Mayorga. I will also communicate to the participants that following this call, we will be issuing an e-mail that will have a PDF attachment that will have all of these information in a fact sheet that you can print, post and distribute to your communities.

Karl Racine: Let me just make clear, anytime you all think the Attorney General has done a good job, please know that it's all about the team that we have. Thank you, David for anticipating the issues today.

Aurelie Mathieu: Thank you. (Corey), do we have another question?

Operator: Yes. Your next question comes from the line of Teresa Edmondson. Teresa, your line is open. Please state your ANC or affiliation.

Teresa Edmondson: Hi, this is Commissioner Edmondson from 1A02. And my question I believe would be for Mr. Chen. And I also wanted to say to the Attorney General, (foreign language).

Karl Racine: (Foreign Language).

Teresa Edmondson: Very good, very – very good. About the 80-hour paid sick leave from the federal that everyone is guaranteed 80 hours worth of paid sick leave. Now, how about folks that have exhausted their paid sick leave from their employers prior to this happening? Will they be able to obtain – is that in new law or is that another bonus or if you just have exhausted your paid sick leave prior to the coronavirus, then you're just out of luck?

Randy Chen: Yes, that's a great question. So this law was just passed on Wednesday. It's my understanding that the law would give folks for an additional 80 hours for the frontline ...

Teresa Edmondson: OK.

Randy Chen: ... events of either contracting COVID-19 or carrying after a family member who has it. That said, things are moving pretty fast. I know that the federal – I know that the Congress is looking at several other coronavirus response laws. So, you know, things could change quite quickly.

And just because of the, you know, I want to caveat all this with – because the law just came out this Wednesday, there may be some uncertainty, I maybe a little tough to give you a firm answer. But it's my understanding that when you – if someone qualifies that that they would get the 80 hours to care for that.

Teresa Edmondson: OK, fantastic. That's very important. It's my community. Thank you.

Operator: Your next question comes from the line of Dorothy Douglas. Dorothy, please state your ANC or affiliation.

Dorothy Douglas: ANC 7D03 in Ward 7. My concern is that UnitedHealth center of Seventh Avenue is vacant. So I can do testing there for people that needs to be test. They have whole vacant hospital facility because there used to be a way off, that they are not mentioning about what you need to get help in this crisis. So my question is, would I had to say to counsel – to the mayor acknowledged that space is available, as well as Providence. So that was my concern.

And the other one was the ANC. What am I supposed to do, we don't had – unable to have the connection to the residence so easily, to address their concern, especially with DDOT. DDOT still sending out information to the community – I mean, to the ANC, and we can't respond. So why is that still going on when everything's closed down? Thank you.

I know I ask two questions. Hello?

Aurelie Mathieu: Yes. Can you e-mail us at [oagcommunity@dc.gov](mailto:oagcommunity@dc.gov) and we'll try to follow up as best as we can on your question regarding to DDOT. And I wanted to get some more clarification on your first question.

Dorothy Douglas: The first question is UnitedHealth used to be great as (helping) hospital, that's vacant, it's empty. So you all – they're doing in Maryland, I think you've seen how they're doing (more attention). People drive by and getting tested and things like that is available. You could do the same thing there. All space in a brand new hospital. The hospital has been renovated, really (practically) brand new is not being used.

So why aren't they being used to folks that are needed testing or even some help? And Providence, we opened them for this and it's emergency.

Aurelie Mathieu: Yes. So we'll wait for your e-mail and see what we can do about it, but it sounds like we'll take your feedback into consideration.

Dorothy Douglas: OK. Can you give me your e-mail again that you say, what is it?

Aurelie Mathieu: Yes, it's [oagcommunity@dc.gov](mailto:oagcommunity@dc.gov).

Dorothy Douglas: Was there anybody that can talk? Can you give me some advice on that? I mean, you're saying, give us an e-mail, you back on that reference. But I think it's enough. I just made clear when you get the hospitals available, and you still have DDOT and Department of Public Works, send our information for the ANCs to give to the community, we can't do. I mean, with this emergency going on. So why is it pushing it?

Aurelie Mathieu: Yes. We'll connect you to someone to see – regarding the ANC issues and then we'll see what we can do. As of now, I don't know where to guide you yet and I don't want to misguide you. So we'll follow-up via email with you.

Karl Racine: We'll have to do that. Did you identify yourself, your name? Your voice sounds familiar. But if you give us your e-mail address ...

Dorothy Douglas: Yes, this is Dorothy Douglas. I'm Dorothy Douglas, ANC 7D03, Ward 7.

Aurelie Mathieu: All right. Thank you, Ms. Douglas.



(Corey), we could take the next question.

Operator: OK. There are no further questions at this time.

Aurelie Mathieu: All right. Thank you. I'd like to invite Attorney General Racine back for any closing remarks.

Karl Racine: OK. So, you know, we've had a heck of a conversation. Let me first thank the ANC commissioners who joined the call. Let me also thank our provider partners, Legal Aid, AARP is just two really outstanding organizations. We plan to do this again, and we plan to continue to do it until we're out of this crisis.

We would also like to have suggestions as to other partners who might join us, for example, Ayuda or other partners. We also want to get feedback from you in regards to how we can do this even better. We're always trying to improve, to help you do your job and also help the residents of the District of Columbia.

I don't have anything other than to say, please respect the social distancing. It's extremely important. You may be OK because of your relative age, but you might still be a carrier. And as a carrier (you may) interact with someone who is more vulnerable than you. So let's make sure that we're respecting the social distance rules. Let's continue to lead and let's pray.

With that, I'm signing off and thank you very much, everyone.

David Mayorga: Thank you.

Operator: OK.

Aurelie Mathieu: Thank you.

Operator: Thank you. This does conclude today's conference call. Thank you for your participation. You may now disconnect.

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