

Illinois Department Of Labor Highlights Contribution Of All Workers On Labor Day 2020 Amidst Ongoing Pandemic

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SPRINGFIELD – Due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, this year's Labor Day 2020 will not be a typical celebration with parades, speeches and picnics across Illinois. But that doesn't mean there is nothing to celebrate on Monday, September 7.

Illinois Department of Labor Director Michael Kleinik said the struggles of this year have served to remind us of the importance of those who show up to work each day.

“While Labor Day has always been a day of celebration, relaxation and fun, most importantly it should be a day where we reflect on the importance of all workers,” said Kleinik. “The pandemic has made us even more appreciative of the many frontline and essential workers who continue to serve us all during this difficult time – from public safety personnel to medical employees to grocery store workers. All workers deserve a special place in our thoughts today.”

Labor Day asks us to pause and take stock of how far we have come in protecting workers in Illinois and the United States.

In September 1882 when 10,000 workers in New York City first gathered to march to celebrate and support labor, it was common for workers to endure 12-hour shifts, seven days a week. Child labor laws were non-existent with young children working dangerous jobs for low wages in factories and even mines. Working conditions for many workers, especially the poor and new immigrants, were often unsafe and unsanitary.

President Grover Cleveland signed legislation creating Labor Day in June 1894. Now 126 years later, even amidst a pandemic, Illinois again will honor all workers on Labor Day.