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Dear contact.firstname,

Two things happened last Friday.

First, at 9:30 AM, the Broadway League formally announced that Broadway would remain dark until May 30. Wrenching news, whether you work on Broadway or not, signaling that the difficult situation facing our industry is going to continue for some time.

Then, a few hours later, SAG-AFTRA announced it launched an "investigation" of Equity's New Media committee.

Simply put, we represent workers, not technology. Not cameras, and not microphones. That means our focus is on contracts that allow us the opportunity to earn fair pay and health care. That is why the national council passed a resolution today making it clear that Equity will fight for us and our ability to earn health weeks and fair pay with longstanding Equity employers.

**[Equity employers have already generated more than 3,700 work weeks during the pandemic on our COVID agreements to help members like you earn fair pay and health weeks. Will you stand with us against this so-called investigation?](#)**

Launching investigations of a sibling union is not what a union does if it is actually trying to be helpful during a pandemic. SAG-AFTRA's investigation will go nowhere. Here is why:

As a union, we represent members with our theatrical employers. Usually, that is live onstage/backstage. But for years, that has also meant in immersive theater or classrooms, in parks and even while performing in prisons. And yes, during the pandemic, that has meant remote work. Some 240 remote work agreements have been issued to Equity employers with Equity collective bargaining agreements. This has meant – actors AND stage managers receive Equity salaries, Equity health insurance weeks and Equity pensions.

Equity has had committees dealing with media issues for decades – since before AFTRA existed. Only now, during the pandemic, has SAG-AFTRA found concerns.

We have not signed SAG-AFTRA employers during the pandemic. In fact, consistent with longstanding practice, we have referred producers to SAG-AFTRA when appropriate.

The AFL-CIO Constitution prohibits member unions from raiding work from an affiliate union, especially when an employer already has an existing collective bargaining agreement in place. It is truly unfortunate that SAG-AFTRA has decided to disregard these long established rules of the road and union solidarity during a pandemic.

We understand that ultimately, stage managers and actors are the only ones who lose.

We were disappointed to hear from members recently that SAG-AFTRA has been offering “deferred compensation” agreements that undercut Equity wages and benefits. We were even more disappointed to hear from many stage managers that they have been fired when SAG-AFTRA signs an Equity employer.

It didn’t have to be this way. We spent months privately discussing with SAG-AFTRA how union/employer relationships work and asked them to not interfere with our employers. Instead, they insisted on a so-called “waiver” that is unusable, and they continued undercutting terms and conditions by signing Equity employers to lesser paying SAG-AFTRA contracts.

SAG-AFTRA’s decision to announce an investigation targeting Equity the same day our industry was hit with an extended shutdown is deeply frustrating.

**[Regardless, our focus is on doing what is right for actors and stage managers. We’re going to keep issuing agreements to Equity employers that allow all of us to earn fair pay and health weeks. Will you stand with us?](#)**

In Solidarity,

Kate Shindle and Mary McColl  
President and Executive Director, Actors' Equity Association

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