



CORONAVIRUS

EXPLAINER

CONGRESSIONAL
PROGRESSIVE
CAUCUS CENTER

Progressive Priorities for the Next Coronavirus Legislative Package

Last updated March 19, 2020

Immediate Cash Assistance

- Immediately start targeted monthly payments of up to \$2,000 for each adult, and up to an additional \$1,000 for families with children, for 6 months with eligibility based upon income
- Extend payments for another 6 months if needed

Housing

- Nationwide moratorium on evictions and foreclosures
- Emergency rental assistance
- Emergency funding for rapid re-housing

Worker-Centered Industry Aid

- Aid should maintain payroll and cover essentials, not go to stock buybacks, executive bonuses, and shareholder dividends
- Condition aid on respect for existing collective bargaining agreements, paid leave, health and safety protections, bankruptcy protections for workers and retirees, and capping executive pay at 50 times the pay of the median worker

Higher education

- Moratorium on all negative credit reporting
- Debt forgiveness or loan forbearance with no additional interest accrued through the crisis (prohibit lenders from making loans due immediately after the pandemic)
- Count student loan assistance for payments and interest charges toward completing Public Service Loan Forgiveness

Small Businesses and Nonprofit Organizations

- Direct cash assistance or grants to small businesses and nonprofit organizations under 50 employees, independent contractors, sole proprietors, and gig economy workers
- Protect small businesses and nonprofits from evictions, utility shut-offs, and other impacts related to an inability to pay bills or loans due to public health emergency measures

Unemployment Insurance (UI) Expansion

- Require all states to offer robust work-sharing programs for workers whose hours are cut to maintain payroll and reduce layoffs
- Expand Disaster Unemployment Assistance (DUA) to cover self-employed individuals and others ineligible for regular UI
- Raise UI wage replacement rate and extend the benefit period to up to 52 weeks
- Eliminate UI eligibility requirements that overly restrict access.
- Federally fund all UI expansions during crisis

Free Testing, Treatment, and Prevention

- Cover coronavirus testing, treatment and prevention at no out-of-pocket cost whether the patient is covered by private health insurance, Medicare, Medicaid, TRICARE, or the Indian Health Service
- Additional resources for hospitals, community health centers, and clinics
- Protections for frontline workers in health care and other sectors
- Use the National Disaster Medical System to cover coronavirus-related care for uninsured people through Medicare
- Provide emergency appropriations to the state share of Medicaid and other costs during this crisis to alleviate the strain on state budgets

Immigration and Criminal Justice

- Free testing, treatment, and prevention to all, regardless of their immigration status
- Implement best practices developed by public health and medical professionals to prevent a coronavirus outbreak in prisons, jails, and immigration detention facilities while maintaining access to counsel and visitation and upholding constitutional rights
- Stop immigration arrests and detention for people who pose no significant public safety risk
- Identify appropriate individuals, particularly those most vulnerable to contracting coronavirus, for release on recognizance, reasonable bond, or other appropriate alternatives to detention
- Suspend immigration court operations and excuse or relax immigration deadlines until at least three months after the outbreak

Paid Leave Expansion

- Provide emergency paid sick days and leave programs with full wage replacement to all workers
- No federal subsidy for employers with more than 500 employees

Election Integrity

- Nationwide “no-excuse” absentee voting during widespread public health emergencies and disasters with at least \$500 million to states to implement
- Provide appropriate polling place adjustments to uphold public health and maintain the ability to vote in person for those who cannot vote by mail

Indian Country

- Ensure that all federal coronavirus resources include Tribes, Tribal Organizations, and Urban Indian Organizations
- Create a Tribal Relief Fund to address coronavirus and provide impacted businesses with emergency relief
- Tribal parity for tax credits, expanded nutrition benefits, and access to the Strategic National Stockpile of Medical Supplies.

Defense Production Act (DPA)

- Require Administration to submit a plan to Congress for the use of DPA authorities, including targets and timelines for the production of supplies
- Additional funding to ensure that the nation’s needs are met