

NEWS BRIEF

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President Trump Signs Executive Order on Pandemic Relief

President Donald Trump recently [signed an executive order](#) and [three memorandums](#) to address pandemic relief in response to the ongoing impact of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. After negotiations for a relief package between the White House and lawmakers collapsed, the executive actions are intended to extend pandemic unemployment benefits, student loan payment deferrals, eviction protections and payroll tax cuts.

Actions Address Unemployment Benefits

One of the memorandums signed is intended to extend [federal unemployment benefits](#). This action is intended to create a new benefit of \$400 per week into December—which is a decrease from the previous unemployment insurance of \$600 per week. The \$600 amount received approval in March and was scheduled to expire at the end of July. According to Trump, states will be responsible for covering 25% of costs, or \$100 per week, per individual.

Much of the workforce affected by COVID-19 has been reliant on unemployment benefits, which were scheduled to expire at the end of July. Congress and the White House had been negotiating a broader pandemic aid package, with unemployment benefits discussed as a core component. In the absence of an agreement, these actions were taken by Trump to address an extension for pandemic relief programs.

Student Loan Payments, Eviction Protections, Payroll Tax Cuts and Potential Challenges

Included in the series of executive actions was an executive order addressing [renters and homeowners](#). According to the White House, this order, to the extent reasonably necessary to prevent the further

spread of COVID-19, aims to take lawful measures to prevent residential evictions and foreclosure resulting from financial hardships caused by COVID-19. One of the memorandums issued addresses student loan [payment deferrals](#). Payments on federal loans were suspended through September, and Trump’s memorandum seeks to extend payments through the end of 2020. Lastly, Trump issued a memorandum deferring [payroll tax obligations](#) through 2020, advising the Treasury Department to allow employers to defer payments for the employee portions of specific payroll taxes. Generally, federal funding is controlled by Congress, leading to potential challenges for these executive actions.

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Trump’s [executive actions](#) include one executive order and three memorandums. These actions intend to extend pandemic relief after an agreement on a relief package was not reached.

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Stimulus Relief Efforts

These executive actions did not address stimulus checks. The U.S. Senate has brought bills forward with stimulus relief as part of a broader pandemic relief package. Discussions regarding stimulus checks may extend into August and September.

