



SEARAC Urges the House to Vote YES on HEROES Act

SEARAC encourages the US House of Representatives to **vote in favor** of the Health and Economic Recovery Omnibus Emergency Solutions (HEROES) Act. The bill is a necessary response to the urgent needs felt by all communities across the country due to the COVID-19 pandemic, including vulnerable communities like Southeast Asian Americans (SEAA).

With the HEROES Act, Congress has made clear its intention to significantly invest in recovery efforts, including:

- Over \$100 billion to K-12 and postsecondary education, providing critical financial aid to schools and directly into the hands of students;
- Expansion of student loan assistance to federal loan borrowers previously ineligible under the CARES Act, and extends assistance until Sept. 30, 2021;
- Inclusion of COVID-19 testing, treatment, and vaccines in Emergency Medicaid;
- Providing more Americans economic support by allowing individuals with an Individual Taxpayer Identification Number access to tax rebates; and
- Delaying deadlines for work authorization and immigrant visas expiration dates during this pandemic.

However, while the HEROES Act is a critical next step in the federal government's response to the COVID-19 crisis, Congress must take bolder steps to ensure that assistance does not unintentionally exclude the most vulnerable communities. The HEROES Act:

- Fails to dedicate targeted funding for vulnerable students, such as English learners, or specify Census funding for targeted outreach to minority and hard to count communities;
- Severely restricts student debt cancellation and fails to account for the millions of borrowers who are newly economically distressed due to the pandemic;
- Does not require Health and Human Services to report disaggregated racial and ethnic data or to establish data disaggregation as a standard for modernizing data collection methods and infrastructure, preventing a proper health assessment of SEAA and other vulnerable communities; and
- Continues to divide immigrants into “deserving” and “undeserving” categories by utilizing mandatory detention as the standard for prioritizing discretionary release from Immigration and Customs Enforcement detention.

The HEROES Act is only a necessary component of an ongoing reinvestment and recovery process. SEARAC encourages the House to vote YES on the HEROES Act, and we call on Congress to take more progressive action to meet the needs of all people, especially those who are disproportionately impacted by the pandemic's devastation. If you have questions, please contact Kham S. Moua, SEARAC Director of National Policy, at kham@searac.org