

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

April 9, 2020

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker
U.S. House of Representatives
H-323, The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Speaker Pelosi:

Thank you for your leadership as our nation experiences unprecedented challenges with the coronavirus pandemic and for ensuring the swift passage of the Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security (CARES) Act. With the number of people seeking unemployment benefits in the past two weeks nearing a record 10 million, we agree with your statements that we must focus on a CARES-2 package that extends and expands on the CARES Act to meet the immediate needs of the American people.

Overall Guiding Principles: We believe that all of our aid must be guided by three guiding principles. First, ensure everyone, regardless of tax or immigration status, age or disability status, is eligible for robust assistance. All assistance must also ensure parity for tribal and U.S. territorial residents and the District of Columbia. Second, ensure that the assistance we provide lasts the length of the crisis by having automatic triggers so that the assistance continues based on economic conditions throughout the duration of the pandemic. Thirdly, ensure every action Congress takes addresses inequality and strengthens racial equity and economic equality.

Primary Areas of Assistance: Our actions now can lay the foundation for a just and resilient recovery, but only if we recognize the scale of this unprecedented crisis and fashion a response that meets that scale. We believe this next relief package must focus on four specific areas: preventing layoffs and protecting paychecks; providing immediate and direct relief to individuals and families; protecting public health; and ensuring election integrity.

Prevent Layoffs, Protect Paychecks and Allow Small Businesses and Nonprofits to Flourish

- *Improve the federal workshare program* by allowing businesses in every state to fully participate, with no minimum employee limit, by reducing required work hours to allow small businesses to ramp back up and permitting additional hours to be covered by UI.

- *Create a federal Paycheck Guarantee program* for employers, including small businesses and nonprofits, to ensure all workers are protected and businesses can quickly return to normal after the emergency ends; with strong conditions for federal assistance.
- *Ensure federal dollars flow to workers* by strengthening industry bailout oversight through repealing waiver authority that override prohibitions on stock buybacks, dividends and compensation limits; providing subpoena power and independence for the newly-created Special Inspector General; respecting collective bargaining agreements, and ensuring strong reporting requirements on all funds; and by prohibiting the waiver of civil rights obligations on all funds.

Provide Immediate and Direct Relief to Individuals and Families

- *Provide expanded and monthly direct cash assistance* of at least \$2,000 per person to adults, plus \$1,000 for children for up to one year, unless the employment-to-population ratio reaches 60%. Include tax filers with ITINs as well as Social Security Numbers, dependent adults, children over 17 and college students.
- *Expand social safety net programs* by expanding Earned Income Tax Credit & Child Tax Credit; waiving TANF work requirements; increasing maximum SNAP benefit by 15% and doubling the minimum monthly SNAP benefit to \$30; and barring rules that would tighten eligibility for SNAP. Expand safe access to food by rapidly expanding the SNAP online purchasing program and allocating emergency funding for SNAP recipients to use for grocery delivery fees.
- *Ensure debt relief and financial protection* by providing at least \$30,000 in student loan debt cancellation; expanding the CARES Act student loan debt provisions to apply to all federal and private student loans; suspending the collection of all consumer debt, including medical debt.
- *Expand housing protections* by extending the moratorium on evictions and foreclosures to include all housing, including renters; suspend work requirements for federal housing programs; prevent utility and internet shutoffs; provide emergency services rental assistance and increased funding for the homeless and housing insecure.
- *Support small businesses* by placing a moratorium on commercial evictions, limiting small business debt collection, and preventing predatory small business lending. Find more ways to address small business and nonprofit losses via grants and forgivable loans.

Protect Public Health

- *Protect essential workers* by ensuring all frontline healthcare and other essential workers (transit, domestic workers; agricultural workers, sanitation, grocery) who continue to work through the crisis receive hazard pay; have access to Personal Protective Equipment (PPE); are protected by a temporary OSHA emergency worker standard; obtain strong whistleblower protections for publicly reporting on conditions; receive \$50 billion in child care assistance; and require that their employers adhere to CDC guidelines on

testing. Ensure undocumented workers performing essential functions are eligible to obtain legal status.

- *Fund the development of a protocol and practices, as well as domestic production of test kits, PPE and other equipment* needed for widespread testing, contact tracing and other necessary public health systems to prepare for getting America back to work.
- *Ensure full health coverage with no out-of-pocket costs for any COVID19 care* by expanding Medicare to cover those on unemployment and those who have lost insurance; expanding Medicaid eligibility for those at risk of poverty or other uninsured; increasing FMAP funding; providing strong incentives for states to expand Medicaid; Ensure all federal funding for Medicaid and other state administered programs include strong maintenance efforts to prevent harmful cuts to eligibility and benefits and provide alternatives in states that have refused to expand Medicaid; and mandating a special Affordable Care Act enrollment period.
- *Substantially expand support to backfill state, local, tribal and territorial governments*, including for localities that are smaller than 500,000 and the District of Columbia. This should include both robust public health support and support for state budgets to head off fiscal austerity and a decline in essential services.
- *Prohibit price-gouging* including by ensuring access to any coronavirus vaccine for all, including the uninsured, at no out-of-pocket cost; and requiring reasonable pricing terms and non-exclusive licenses for any contracts or funding agreements related to coronavirus research and development.
- *Require the CDC in coordination with HHS to collect and distribute data on racial and ethnic health disparities* related to the coronavirus pandemic.
- *Expand paid sick, family and medical leave* by ending the exclusion for employers with more than 500 employees and by removing hardship exemptions, as well as allowing local governments and government entities to benefit from offsetting tax credits.
- *Protect the health of those in jails, prisons, and detention facilities* by releasing those who pose no significant public safety risk; ensuring public health and safety, including testing and treatment, for those who remain; delaying immigration deadlines and non-detained court hearings for pandemic duration; automatically renewing work authorization and non-immigrant status; and suspending the harmful public charge rule.
- *Increase support for domestic violence agencies and reject any restrictions to reproductive health care and access.*
- *Provide immediate emergency funding for Community Health Centers.*

Ensure Safe Elections

- *Enact a vote-by-mail requirement* for 2020 federal elections while maintaining access to in-person voting for those who do not have access to mail voting.
- *Ensure the protection of voting rights* through the passage of core pieces of the Voting Rights Advancement Act.
- *Invest in state election integrity efforts* by appropriating at least an additional \$3.6 billion for state-administered elections.

Sincerely,



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Co-Chair
Congressional Progressive Caucus



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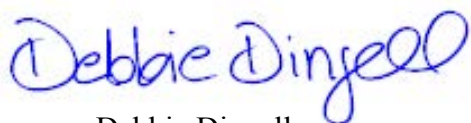
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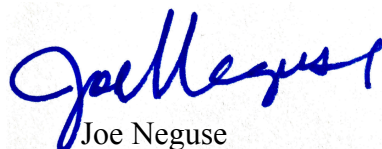
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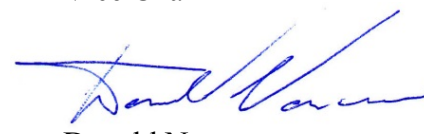
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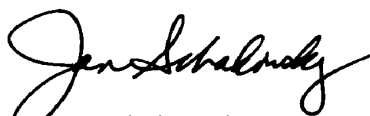
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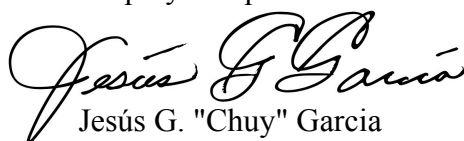
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