

**Congress of the United States**  
Washington, DC 20515

June 17, 2020

The Honorable Mitch McConnell  
Senate Majority Leader  
S-230 United States Capitol  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator McConnell,

As the leadership of the Democratic Women's Caucus, we urge the Senate to take immediate action on H.R. 6800, the *Health and Economic Recovery Omnibus Emergency Solutions Act* (HEROES Act). The coronavirus pandemic has caused devastating health and economic impacts for women and their families, especially women of color. Women make up the vast majority of employees in some of the hardest hit industries and have therefore lost jobs in those sectors at disproportional rates. Despite the May jobs report illustrating modest improvements in unemployment numbers, those gains haven't translated to improving the standing of Black and Latina women, who face unemployment rates of 16.5 percent and 19 percent, respectively.

For women and their families, the dire situation illustrates the urgent need for a legislative package that reflects the immense needs facing our nation. The HEROES Act provides the necessary investments to ensure the health and well-being of women as we combat this pandemic and prepare for the impending road to recovery. Key provisions supported by the Democratic Women's Caucus include:

- Nearly \$1 trillion for states, cities, tribal and territorial governments to avert layoffs of public sector workers - first responders, health workers, nurses, teachers and more;
- The establishment of a Heroes' Fund to ensure that essential workers receive hazard pay;
- An additional \$1.1 billion for low-income pregnant women and mothers with young children to access nutritious foods through the Women, Infants and Children (WIC) nutrition program, following the \$500 million secured in the CARES Act;
- Increases to the maximum SNAP benefit level by 15 percent to ensure families can keep food on their tables;
- \$7 billion for child care, and \$850 million for Family Care for Essential Workers; we also support the *Child Care is Essential Act* which calls for \$50 billion to stabilize the child care industry;
- Expansion of the Child Tax Credit and the creation of a new Young Child Tax Credit of \$3,600 for children under six years old;
- Increased funding and a waiver of matching requirements for programs that support survivors of domestic and sexual violence;
- The elimination of employer exemptions to paid leave and paid sick days protections that are more likely to impact women and workers of color, and an expansion of covered uses of paid leave;

- Direct payments of \$1,200 for each family member similar to the Economic Impact Payments in the CARES Act;
- \$90 Billion to the State Fiscal Stabilization Fund for grants to states to support elementary and secondary schools and public postsecondary institutions because women and families depend on strong educational programs for students;
- Increased funding for states to prepare for the election so that voters do not have to sacrifice their health in order to participate in our democracy.

The U.S. House of Representatives passed the HEROES Act on May 15, 2020. Since then, citizens across our nation have demanded increased protections and equality for African Americans and communities of color. With nearly 119,000 COVID-19-related deaths and unemployment numbers not seen since the Great Depression, the American people overwhelmingly support the strong urgent relief included in the HEROES Act. Time is of the essence. The Senate must pass the HEROES Act without further delay.

Sincerely,

**Lois Frankel**  
Member of Congress

**Brenda L. Lawrence**  
Member of Congress

**Jackie Speier**  
Member of Congress

**Veronica Escobar**  
Member of Congress

**Deb Haaland**  
Member of Congress