

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

April 7, 2020

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Minority Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Leader Pelosi and Minority Leader McCarthy,

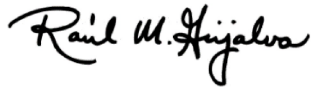
As the COVID-19 crisis expands so do obvious distinctions between socio-economic classes. While many white-collar professionals can follow social distancing guidelines, essential blue-collar workers are tasked with holding our country together by delivering the hands-on vital services we need to survive. We ask that the next COVID-19 bill require employers take action to protect workers and include premium pay to supplement low-income workers and to ensure this crisis doesn't further exacerbate class inequalities.

Workers across our nation are taking enormous risks, sometimes for poverty wages, to allow our nation to continue to function. Frontline health care providers are selflessly risking their own lives to save others. While some corporations have begun to supplement pay, it is not enough, and many workers are left out. Businesses need to take immediate stringent actions to protect their employees from the hazards presented by the novel coronavirus. The next package should include a requirement for OSHA to issue an Emergency Temporary Standard that requires employers to implement protections for these at-risk workers.

Future legislation should support supplemental pay that reflects the work and hazards these individuals are encountering on a daily basis. Eligibility for the additional pay should include, but not be limited to, health care workers along the spectrum of care, grocery workers, restaurant workers, child care providers, public sector workers (including police, fire, corrections, postal), farmworkers, utility workers, transportation workers, sanitation workers and other hourly employees deemed essential. Federal employees who are required to report to work, including Title 38 employees with the Department of Veterans Affairs, the Transportation Security Administration, and the Federal Aviation Administration should also be included. Federal workers who cannot work remotely are in immediate danger of exposure, and current protocols have no guarantees of protection. The legislation should include a full tax credit or other form of reimbursement for businesses under 500, to be appropriately scaled down for larger employers. Business participation in the supplemental compensation should be mandatory.

We are asking these individuals and their families to sacrifice so much for our nation. It is imperative that we make every effort to prevent this crisis from being one that is disproportionately borne by the working class. Instead we should use this as an opportunity to pay them their full worth – a worth that has been undervalued in many cases for far too long.

Sincerely,



Raúl M. Grijalva
Member of Congress

/s
Tim Ryan
Member of Congress

/s
Joe Neguse
Member of Congress

/s
Debbie Mucarsel-Powell
Member of Congress

/s
Juan Vargas
Member of Congress

/s
Marcy Kaptur
Member of Congress

/s
Peter A. DeFazio
Member of Congress

/s
Joseph P. Kennedy, III
Member of Congress

/s
Dina Titus
Member of Congress

/s
Suzanne Bonamici
Member of Congress

/s
Jamie Raskin
Member of Congress

/s
Mark Pocan
Member of Congress

/s
Cedric Richmond
Member of Congress

/s
Jahana Hayes
Member of Congress

/s
Joaquin Castro
Member of Congress

/s
Nydia M. Velázquez
Member of Congress

/s
Steve Cohen
Member of Congress

/s
Eleanor Holmes Norton
Member of Congress

/s
Frederica S. Wilson
Member of Congress

/s
Ilhan Omar
Member of Congress

/s
Alan Lowenthal
Member of Congress

/s
Ann Kirkpatrick
Member of Congress

/s
Darren Soto
Member of Congress

/s
Stephen F. Lynch
Member of Congress

/s
Judy Chu
Member of Congress

/s
Daniel T. Kildee
Member of Congress

/s
Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez
Member of Congress

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Jimmy Panetta
Member of Congress

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Albio Sires
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David N. Cicilline
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Tulsi Gabbard
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Pramila Jayapal
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James P. McGovern
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José E. Serrano
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Earl Blumenauer
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Adam Smith
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Barbara Lee
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Debra Haaland
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Adriano Espaillat
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Ayanna Pressley
Member of Congress

/s
Gilbert R. Cisneros, Jr.
Member of Congress

/s
Ben Ray Luján
Member of Congress

/s
Jim Langevin
Member of Congress