

MOMSRISING'S COVID-RELIEF PRIORITIES

The moms of America urge leaders to immediately pass a comprehensive, robust COVID-relief package that centers the growing racial disparity in COVID-19 morbidity throughout each issue area and lifts families and our economy. Shocking data show Black, Latinx, and Native American people are dying at rates markedly higher than white Americans.

Our elected leaders must develop and implement health equity interventions across all components of coronavirus response legislation, collect national health outcomes data by race, and ensure that all new policies urgently address these racial and ethnic disparities.

COVID-19 relief must be enacted immediately and include the following:

- **PAID LEAVE.** Congress must include robust paid leave in any COVID-related package. Access to paid leave in the pandemic has been linked to a reduction in the spread of COVID-19 by as much as 15,000 new cases per day where people are able to use the leave. Paid leave during the pandemic has prevented countless evictions, hospitalizations, hungry children, and sleepless nights. The last Congress left town without expanding and extending emergency paid leave, putting 31 million parents at risk for losing access to paid childcare leave at the same time the virus is surging and many schools are operating virtually. This new Congress must fix that mistake and act quickly to renew and expand emergency paid leave by passing President Biden's plan. President Biden's paid leave plan that will provide 14 weeks of paid sick and family and medical leave to help parents with additional caregiving responsibilities when a child or loved one's school or care center is closed; for people who have or are caring for people with COVID-19 symptoms, or who are quarantining due to exposure; and for people needing to take time to get the vaccine. The plan also provides paid leave to federal workers and will reimburse employers with less than 500 employees for the cost of this leave and more. This plan will also extend the emergency paid leave benefits until the end of September 2021. While we need a permanent paid leave policy in this country, the Biden emergency paid leave plan is a huge step in the right direction and meets our immediate needs to paid leave right now. A priority should be made over time to pass permanent paid family and medical leave and earned paid sick days. The pandemic makes it painfully clear that we need comprehensive and permanent paid family and medical leave. The pandemic will end, but we know the need for paid family and medical leave and earned sick time will not. Access to these essential earned benefits increase workforce attachment and increase family's economic security;
- **UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE PROGRAM.** Extend and strengthen the unemployment insurance program, including reauthorizing the \$600/week boost established under Federal Pandemic Unemployment Compensation (FPUC), extend PUA and PEUC, and expand both of these programs by adding more weeks of benefits for workers experiencing long-term unemployment. In addition, the federal government needs to make investments and changes to our existing UI system to modernize it and make sure it is well-funded to support struggling workers in the future.



- **CHILDCARE STABILIZATION FUND.** While the \$10 billion in CCDBG was a critical downpayment, after months on insufficient aid, it's critical to prioritize a minimum of \$40 billion dedicated to a childcare stabilization fund to stabilize the childcare industry, support and ensure programs don't close their doors permanently and can reopen, safely meeting all new regulations, and ensure parents, particularly moms, aren't pushed out of the workforce because of childcare breakdowns. Congress has also provided \$1 billion in COVID-19 relief to Head Start. Following the CARES Act inclusion of \$750 million for Head Start, a \$1.7 billion need remained. Accounting for the most recent \$250 million that was included in the December relief package, \$1.45 billion in stark, one-time funding is still needed to support our families.

- **INVEST IN OUR EDUCATION SYSTEM.** Support reopening schools and campuses safely by providing robust funding to support educators, support staff, students, and families during this pandemic. This includes major investments in our education systems to stabilize education funding, at least \$12 billion to equip students with hot spots and devices to help narrow the digital divide and close the homework gap, and direct funding for personal protective equipment (PPE);

- **MSNAP (SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM).** Ensure struggling families can access nutritious food during this economic crisis by boosting SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) maximum and minimum benefits, rescinding all SNAP rule changes that would time limit, terminate, or weaken benefits and increase funds for school meals and other nutrition programs that are in unprecedented demand;

- **CHILD TAX CREDIT.** Laying the groundwork for vital tax improvements with a temporary expansion of the Child Tax Credit (CTC) in COVID legislation and then making this tax credit fully available to the 27 million children who are currently denied some or all of the tax credits that higher income people receive and creating a young child bonus for families with children under the age of 6.

- **EITC (EARNED INCOME TAX CREDIT).** Improve the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) to reach more low-income families and stop taxing low-wage workers who are not raising children into poverty. The first step should be to take immediate action to boost the credit and extend the age range to help low-wage workers who are already struggling in the COVID economy. Then, permanent improvements should be made so more working families can benefit from this important working family tax credit. In addition, expanding the EITC to low-wage workers without children in the home,

"I've been out of work since March 13th. The first month was terrible – I went a month without any income, then finally I got accepted for SNAP and that helped with food. Finally, unemployment kicked in and I was able to pay my rent and bills. Without unemployment I'll be homeless, unable to pay my bills. My industry is still out of work and it's not looking like we will be going back any time soon. I need this unemployment to keep going. I'm depending on it since it's all we have."

– Megan, Lexington, KY



“We have two group family daycares. With the current situation, we really don’t know how we’re gonna make it!! Parents are keeping kids at home. No one knows how long it’s gonna be like that. We don’t know how we can pay three rents: 1 rent for each daycare, 1 rent for an apartment, where we live. We also worry about our caregivers: they simply will not have money to buy food. I would love to help them somehow. But we can not make ends meet! We need some help!”

– **Tetiana, New York**

many of whom are still supporting and providing support to children, is important since this is the largest group of adults who are taxed into, or deeper into, poverty every year.

- **REPEAL MILLIONAIRES TAX GIVEAWAY.** Repeal the appalling \$135 billion Millionaires Tax Giveaway that was included in the CARES Act;
- **DIRECT PAYMENTS.** Provide additional direct payments to families, including immigrant families;
- **FUND STATE, LOCAL, TERRITORIAL AND TRIBAL GOVERNMENTS.** Support robust funding for state, local, territorial and tribal governments;
- **FEDERAL EVICTION MORATORIUM.** Address the urgent health and housing needs of low-income renters and people experiencing homelessness by extending, strengthening, and enforcing the federal eviction moratorium, providing robust funding of at least \$30 billion for emergency rental assistance and utility assistance and at least \$28 billion for long-term housing vouchers for households with the greatest needs. These critical resources are vital to keep people experiencing homelessness safe and stably housed.
- **COVID-19 VACCINE DISTRIBUTION.** Support a scaled-up distribution of the COVID-19 vaccine, with the federal government taking on a key leadership role and achieving a goal of 1 million doses a day in the first 100 days. Distribution to as many people as possible, as quickly and as safely possible, is critical but as critical is that the mechanisms for distribution ensure equity and address those at greatest risk first. There have to be real mechanisms to assure that people of color and people with economic barriers to care don’t get left behind, especially given they are infected and dying at higher rates. Trust needs to be garnered for those who are wary of the vaccine through culturally competent tactics to get as many people on board as possible. As the vaccine rollout



continues, and hopefully accelerates under new leadership, we will also need to scale up manufacturing of more doses by encouraging no exclusive patents so that more than one company can manufacture without running into patent rights issues. To further ensure a smoother rollout, more aid to state, local, tribal, and territory governments to meet vaccination distribution needs and manage the escalating crisis must be included in any COVID-19 legislation, as well as utilize any available federal resources or personnel to aid in vaccination efforts.

- **HEALTH INSURANCE.** Prevent people from losing their employer-sponsored health insurance; create a special enrollment period under the Affordable Care Act; provide additional funding for states' Medicaid programs and home- and community-based services; mandate reports to Congress on the race, ethnicity, and disability status of COVID-19 test recipients, hospitalizations and mortality; prohibit price gouging on consumer goods and services needed for medical treatment; provide essential funding for mental health supports; give aid to Native American communities; and provide additional funding for other urgent health issues like testing, tracing, and treatment;
- **NO-COST TESTING AND TREATMENT.** Provide no-cost testing and treatment for all, including immigrant communities, and ensures that testing and treatment for COVID-19 is covered under emergency Medicaid;
- **PRESCRIPTION REFILLS & SUPPLIES.** 90-day refills of prescriptions and medical supplies for people with Medicaid, CHIP, and private insurance;
- **WORKER SAFETY.** Enhance worker safety by immediately updating OSHA guidance on how to best protect workers from contracting COVID in the workplace, issue an Emergency Temporary Standard to protect all workers from exposure as quickly as possible, and rigorously investigate all claims of unsafe workplaces, using all remedial tools available when violations are found;
- **RELIEF TO ALL FAMILIES AND ESSENTIAL WORKERS.** Protect and extend relief to all families and essential workers, including green card holders, DACA recipients, Temporary Protected Status-holders, and the 11 million people in undocumented communities;
- **JUVENILE JUSTICE AND DELINQUENCY PREVENTION ACT.** Provide \$75 million for rapid response grants through Title II of the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act. These funds will help support a variety of services, including testing of young people and staff in facilities and continued access to education and community support for youth returning home, at this time when positive tests in secure settings continue to rise to an alarming degree;
- **REDUCE INCARCERATED PEOPLE.** Include measures to reduce the number of people who are incarcerated to minimize the spread and impact of COVID-19 by directing the federal Bureau of Prisons and states to release individuals in jails, prisons, and detention centers who do not pose a public safety risk, such as families held by ICE, pregnant women, elderly people, those housed in pre-trial detention, those held on technical parole or probation violations, and those who are nearing their release date. Provide guidance to states on releasing people from prisons, jails, and detention centers. In addition, include policies that guarantee safe conditions and ensure that transparent plans are in place to address the COVID-19 crisis for incarcerated individuals; and
- **REDIRECT JUSTICE & POLICE FUNDING.** Redirect criminal justice and police force funding that is not specifically for COVID-19 health and safety precautions or supporting decarceration to other programs.

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