



March 16, 2020

FEDERAL CORONAVIRUS UPDATE

Emergency Funding

On March 14, the House adopted an amended H.R.6201, the “Families First Coronavirus Response Act,” with a 363-40 bipartisan vote. The passage of the bill comes after negotiations between Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi (D-CA) and U.S. Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin, who represented the White House.

The bill would provide, for those affected by the Coronavirus, paid emergency leave for families with two weeks of paid sick leave; up to three months of paid family and medical leave. The two weeks paid sick leave provision will expire on December 31, 2020. The bill also includes enhanced Unemployment Insurance. Additional provisions of the bill include, but are not limited to:

- No-cost diagnostic testing for Coronavirus, including for those with private health plans and the uninsured;
- A supplemental increase of \$500 million to the Special Nutrition Program for Women Infants and Children (WIC) to provide continued access to food for women who lose their jobs or are laid off due to the coronavirus pandemic;
- \$400 million to assist local food banks, \$300 million of which is to purchase additional food;
- U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) creation of a national waiver for states to provide supplemental assistance for families with children who attend schools closed due to the Coronavirus. Additional payments, equal to the cost of a school meal, would be added to a family’s Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) card to help offset the loss of access to free or reduced meals typically provided by the school;
- USDA authority to issue waivers for state school nutrition plans even if such waivers would increase costs to the federal government;
- USDA authority to issue a nationwide waiver to increase flexibility for state implementation of the School Lunch Program;



- Suspension of work and work training requirements for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP); and,
- \$250 million for the Senior Nutrition program.

The President, in a tweet, expressed his support of the bill and called for Republicans to “VOTE YES.” President Trump went on to say he looks forward to “signing the final Bill, ASAP!” The bill will be considered by the Senate when they return to session today, March 16. The House bill is [here](#). A summary of the bill is [here](#). The President’s tweets are [here](#). A Dear Colleague Letter from the Speaker is [here](#).

The President and Congress are considering a third round of emergency funding. See below for information on both. Also, we are still waiting for the Senate to act on the second package. The House is apparently working on technical corrections before the Senate considers it.

Guidance

On March 16, President Trump released guidelines today instructing Americans to avoid social gatherings of more than 10 people for the next 15 days to slow the spread of the novel coronavirus. The White House's new guidelines also advises Americans to avoid eating and drinking at bars, restaurants and food courts; going on shopping trips and making social visits; and visiting nursing homes and retirement or long-term care facilities.