



UNITED STATES SENATOR *for* WEST VIRGINIA



For Immediate Release:

March 26, 2020

Contact: [Sam Runyon](#)

202-740-6241

FUNDING FOR HOSPITALS, HEALTHCARE WORKERS, UNEMPLOYED, SMALL BUSINESSES IN THIRD CORONAVIRUS EMERGENCY FUNDING PACKAGE

Washington, D.C. – Today, after securing funding for healthcare workers, unemployed, small businesses, and state and local governments, and voting yes on the third COVID-19 emergency funding package, *the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act*, U.S. Senator Joe Manchin (D-WV) released the following statement.

“On Sunday morning, Mitch McConnell shared his Republican legislative proposal with the Senate Democrats and it did not have adequate funding to address the unprecedented pandemic we are facing right now. We are staring down a medical crisis and if we do not act swiftly it will become a lasting economic crisis, which is why I have been working so hard to ensure we are fighting COVID-19 with a two pronged approach. First, we must arm our healthcare professionals with the equipment to protect themselves and the resources they need to keep their facilities open while they fight on the front lines and invest in research to develop treatments and a vaccine for COVID-19. At the same time we must get immediate financial relief for those who find themselves unemployed through no fault of their own and small businesses who are struggling to stay afloat as their businesses remain closed due to the protective measures needed to prevent the spread of this virus.

“We cannot begin to heal our economy until we can stop the spread of COVID-19. As a result of our negotiations, the amount of funding for hospitals and medical facilities has increased from \$75 billion to \$150 billion. This surge of funding is going to be critical for recovery efforts in West Virginia, and I could not move forward with any relief legislation until I knew we were adequately investing in our healthcare workers. I have said from the beginning we must take care of those who have lost their jobs through no fault of their own. This relief package includes a dramatic expansion and reform of the existing unemployment insurance program. We’ve strengthened unemployment benefits and ensured that laid-off workers, on average, will receive their full pay for four months instead of the three months offered in Majority Leader

McConnell's draft. It ensures that all workers are protected whether they work for businesses small, medium or large, along with self-employed and workers in the gig economy – like Uber drivers. And for the small businesses across our state that are hurting through no fault of their own, this bipartisan compromise offers relief through new large funding streams to help them bridge this health crisis.

“Over the past few days, funding for state and local governments has been a major source of debate. I have made clear time and time again that we need to put the needs of Main Street ahead of Wall Street. The economy won't recover until people are convinced they can work, shop, and leave their homes safely. Thankfully, the final bill has what the previous versions lacked – robust funding for states and local governments, including funding for a state and local Coronavirus Relief fund, FEMA's Disaster Relief Fund to provide for the immediate need to protect citizens and help them recover from the overwhelming effects of COVID-19, grants to provide emergency support to local school systems and higher education institutions, additional funding for elementary, secondary, and higher education, and increased access to mental health services. The bill also increases access to federal funding for Community Development Block Grants, the Economic Development Administration, and the Manufacturing Extension Partnership to help mitigate the local economic crisis and rebuild impacted. Even so, I worry that this won't be enough, and that our small towns and rural communities will need help to maintain essential services and combat this crisis. I will continue to fight for West Virginians to make sure they get what they need in the weeks and months ahead.

“I hope the House will quickly take up and pass our bipartisan recovery bill. It's critical that we move quickly so that we can help so many in our country who need it right now,” **said Senator Manchin.**

Highlights from the package include:

Increasing Healthcare Capacity

- **Hospitals and Healthcare Institutions** – \$150 billion for hospitals, healthcare institutions, public entities, not-for-profit entities, and Medicare and Medicaid enrolled suppliers and institutional providers to cover unreimbursed healthcare related expenses or lost revenues attributable to the public health emergency resulting from the coronavirus. Includes \$50 billion in increased Medicare payments to providers.
- **Nursing Homes** – \$200 million for CMS to assist nursing homes with infection control and support CMS and states as they work to save lives and mitigate the spread of COVID-19 in nursing homes.
- **Good Samaritans Health Providers Act (S. 1350)** – Provides liability protections for volunteer health providers to provide services across state lines in times of emergency and could alleviate staff shortage issues. Senator Manchin is an original cosponsor of this legislation.
- **Telehealth:**
 - **Expanded Availability of Telehealth** – Allows Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs) and community health centers to provide telehealth services to patients as “distant sites”, improving reimbursement. Also allows provides the Secretary

authority to waive certain telehealth requirements, and allow providers to over telehealth through audio only, such as landlines.

- **Promote Rural Telehealth** – \$25 million to support rural telehealth through the Distance Learning and Telemedicine program. This increase will help improve telemedicine in rural areas.
- **Connected Care Pilot Program** – \$200 million for the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) Connected Care Pilot Program. This program will support efforts of healthcare providers to address COVID-19 by using telehealth to connect with patients.
- **Availability of PPEs, masks, gowns, and other essential equipment:**
- **Strategic National Stockpile** – \$16 billion for the Strategic National Stockpile for critical medical supplies, personal protective equipment, and life-saving medicine.
- **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention** – \$4.3 billion to prevent, prepare for, and respond to the coronavirus, including \$1.5 billion to support States, locals, territories, and tribes in their efforts to conduct public health activities such as the purchase of PPEs and increased testing.
- **DPA Authority** - \$1 billion for the Department of Defense to use under the Defense Production Act to invest in manufacturing of key items such as personal protective equipment and medical equipment.
- **Liability Protections** – Provides permanent liability protection for manufacturers of certain personal respiratory protective equipment that have been cleared by NIOSH, such as masks and respirators, in the event of a public health emergency. This will allow for more manufacturers to develop masks and respirators for healthcare providers.

Helping Workers and Families

- **Expanded Unemployment Insurance** – Expands eligibility to include part-time, self-employed, and gig economy workers; provides an additional 13 weeks of unemployment benefits; and increases individual benefits by \$600 per week to ensure that no one is penalized for practicing responsible social distancing.
- **Direct Payments** – Working class Americans that file their taxes will receive a direct payment of \$1,200 (\$2,400 for couples) if adjusted gross income does not exceed \$75,000 (\$150,000 for married couples). They are also eligible for an additional \$500 per child.
- **Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program** – \$15.5 billion in additional funding for SNAP to ensure all Americans, including seniors and children receive the food they need. On average, 340,000 West Virginians rely on SNAP.
- **Child Nutrition Programs** – \$8.8 billion in additional funding for Child Nutrition Programs in order to ensure children receive meals while school is not in session.
- **The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP)** – \$450 million for the TEFAP program. With many communities suffering from job losses, food banks have seen increased needs. These funds are critical so food banks can continue to assist those Americans most in need.
- **LIHEAP** - \$900 million for low income households, including over \$6 million for West Virginia, to help with heating and cooling in homes, weatherization, and energy-related low-cost home repairs or replacements.

Supporting Impacted Businesses

- **Small Business Assistance** – \$350 billion is provided for small and medium businesses with fewer than 500 workers who will be able to apply for government-backed, forgivable loans to cover the costs of their workers' wages, as well as some other business expenses such as rent, up to a maximum of \$10 million.
- **Tax Credits for Paid Leave** – Treasury is authorized to advance the payment of tax credits for employers that are required to provide up to 12 weeks of coronavirus-related paid leave to their employees.
- **Defer Paying Taxes** – Businesses can defer the 6.2% tax they pay on wages that is used to fund social security. The deferred tax would have to be paid over two years: half by December 31, 2021 and the other half by December 31, 2022.
- **Support for Manufacturing** – \$50 million is provided for the Hollings Manufacturing Extension Partnership to help small- and medium-sized manufacturers recover.

Helping Homeless Youth

- **McKinney-Vento** – \$13 billion has been set aside for schools serving K-12 students that will be issued to States based on their Title I formula. McKinney-Vento is an allowable use of those funds, but it will be up to the State Department of Education to make that determination.
- **Runaway and Homeless Youth** – \$25 million was set aside for this program to go to existing grantees. This will directly benefit the Children's Home Society in Charleston and Youth Services System in Wheeling in their work to provide services to homeless children and youth.
- **Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration** – \$425 million for SAMHSA to increase access to mental health services in our communities through Community Behavioral Health Clinics, suicide prevention programs, and emergency response spending that can target support where it is most needed, such as outreach to those experiencing homelessness.

Aid to State and Local Governments

- **Coronavirus Relief Fund** – \$150 billion to support state and local governments on the front lines of the response effort, including no less than \$1.25 billion for West Virginia. It also authorizes an additional \$454 billion to leverage more than \$4.5 trillion in lending for distressed states, municipalities, and businesses.
- **Resources for Federal, State and Local Law Enforcement** – \$850 million for the Byrne-Justice Assistance Grant Program (Byrne-JAG) to help state and local police departments and jails meet their needs, including purchase of personal protective equipment and other needed medical items and to support overtime for officers on the front lines. Includes over \$6 million in dedicated funding for West Virginia.

- **Disaster Relief Fund** – \$45 billion to provide for the immediate needs of state, local, tribal, and territorial governments to protect citizens and help them recovery from the overwhelming effects of COVID-19. Reimbursable activities may include medical response, personal protective equipment, National Guard deployment, coordination of logistics, safety measures, and community services nationwide.
- **Community Development Block Grant** – \$5 billion for Community Development Block Grants, including almost \$10 million for West Virginia and language authored by Senator Manchin to lift the statutory cap on the use of funds for public services to allow local communities to use existing funds to respond to the coronavirus.
- **Schools** – \$31 billion in grants to provide emergency support to local school systems and higher education institutions so they can continue providing educational services to their students. This includes \$13.5 billion for elementary and secondary education and another \$14.25 billion for institutions of higher education.

Closing the Digital Divide/Rural Broadband

- **Institute for Museum and Library Services** – \$50 million for the Institute of Museum and Library Services to expand digital network access in areas of the country where such access is lacking, including the purchase of internet-enable devices such as “hotspots” which Senator Manchin fought to explicitly authorize to allow individuals in rural areas to remain connected during this time.
- **Rural Development** – \$25 million to support the Distance Learning and Telemedicine program within the U.S. Department of Agriculture and another \$100 million for the ReConnect program to promote the deployment of broadband throughout rural America.

To view the full bill text, please click [here](#).

A timeline of Senator Manchin’s actions throughout the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic can be found [here](#).

Senator Manchin launched an information resources page where West Virginians can learn more about the coronavirus pandemic and how to protect themselves and their families. **To learn more please click [here](#).**

To receive daily updates from Senator Manchin on the coronavirus pandemic, please click [here](#).

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