



## COVID-19 Stimulus Packages

### At-a-glance: Care-based analysis

*As the COVID-19 pandemic triggered an unprecedented public health crisis and economic breakdown in the US and worldwide, US Congress proposed and passed several pieces of legislation to address and alleviate the impact of this crisis. The following analysis spotlights the ways in which COVID-19-related legislation and economic relief packages can advance an approach rooted in care. This lens must center those made most vulnerable during this crisis and recognize our interdependence across borders.*

**Background:** Congress has passed the following pieces of legislation offering relief in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, including:

- Phase 1: The [Coronavirus Preparedness and Response Supplemental Appropriations Act](#) (H.R. 6074), signed into law on March 6, 2020 (\$8.3 billion)
- Phase 2: The [Families First Coronavirus Response Act](#) (H.R. 6201), signed into law on March 18, 2020 (\$192 billion)
- Phase 3: The [Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security \(CARES\) Act](#) (H.R. 748), signed into law on March 27, 2020 (\$2 trillion)
- Potential Phase 4: [HEROES Act](#) (H.R. 6800), passed by the House on May 15, 2020 (\$3 trillion)

**Highlights:** Below are highlights of the above packages (Phases 1-3), which take steps towards a care-based approach:

- Paid sick and family leave related to COVID-19 exposure, illness, or closed schools and daycares for certain employees.
- Direct cash assistance for many individual taxpayers, an expansion of unemployment insurance, funding for worker training.
- Emergency food and nutrition assistance, support for food banks, and funding for child care.
- Moratorium on evictions in properties receiving federal funds and foreclosures of federally-backed mortgages; rental assistance.
- Funding to prevent and respond to coronavirus internationally, including for global health programs, economic support, disaster assistance and migration and refugee assistance.
- Improved access to free testing for COVID-19. Funding for federal, state, and local public health agencies; for health care providers, hospitals, and community health centers; for telehealth; and for increased manufacturing of supplies. Funding for state, local, and tribal governments and for several federal agencies, including for the development and review of a vaccine.
- Federal grants, loans, and tax benefits for small businesses and nonprofits.
- Temporary suspension of student loan payments and accrual of interest, and grants for college students through universities.
- No increased funding for the Pentagon thus far.

The HEROES Act, if passed by the Senate and signed into law, would further:

- Extend or expand many of the above provisions, including unemployment insurance; paid leave; a second round of direct stimulus payments; funding for food and nutrition assistance programs; and funding for federal agencies and state, local, and tribal governments.

- Allocate funds to confront gender-based violence, including Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) grant programs and for housing vouchers for domestic and sexual violence survivors.
- Expand protections for immigrants, including by improving their access to free COVID-19 testing and treatment, and to stimulus relief payments. Provide essential workers temporary protection from deportation, and allow undocumented students to receive emergency education grants.
- Allocate additional funds for testing and contact tracing to mitigate the spread of the virus.
- Create a Heroes' Fund to provide premium pay and support the care needs of frontline workers.
- Additional education relief, including the cancellation of up to \$10,000 in student debt.

### **How could the stimulus packages be strengthened from a care-based perspective?**

- We need not only emergency response, but policies rooted in care that will extend far beyond this crisis moment and set the stage for a just recovery. That means shifting from one-time cash payments to a recurring monthly basic income, particularly for low-income and unemployed people. It means moving beyond free testing for COVID-19 alone towards free universal health care. It means increasing the length of paid sick, family, and medical leave and applying it to all employers, including large corporations — who are currently exempt from these policies. It also means valuing and recognizing all forms of care, including through paid leave for caregivers of people with disabilities. We need to provide paid parental leave to protect families amidst the pandemic and improve gender equity in the long haul. Thus far, the stimulus packages simply do not go far enough.
- We also need inclusive policies that reach all people, including undocumented immigrants and asylum-seekers. Currently, many stimulus benefits — like cash assistance and unemployment insurance — exclude immigrant families. We must guarantee access to healthcare and economic justice for all people, regardless of their immigration status. The HEROES Act takes steps towards this, however, would still [exclude recently arrived refugees](#) from receiving stimulus checks and prevent [undocumented immigrants from receiving unemployment insurance](#). Further, besides the minimal funding offered for migration and refugee assistance, we must call for the release of immigrant detainees, halt ICE raids, end construction of a border wall, and stop deportations.
- The House Committee on Appropriations recently [released its draft FY21 foreign aid bill](#), which includes \$10 billion for a global COVID-19 response. Such funding is vital, and we also need a gender analysis to ensure that funds flow through women, girl and LGBTIQ+ led grassroots organizations that implement community-based approaches to delivering aid and are well poised to respond to the pandemic. Further, increased funding must be provided for gender-based violence programming and services globally to address the [increase in such violence](#) due to lockdown and quarantine measures. Finally, funding is needed for Indigenous, disability justice, and Afro-descendent grassroots groups working to contain the pandemic's impact on their communities, which are especially at risk.
- Stimulus packages must recognize the full breadth of COVID-19's international impacts. For instance, [we must lift many economic sanctions](#), which are strangling economies, limiting access to humanitarian aid and medical equipment, shredding social safety nets, and worsening unemployment and hunger. In addition, the stimulus bills are an opportunity to call for global debt cancellation for Global South countries, enabling resources to instead be used for health and economic justice, and [an issuance of Special Drawing Rights \(SDRs\) by the IMF](#).
- Countries in the Global South are facing the impacts of the climate crisis through more frequent disasters, droughts and flooding. Combined with the effects of the pandemic, climate crisis further exacerbates hunger, poverty and displacement. Funds for climate mitigation and adaptation, and for food security, are vital, especially as we face hurricane season. This is also a

key moment to create green jobs for everyone to stimulate the economy, including by recognizing the unpaid and underpaid care work done primarily by women. We need a [feminist Green New Deal](#) in our next stimulus package. Far from this, already, [at least \\$113 million in small business funds](#) and [more than \\$3 billion](#) in coronavirus aid has gone to the fossil fuel industry. At minimum, stimulus legislation must restrict oil and gas companies from obtaining coronavirus relief funds, including loans.

- The stimulus packages included tremendous bailouts for industry, including airlines and [private jet companies](#). Wealthy hospitals [received more than \\$5 billion in funds](#), even as hospitals and health centers serving poorer communities are struggling to keep their doors open. Large corporations and wealthy individuals [received \\$174 billion in tax breaks](#). And in practice, many of the corporations receiving federal funds [don't necessarily face the strict conditions](#) promised — like ensuring that workers remain on payroll or limits on executive compensation. Even the proposed HEROES Act could lead to [a bailout of defense and intelligence contractors](#) and [lobbying firms](#), who would be eligible for Paycheck Protection Program funds. A care-based policy demands better than bailouts for the rich, as people everywhere face record levels of unemployment, poverty, and hunger.