

## Top Requests for Next COVID-19 Legislative Package As of May 21, 2020

### Education funding

- Provide at least \$175 billion for the Education Stabilization Fund to distribute to states, allocated by formula, for public pre-K through post-secondary education to fill budget gaps caused by declining state revenues due to the COVID-19 national emergency.
- Reject Education Secretary Betsy DeVos' "microgrants" and other voucher schemes that siphon funding from public schools and undermine accountability.

### Homework gap

- Due to school closures across the country, 8-12 million K-12 students are at risk of falling behind their peers because they don't have internet access at home.
- To address this issue, appropriate \$4 billion for the successful E-Rate program, administered by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC), to help schools procure and distribute Wi-Fi hotspots and connected devices to K-12 students who don't have them at home.

### Higher education

- For the duration of the COVID-19 national emergency, cancel monthly federal student loan payments and interest accrual, including commercially held Federal Family Education Loans (FFEL) and Perkins Loans held by institutions of higher education.
- After the national emergency ends, cancel at least \$30,000 in student loan debt per student.
- Through the Education Stabilization Fund, provide additional assistance for community colleges to compensate for CARES Act's funding methodology, which uses the number of enrolled Pell grant recipients to prioritize allocations (many community college students are eligible for Pell grants, but don't apply for them).

### Worker protections, including PPE

- Provide at least \$56 million for personal protective equipment (PPE) for teachers, Education Support Professionals (ESPs), and other school staff who interact with students and their families, including food service workers who prepare and distribute meals, custodians who clean and disinfect buildings, security officers, and technology specialists.
- Provide training and guidance on mitigating transmission of the coronavirus for teachers, ESPs, and other school staff.
- Task the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) with crafting emergency standards to help protect frontline workers at risk of contracting the virus.

### SNAP and child nutrition

- Increase monthly minimum Supplemental Assistance Program (SNAP) benefit from \$16 to \$30 and maximum benefit by 15 percent.
- Suspend changes in SNAP rules proposed by the U.S. Department of Agriculture that limit eligibility and weaken benefits.
- Extend the Pandemic Electronic Benefit Transfer (P-EBT) program through the summer of 2020 and into the new school year for students eligible for free or reduced-price meals.

## **Health care**

- Provide extended COBRA premium relief that includes federal, state, and local employees.
- Protect COVID-19 patients from surprise medical bills.
- Eliminate out-of-pocket costs for all medical care related to COVID-19 for all patients—not just care delivered in hospitals.
- Provide more time to obtain reimbursement for services covered by flexible spending accounts (FSAs).

## **Voting rights**

- Provide at least \$4 billion more in funding to ensure all eligible voters can actually vote come November, while protecting public health and safety.

## **Immigration**

- Automatically extend work authorization for Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) recipients and Temporary Protected Status (TPS) holders.
- Halt implementation of new public charge rules that deter people from immigrant families—including U.S. citizens—from seeking COVID-19 testing and treatment.
- Restrict transferring or reprogramming funds appropriated for other purposes to immigration enforcement, detention, and border wall construction.

## **Sick leave**

- Extend paid sick leave provisions of the CARES Act.

## **Economic help for individuals**

- Provide second round of stimulus payments at least as big as the first round under the CARES Act.
- Expand/ensure eligibility for young adults, all seniors, and immigrants not covered by the first round, or whose payments are delayed.
- Fully repeal the cap on the state and local tax (SALT) deduction.

## **Retirement security**

- Fully repeal the Government Pension Offset (GPO) and Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP) that unfairly reduce Social Security benefits earned by educators.
- Do not require structural changes in public pension plans to which states contribute, or use the economic crisis as an excuse to raid such plans.
- Allow pension plans governed by the Employee Retirement Income Security Act (ERISA) to increase their amortization periods from 7 to 15 years.

## **Unemployment insurance**

- Extend unemployment insurance provisions of the CARES Act.
- Modify “between terms” restriction to allow individuals to receive payments during the summer.
- Cover laid-off workers who are not normally eligible, such as adjunct and contingent faculty at colleges and universities (our review indicates they should be covered by the CARES Act).

## **Housing stability**

- Provide additional funding to help prevent homelessness, evictions, and foreclosures.

## **Rural education**

- Provide Secure Rural Schools (SRS) payments for 4,400 schools in 775 rural counties located near national forests in 41 states.
- Create a permanent endowment fund—similar to that in the Forest Management for Rural Stability Act (S. 1643)—to provide reliable funding for public schools, public health, and other essential services in rural communities across the United States.