



820 First Street NE, Suite 350, Washington, DC 20002
202-347-9797 | networklobby.org

March 16, 2020

United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Senator:

On behalf of our 100,000 supporters nationwide and in the name of the common good, NETWORK Lobby for Catholic Social Justice urges you to approve H.R. 6201, the Families First Coronavirus Response Act, immediately. This is urgently needed to ensure that people have the ability to care for themselves and their families. Passing this bill will help to contain the virus by: ensuring people can get tested; allowing workers to take time off if they are sick; providing needed relief for workers who are laid off; and ensuring children and their families have access to food. While there is more to do to ensure the health and well-being of communities and businesses, this critical bill must be passed immediately.

The Gospel and Catholic Social teaching calls us to prioritize the needs of the most vulnerable. Our mission at NETWORK is to advocate for the most vulnerable and marginalized members in our society—persons with preexisting conditions, people experiencing homelessness, people working low-wage jobs, incarcerated populations, communities of color, women and families living in poverty. These are precisely the people that will suffer the most in this growing pandemic. If ever there was a time to appreciate the common good, it is now.

This unprecedented health and economic crisis is growing exponentially more grave and perilous with each passing day. H.R. 6201 takes necessary and critical actions to protect the safety and well-being of all of us. This is a crucial step to assuage the worst-case economic and health scenarios, but it will also not be enough. The coming weeks will require additional bold, strategic action from Congress to stabilize the economy while protecting workers severely impacted by this unprecedented pandemic.

H.R. 6201 includes extending unemployment insurance and guaranteeing paid sick days, freeing workers from worry about taking time off to care for family members or themselves. While some Republicans refused to support this bill unless paid sick-time benefits were restricted to companies with 500 or fewer employees, we know that coverage for all workers is essential for the health of our nation. We consider H.R. 6201 a down payment in the fight for a universal benefit in coming legislation. Half-measures will not suffice when everything is on the line.

The House bill is also crucial in making sure that people do not go hungry as a result of this crisis. School closings are interrupting millions of school meals for children. This bill will help make sure they will not lose access to food. And it will also provide funding for older Americans who rely on meal programs, extensions for low-income families who rely on Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits, and much more. In short, H.R. 6201 gets needed services to our most vulnerable people.

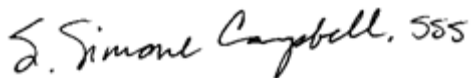
Importantly, H.R. 6201 ensures free coronavirus testing. No one should have to worry about whether they can afford to be tested. We have already seen testing delays because of faulty test kits and a slow response of our federal government. Congress needs to support broad testing now in order to identify and contain this deadly virus. Delays in early and widespread testing due to financial concerns would be disastrous. Passage of this bill would help avoid cases of Covid-19 from being spread by unknown carriers.

H.R. 6201 had huge bipartisan support in the House, and we are grateful for Speaker Nancy Pelosi's leadership in crafting this proposal. It was supported by 363 members of the House, the Republican House leadership, the secretary of the treasury and President Trump. It is now time for the Senate to step up and immediately pass this bill. Each day of delay puts lives and livelihoods at perilous risk.

NETWORK Lobby urges you to act now to pass H.R. 6201. Delays at this time are unconscionable. We look forward to working with you in the future on additional stabilization measures needed to respond to this crisis.

Thank you for considering our views on this crucial legislation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "S. Simone Campbell, SSS". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Sister Simone Campbell, SSS
Executive Director
NETWORK Lobby for Catholic Social Justice