

December 8, 2020

The Honorable Speaker Nancy Pelosi  
Speaker  
U.S. House of Representatives  
H-232, U.S. Capitol  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Mitch McConnell  
Majority Leader  
U.S. Senate  
S-230, U.S. Capitol  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy  
Minority Leader  
U.S. House of Representatives  
H-204, U.S. Capitol  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Charles E. Schumer  
Minority Leader  
U.S. Senate  
S-221, U.S. Capitol  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Speaker Pelosi, Leader McCarthy, Leader McConnell, and Leader Schumer:

We write to convey the indisputable need to including relief checks in the stimulus package currently being negotiated, and to reinforce the call made by countless Americans for continued direct cash payments in the wake of the COVID-19 crisis.

The COVID-19 pandemic has caused major shocks to the U.S. economy and public health system in our modern history. This pandemic has only worsened existing systemic inequities in our society, with low-wage earners, women, and Black and Latino communities disproportionately suffering from the human and economic toll of the virus. Almost half of all households in the United States reported experiencing serious financial concerns such as running out of savings and not having enough money for basic necessities.<sup>1</sup> Direct cash assistance has become a lifeline for the American people.

We have learned from the CARES Act that the Economic Impact Payments (EIPs) saved many families from financial ruin and sheltered the economy as a whole. According to a Census Household Pulse Survey, most respondents used these checks to pay for everyday expenses including food, rents/mortgages, utilities, and other consumer debts.<sup>2</sup> This boost in consumer spending in the second quarter helped to prop up the economy. These cash payments were one of the main reasons why the poverty rate fell in the early months of the pandemic, before beginning to rise again as critical fiscal aid has been depleted or set to expire.<sup>3</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Noguchi, Yuki. "Nearly Half of U.S. Households Face a Financial Crisis." *NPR News*, 10 Sept. 2020. Web. <<https://www.npr.org/sections/health-shots/2020/09/10/910724801/overview-of-poll-data-on-pandemics-damage>>.

<sup>2</sup> Perez-Lopez, Daniel and Charles Adam Bee. "How Are Americans Using Their Stimulus Payments?" *U.S. Census Bureau*, 24 June 2020. Web. <<https://www.census.gov/library/stories/2020/06/how-are-americans-using-their-stimulus-payments.html>>.

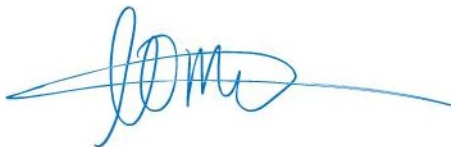
<sup>3</sup> Luhby, Tami. "More Americans Fall into Poverty After Federal Stimulus Programs End." *CNN*, 15 Oct. 2020. Web. <<https://www.cnn.com/2020/10/15/politics/poverty-congress-coronavirus-stimulus/index.html>>.

Now that much of the fiscal assistance in the CARES Act has run out, consumer spending is trending downward while COVID-19 cases are spiking across the country. It is clear that we need to provide financial support to those who must stay home, and prevent our most vulnerable populations from being pushed into poverty and homelessness.

This type of cash assistance has already proved to be one of the most effective and most equitable ways to directly support the American people this year. Excluding universal and direct cash relief from the next stimulus will leave behind tens of millions of people who have lost income as well as many struggling individuals who cannot work and those left out of federal support programs. A robust relief package must pair cash assistance programming with increased unemployment insurance (UI), Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), aid to states and localities, and childcare funding. However, direct payments are one of the quickest ways to bring relief to the most people and must be a priority in the next package to ensure that American families will have the unconditional aid they need to support themselves and their local economies during this perilous time in our nation's history.

We hope that you will keep in mind this urgent need as you continue to craft a relief package to help struggling Americans as we reach the end of the year. Our constituents are in great need, and we have a duty to deliver the most effective, most direct assistance possible.

Thank you for your consideration,



ILHAN OMAR  
Member of Congress

Additional U.S. House Co-Signers:

Rashida Tlaib

Jamie Raskin

Donald S. Beyer Jr.

Earl Blumenauer

Lisa Blunt Rochester

Suzanne Bonamici

Brendan Boyle

Ayanna Pressley

Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez

Ro Khanna

John B. Larson

Brenda L. Lawrence

Barbara Lee

Alan Lowenthal

Tony Cárdenas  
André Carson  
Kathy Castor  
Judy Chu  
David N. Cicilline  
Emanuel Cleaver  
Jim Cooper  
Madeleine Dean  
Mark DeSaulnier  
Veronica Escobar  
Adriano Espaillat  
Ruben Gallego  
Sylvia R. Garcia  
Al Green  
Raúl M. Grijalva  
Jimmy Gomez  
Deb Haaland  
Jahana Hayes  
Pramila Jayapal  
Eddie Bernice Johnson  
Henry C. “Hank” Johnson  
Robin L. Kelly

Carolyn B. Maloney  
James P. McGovern  
Jerry McNerney  
Grace Meng  
Gwen Moore  
Jerrold Nadler  
Eleanor Holmes Norton  
Chellie Pingree  
Mark Pocan  
Bobby L. Rush  
Tim Ryan  
Mary Gay Scanlon  
Jan Schakowsky  
José E. Serrano  
Albio Sires  
Mark Takano  
Dina Titus  
Juan Vargas  
Nydia M. Velázquez  
Bonnie Watson Coleman  
Peter Welch  
Lauren Underwood