

August 6, 2020

Dear Members of Wisconsin's Congressional Delegation:

We write to you with urgency about the COVID-19 pandemic and the associated health and economic crises. As Wisconsinites struggle with the disease and its effects, we ask that you act to pass another relief package that includes:

- **Ensuring universal access to free testing, treatment, and preventive vaccines for COVID-19** regardless of immigration status, income, or any other eligibility criteria;
- **Increasing the state's Federal Medical Assistance Percentages (FMAP)** by an additional 7% to help the state avoid deep cuts to its services, and require states not to cut eligibility and benefits during the period of the enhanced FMAP;
- **Funding for states, local governments, and school districts** to cover lost revenue and continue essential services;
- **Additional and recurrent economic stimulus payments for individuals**, regardless of immigration or family status, until the economy recovers;
- **Extend the supplemental \$600 per week in unemployment insurance** through at least the end of the year for all workers;
- **Increasing and extending the supplemental federal paid leave included in the CARES Act**, as many parents face the prospect of limited in-person schooling, and workers face additional challenges with caring for a loved one, or battling an illness themselves;
- **Additional funds for the homeless and those experiencing housing insecurity**, including additional funds for Emergency Solutions Grants (ESG), Community Development Block Grants, and federal disaster aid administered by FEMA;
- **Funding for states' Home and Community Based Services (HCBS) Medicaid waiver (Family Care, IRIS, and Children's Long-Term Support in Wisconsin)** providers, workers, and services that keep older adults and people with disabilities in their homes and out of congregate settings. Older adults and people with disabilities currently living in their homes will experience additional barriers finding direct care workers or support they need, leading to more people forced into Medicaid-funded institutions where the risk of contracting COVID-19 is greater. Some providers of critical in-home services will go out of business or cut their workforce, costing jobs, and leaving people with disabilities with no workers and few choices. Wisconsin is facing a significant revenue shortfall, and a lack of dedicated funding for HCBS puts people with disabilities at risk of unnecessary institutionalization, and puts states in the position of violating the civil rights of people with disabilities and spending even more on Medicaid-funded institutional settings.
- **Additional emergency investments in critical Older Americans Act programs** that include dedicated funding to alleviate widespread social isolation and loneliness among older adults.
- **Ensure Wisconsinites have access to healthy food by increasing the SNAP maximum benefit by 15% for the duration of the economic downturn**, increase the SNAP minimum

benefit from \$15 to \$30, allow co-enrollment in Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations and SNAP, and provide parity and eligibility for tribal governments and Indian Tribal Organizations in the Emergency Food Assistance Program.

- **A public health awareness and guidance campaign** based in science that includes robust outreach to the public, businesses, medical providers, nursing homes and other congregate care settings, schools, and people working with our most vulnerable neighbors in programs like FamilyCare and IRIS;
- **Programs to help get people back to work in temporary transitional jobs** with a wage paid by the government, which often lead to full-time employment at the end of their duration. These workers could also work to enhance public goods and infrastructure, and engage directly in the fight against COVID-19; and
- **Include the Pandemic TANF Assistance Act (S. 3672)**. This critically important funding would provide flexible emergency assistance to help low-income families cover groceries, the rent, and utility costs. It would enable states to provide emergency cash assistance to families and individuals that have been left out of other relief measures like unemployment insurance (UI), including individuals returning from jail or prison, survivors of domestic violence, immigrants, and young people from low-income neighborhoods who are just entering the labor market.

Thank you for your consideration of these requests, and your work to help people who are struggling during this pandemic.

Sincerely,

Kids Forward

9to5, National Association of Working Women

Citizen Action of Wisconsin

Community Advocates Public Policy Inst.

Fair Wisconsin

Feeding Wisconsin

Greater Wisconsin Agency on Aging Resources

Hunger Task Force

League of Women Voters of Wisconsin

Lutheran Office for Public Policy in Wisconsin

Mental Health America of Wisconsin

Survival Coalition of Disability Organizations

The Arc Wisconsin

Wisconsin Alliance for Women's Health

Wisconsin Board for People with Developmental Disabilities

Wisconsin Council of Churches

Wisconsin Faith Voices for Justice

Worker Justice Wisconsin