

Proposed “COVID-19 Peoples’ New Deal Act of 2020”
developed by partners in the COVID-19 Emergency Response Group
May 11, 2020 (provisional document, under review)

PURPOSE: To enact the system a caring America would adopt to combat the C-19 public health and economic crisis.

General Provisions: Applicable to all public health and economic security policies and programs.

- **One Application for All Benefits:** Simplify eligibility requirements for public benefits and create a common, interview-style application for all of them that is suitable for use online, by telephone or in-person.
- **Provide Benefits First & Confirm Eligibility Later:** Allow self-certification of facts to obtain Provisional Eligibility for all public benefits, followed by a verification process to confirm eligibility after benefits begin.
- **Interim Public Benefit Payments:** Provide interim assistance by EBT card, or the equivalent for non-cash benefits, to anyone that establishes their Provisional Eligibility for a benefit, in an amount equal to 2 weeks or ½ months’ worth of the benefit, renewable every 2 weeks or ½ month until regular benefit disbursements begin.
- **Speed Delivery of Benefits:** Fund and empower a new federal agency to implement an emergency upgrade and expansion of public benefit delivery systems by all levels of government.
- **Treat All Immigrants As Potential Neighbors:** Grant all non-citizens in the country Provisional Permanent Resident status and eligibility for all public benefits while their status is finalized. Repeal the public charge rule and suspend all ICE and DOJ immigration enforcement activities for the duration of the public health crisis.
- **National Public Health Response:** Compel the federal government to assume its leadership responsibilities.
- **National Scope of Economic Security Plan:** Ensure that needed benefits are available in all states, the District of Columbia, all U.S. territories, in all tribal lands and through all tribal organizations.

HEALTH CARE

- **Health Insurance for All:** Provide emergency insurance for everyone who lacks adequate coverage during the C-19 pandemic and initiate a plan to provide permanent coverage for everyone as the pandemic recedes.
- **Open Enrollment for All Health Care Plans:** Allow applicants to enroll retroactive to Jan. 1, 2020.
- **Eliminate Work Requirements for Medicaid:** Formally recognize that affordable health care is a human right.
- **Federal Public Health Response:** Establish federal agency with adequate funding, authority and freedom from political interference to establish a comprehensive national C-19 testing and tracking program.
- **Vulnerable Populations:** Provide special outreach to and services for vulnerable population groups.
- **Occupational Safety and Health:** Grant OSHA the funding and mandate needed to adopt and enforce emergency safety protocols for all workplaces in the country.
- **Behavioral Health:** Fund public health and treatment initiatives for behavioral health problems related to C19.
- **Toxic Substances:** Grant the EPA the funding and mandate it needs to adopt and enforce emergency rules to protect both workers and non-workers from exposure to dangerous cleaning and disinfecting products.
- **Homelessness:** Provide safe emergency housing to all individuals and families experiencing homelessness and fund special services to facilitate their receipt of needed public benefits and health care.
- **Release All Individuals from Immigration Detention Facilities:** For everyone’s safety
- **Release All Incarcerated Individuals Who Do Not Pose a Significant Public Safety Threat:** For everyone’s safety.
- **Provide Safe Housing and Income Support for Released Individuals:** With savings in detention costs.
- **Eliminate Unaffordable Medical Debt:** Provide for federal government to repay medical debt in excess of what a family can repay with 10% of their income for insurance premiums, out-of-pocket costs, and debt payments combined.

ASSISTANCE FOR STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENTS

- **Reimburse All C-19 Expenditures:** All expenditures attributable to the C-19 public health and economic crisis.
- **Reimbursement for Lost Revenue:** All revenue losses attributable to the C-19 public health and economic crisis.

ECONOMIC SECURITY

- **Unemployment Compensation (UC):** Expand eligibility to include all unemployed individuals and increase benefits to include substitute for employer health insurance and 100% of prior wages after payroll taxes, health insurance premiums and work-related expenses. Continue benefits until comparable job is available and treat any available job as unsuitable if it doesn’t comply with public health advice and related OSHA standards.

- **Employee Retention Program:** Provide otherwise solvent small businesses with successive, need-based grants that distinguish between aid intended for use as a substitute for UC and aid intended to support continued business operations. Make grants convertible to loans if conditions are not satisfied.
- **Other Small Business Aid:** Require business interruption insurance to treat public health emergencies the same as natural disasters; establish a C-19 commercial rent-deferment and eviction-moratorium program, a debt deferment and restructuring program, and a sustainable business tax credit; ensure that truly small businesses (fewer than 20 FTE employees) and somewhat larger small businesses (20-50 FTE employees) receive at least a proportionate share of all aid. Ensure that procurement by all levels of government favors sustainable small-businesses and small businesses owned by members of disadvantaged population groups.
- **Small Farmer Aid:** Enact S. 3602 (the “Relief for America’s Small Farmers Act”) to provide tax-free debt forgiveness for SBA loans to small farmers.
- **Aid for Large Businesses:** Except for grants intended as a substitute for UC, restrict aid for large businesses to need-based loans or loan guarantees as opposed to grants or tax credits; provide below-market rate loans only as operating capital unless the government is provided a compensating equity interest in the business, and prohibits executive pay increases, stock buybacks and the payment of dividends until the loan is repaid.
- **Jobs for All:** Enact H.R. 1000 (the “Jobs for All Act”) to ensure the availability of decent, sustainable, living-wage employment for all jobseekers across all phases of the business cycle.
- **National Infrastructure Bank:** Enact H.R. 6422 (the “National Infrastructure Bank Act”) to provide \$4 trillion to rebuild the nation’s deteriorating infrastructure, kickstart the transition to a carbon-free economy, and substantially increase the number of good paying, working class jobs available in the country.
- **Work Permits:** Automatically extend or renew Employment Authorization Documents as they expire.
- **Family and Medical Leave:** Provide generous family and medical leave for all employees.
- **Emergency Housing Assistance:** Enact H.R. 6515 (the “Rent and Mortgage Cancellation Act of 2020) to provide rent and eviction relief for renters, mortgage and foreclosure relief for homeowners, an increase in the supply of affordable housing, and conditional compensation to landlords and mortgage holders.
- **Permanent Housing Assistance:** Turn the Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher Program into an entitlement.
- **Credit Reporting:** Enact a moratorium on the reporting of payment delinquencies to credit reporting agencies for the duration of the C-19 emergency.
- **Food Security:** Reduce food insecurity by enacting improvements in existing food programs to expand eligibility, increase benefits, and streamline access.
- **Broadband Access and Laptops:** Provide free broadband and laptops to all families with income below 200% of poverty thresholds, and an additional laptop for each child under age 18 in such families.
- **Advertising Campaign:** Fund a multi-platform advertising campaign to better inform the public concerning C-19 public health measures and C-19 health care and economic security assistance.

EDUCATIONAL SECURITY

- **Telephone and On-Line Tutoring:** Fund expansive special telephone and on-line tutoring programs to help disadvantaged and special needs students receive equal benefit from remote teaching.
- **Colleges and Universities:** Provide adequate funding to allow institutions of higher education and their students to survive and adapt to the disruptions caused by the C-19 crisis, with particular attention to the extra challenges disadvantaged students face as a result of the crisis.

SECURING DEMOCRACY

- **Census:** Extend census for as long as necessary to ensure the quality and accuracy of the count.
- **Voting Rights:** Require DOJ or federal court clearance that any state action affecting voting is supported by convincing evidence that fraudulent votes will be reduced by more than votes by persons eligible to vote.
- **Redistricting:** Require all redistricting to be carried out by non-partisan processes.
- **Anti-Discrimination Rights:** Redefine “discriminate” in federal law to conform with the definition contained in the International Covenant on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination.

INTERNATIONAL ASSISTANCE

- **International Cooperation:** \$12 billion appropriation for multilateral efforts to combat the COVID-19 pandemic, accompanied by Sense of Congress statement affirming necessity of such cooperation.