



WAYS & MEANS COMMITTEE

CHAIRMAN RICHARD NEAL

HOUSE DEMOCRATS INTRODUCE FAMILIES FIRST CORONAVIRUS RESPONSE ACT

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Press Release

Legislation provides paid leave, establishes free testing, protects health workers, and provides important benefits to children and families

WASHINGTON, DC — House Democrats today introduced the Families First Coronavirus Response Act to bolster the federal government’s response to the coronavirus outbreak and address the severe impacts of the coronavirus on Americans’ personal safety and financial security.

The Families First Coronavirus Response Act, expected to be considered in the House on Thursday, is sponsored by Appropriations Committee Chairwoman Nita M. Lowey (D-NY) and co-sponsored by Ways and Means Committee Chairman Richard E. Neal (D-MA), Education and Labor Committee Chairman Bobby Scott (D-VA), and Energy and Commerce Committee Chairman Frank Pallone, Jr. (D-NJ).

The legislation provides paid leave, establishes free coronavirus testing, supports strong unemployment benefits, expands food assistance for vulnerable children and families, protects frontline health workers, and provides additional funding to states for the ongoing economic consequences of the pandemic, among other provisions.

“The coronavirus has officially reached a pandemic level, with a rising death toll and deepening impacts on workers and families in communities across the United States,” said Chairwoman Lowey. “While the \$8.3 billion coronavirus supplemental we enacted into law was a crucial step stabilized our public health system, more support for working families is clearly needed. House Democrats’ new legislation puts working families first by providing new resources and more protections as our country faces this public health emergency.”

“The coronavirus is first and foremost a public health crisis, but it also threatens to have significant financial consequences for workers and families,” said Chairman Neal. “The Ways and Means Committee crafted provisions in this legislation to establish a historic, emergency paid leave program, stabilize the unemployment insurance system, and ensure access to free virus testing. These policies are lifelines for families, allowing them to endure unexpected circumstances without putting their health at risk or facing financial ruin. I’m glad House Democrats quickly assembled this thorough package to complement last week’s emergency funding and keep Americans safe. We stand ready to act and meet the challenge of this unprecedented time.”

“The spread of COVID-19 will present increasingly severe challenges for students, workers, and families across the country. We must deliver a bold and targeted response to support communities through this public health crisis,” said Chairman Scott. “The Families First Coronavirus Response Act provides our

constituents the health coverage, food assistance, and financial support they need to cope with the widespread consequences of this pandemic. This legislation reflects our responsibility to stand with the American people as we confront this national emergency.”

“Around the nation, Americans are justifiably concerned about their health and the health of their families,” said Chairman Pallone. “With this legislation, we are ensuring that any American who thinks they may be infected with the virus can be tested without having to worry about paying for the costs of the test or the doctor visit. This will give people financial peace of mind if they believe they may have the virus and need to be tested.”

The legislation introduced today builds on an \$8.3 billion emergency coronavirus [spending package](#) enacted into law on March 6. That package – consisting entirely of new funds – included support for state and local health agencies, vaccine and treatment development, and loans for affected small businesses to lessen the economic blow of this public health emergency.

The text of the “Families First Coronavirus Response Act,” H.R. 6201, is [here](#). A summary of H.R. 6201 is [here](#).