Coronavirus—Congressional Action

Information on Congress’ response to the coronavirus crisis, including bill summaries, proposed changes to voting procedure, and age breakdown of the 116th Congress.

March 27, 2020
Congress’s three-phase response to the coronavirus crisis

**Phase 1**
- Initial support and vaccine development
- H.R. 6074 — Coronavirus Preparedness and Response Supplemental Appropriations Act
  - $8.3 billion in COVID-19 response funding for developing a vaccine and preventing further spread of the virus
  - Became law on 3/6/20

**Phase 2**
- Paid leave, unemployment and food assistance
- H.R. 6201 — Families First Coronavirus Response Act
  - $100 billion in worker assistance, including emergency paid sick leave, food assistance, and unemployment payments
  - Became law on 3/18/20

**Phase 3**
- Major economic stimulus package
- H.R. 748 Stimulus package
  - Major stimulus package ($2 trillion)
  - Loans and support to major industries, including airlines and small businesses
  - Direct payments to individuals and families
  - Became law on 3/27/20
Phase 1 (H.R. 6074): Coronavirus Preparedness & Response Supplemental Appropriations Act

**Bill overview**
- Provides $8.3 billion in emergency funding in response to the coronavirus outbreak for:
  - The development and manufacturing of vaccines and other supplies
  - State, local and tribal public health agencies
  - Loans for affected small businesses
  - Evacuations and emergency preparedness activities
  - Humanitarian assistance for affected countries
- The supplemental appropriations will be provided to the FDA, CDC, NIH, Public Health and Social Services Emergency Fund, Small Business Administration, Department of State, and USAID
- Designates the supplemental appropriations as emergency spending, which is exempt from discretionary spending limits

**Votes in Congress**
- **House:** Passed with a vote of 415-2
- **Senate:** Passed with a vote of 96-1

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**Rep. Nita Lowey**
(D-NY-17)
*Bill sponsor*

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Sources: Congress.gov.
Phase 2 (H.R. 6201): Families First Coronavirus Response Act

**Bill overview**

- Creates a **federal emergency paid leave program** administered by SSA
- Provides funds for nutrition assistance, including $500 million for WIC and $400 million for TEFAP
- Includes $5 million for the Department of Labor to administer an emergency paid sick days program and $250 for the Senior Nutrition Program in the Administration for Community Living
- Offers provisions to ensure children’s access to school lunches
- Suspends SNAP work requirements
- Requires OSHA to issue an ETS requiring employers in the health care sector to develop a comprehensive exposure control plan to protect workers from COVID-19
- Offers states $1 billion for emergency grants and interest-free loans to support processing and paying unemployment insurance
- Requires private insurers to expand coverage of certain COVID-19 related expenses
# Phase 3 (H.R. 748): Middle Class Health Benefits Tax Repeal Act (Vehicle for third coronavirus package)

**Sources:** PBS NewsHour, CNN, The Wall Street Journal, The Hill, Vox

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduced</td>
<td>3/23/20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Passed Senate</td>
<td>3/25/20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Passed House</td>
<td>3/27/20</td>
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<tr>
<td>To president</td>
<td>3/27/20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Signed into law</td>
<td>3/27/20</td>
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**Total cost:** $2 trillion

- **Direct payments to individuals:**
  - $1,200 per adult, with an additional $500 per child
  - The full amount will go to individuals who earn
    $75,000/year or $150,000 for married couples; the
    payments scale down for higher-earning individuals,
    phasing out completely at $99,000 for individuals,
    $146,500 for heads of households with one child, and
    $198,000 for joint filers without children

- **Hospital investments**
  - $100 billion for hospitals
  - $1 billion to Indian Health Service
  - $16 billion for building a stockpile of medical
    equipment
  - Increases reimbursements by 20% for treating
    Medicare patients with coronavirus

- **$500 billion lending funds for industries, states, and localities**
  - Loans for companies with more than 500 employees
  - $25 billion in loans to airlines; $4 billion to cargo
    carriers
  - Bans loans to businesses owned by the president, vice
    president, heads of executive departments, or members
    of Congress

- **$350 billion in loans for small businesses**
  - Loans to small businesses would be forgiven if payrolls
    are maintained
  - Unemployment benefits increased $600/week for four months
  - New Treasury IG and Congressional Oversight Board
  - State and Local Funds
    - $150 billion for state and local funds, including $8
      billion for tribal governments

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Slide last updated on: March 27, 2020
Responding to the coronavirus crisis will limit negotiating time for other legislative priorities

### Upcoming legislative deadlines

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Expiration date</th>
<th>Description</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FISA Reauthorization</td>
<td>March 15, 2020</td>
<td>• Four FISA provisions—the “roving wiretap” provision, “lone wolf” provision, “business records” provision, and “call detail records” program—were temporarily extended in the 2019 Continuing Resolution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TANF &amp; CCES Reauthorization</td>
<td>May 22, 2020</td>
<td>• Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) programs and the Child Care Entitlement to States (CCES) provide child care assistance for low-income families</td>
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<tr>
<td>Health Extenders</td>
<td>May 22, 2020</td>
<td>• Various Medicare and Medicaid policies are set to expire, including the community mental health services demonstration program</td>
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<tr>
<td>Appropriations</td>
<td>Sept. 30, 2020</td>
<td>• The House and Senate began hearings from Fiscal Year 2021 appropriations, although work on coronavirus could delay some negotiations</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

- The Senate passed a 77 day extension of 3 out of 4 provisions (excluded call detail records)
- The new deadline would be May 30th
- S 3501 passed the Senate on March 16th and would be retroactive to March 14th
Age breakdown of the 116th Congress

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Generation</th>
<th>House</th>
<th>Senate</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Under 40</td>
<td>33</td>
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<tr>
<td>40s</td>
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<td>50s</td>
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<tr>
<td>80s</td>
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<td>12</td>
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*Includes the non-voting representative from D.C. Sources: National Journal Almanac

- Under 65: 34% (House), 49% (Senate), 37% (Both chambers)
- 65 or older: 66% (House), 51% (Senate), 63% (Both chambers)
Congress is contemplating new voting procedures during the COVID-19 outbreak

**Current procedures**

**Unanimous consent**
- All members agree to a motion without voting
- One member can block the motion

**Roll call voting**
- Each member must enter the chamber and verbally or physically announce their vote
- All Senate votes take place this way

**Vote by electronic device - only in House**
- Members insert a card into devices located throughout the chamber and then press a button to vote

**Changes proposed**

**Vote by proxy**
- A member of Congress allows another member to vote for them in their absence
- Currently allowed in Senate committee votes

**Remote voting**
- Voting online or by phone from any location

**Extended voting periods**
- Elongating the time allowed for voting to reduce crowding in the chambers

**Raising unanimous consent threshold**
- Requiring more than one member to object for a UC motion to be blocked
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