



Senate “Skinny COVID Bill” and Disability Priorities

***Please note that this is a non-exhaustive list that we will continue updating as we review Senate Republicans’ latest [bill](#), the Delivering Immediate Relief to America’s Families, Schools and Small Businesses Act. This proposed bill follows a largely similar [proposal](#) of the same name released by Senate Republicans last month. For a quick comparison of the Senate’s coronavirus relief proposals and the HEROES Act passed by the House, click [here](#).

What’s in the bill?

- Supplemental unemployment insurance in the amount of \$300 per week until December 27, 2020
 - The federal government had provided \$600 per week until it expired on July 31, 2020
- \$105 billion in additional education funding
- Additional funding for coronavirus treatment and vaccine development
- Additional funding for the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) and an extension to allow certain businesses to apply for a second loan
 - Note, though, that while the bill provides additional funding, it also “claws back” from monies previously allocated by Congress for PPP and returns it to the general funds of the Treasury Department
- Additional funding for the US Postal Service

What’s in the bill that’s harmful?

- Immunity from liability for harm related to COVID-19 for any business, non-profit, school, medical provider, or medical professionals in the vast majority of circumstances
 - This is incredibly dangerous. It threatens the safety of people with disabilities and older adults in congregate settings, makes it easier for employers to escape liability for discrimination and safety violations in the workplace, and allows for businesses to refuse to accommodate disabled people.
- Two-thirds of the additional K-12 educational funding is available only once there is a plan in place for reopening schools
- “Clawing back” unspent funds meant to provide loans to states, municipalities, and certain businesses

What’s not in the bill that should be?

- Dedicated federal funding dedicated specifically to home and community based services (HCBS) and additional funding for states’ Medicaid programs

- We are advocating for the funding in the HEROES Act passed by the House: a 14% point increase in federal funding to Medicaid and an additional 10% point increase in federal funding for HCBS
- We are working to ensure that the definition of HCBS is clarified to include community-based mental health services and that the funding has strong maintenance of effort provisions (MOE), to prevent states from taking Medicaid coverage away from anyone or implementing changes that would make it harder to get Medicaid coverage during the pandemic
- Hazard pay for direct care workers
- Expanded eviction and foreclosure protection
- Funding for housing programs, including rental assistance
- Additional “recovery rebate” payments (like those in the Families First Act), which are direct cash payments meant to provide financial assistance to people during the crisis
 - Additional payments should be made available to adults with disabilities who are claimed as dependents and people who file taxes using taxpayer ID numbers
- Requirements for and funding to assist states with expanded absentee and mail-in voting and same day voter registration
- Additional nutrition assistance
- Funding to state and local governments to help with crisis response
- Funding for substance use prevention and treatment, suicide prevention, and community mental health services, as well as emergency response grants to address COVID-19 related behavioral health needs.
- A two-month special enrollment period to allow people to get health insurance on the ACA marketplace
- Expansion of the emergency paid sick and family and medical leave and extension of the supplemental unemployment compensation provided under the Families First Act
- Increased funding for Social Security and SSI
- 90-day refills of prescriptions and medical supplies
 - NOTE: The CARES Act did include this for Medicare, but not for Medicaid, CHIP, or private insurance or people with disabilities who rely on controlled substances and the HEALS Act does not expand on that coverage
- Disaster relief that is responsive to the needs of the disability community, which will be disproportionately impacting by additional disaster events that occur during the COVID-19 pandemic, as in the [Real Emergency Access for Aging and Disability Inclusion \(REAADI\) for Disasters Act](#) (S. 1755) and the [Disaster Relief Medicaid Act \(DRMA\)](#) (HR. 3215/S. 1754)
- Funding for the Administration for Community Living, including funding dedicated to Developmental Disabilities Act programs
- Permanent reauthorization of the [Money Follows the Person](#) (MFP) program
 - Under the CARES Act, the program is extended until November 30, 2020