

## Senate Reaches Agreement on \$2 Trillion COVID-19 Stimulus Bill

Article

03.25.2020

Early this morning, Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell announced that after days of discussion, the Senate has reached a bipartisan agreement on a \$2 trillion relief package for the coronavirus pandemic. The Senate will vote on this bill later today. The stimulus plan includes the following:

- \$500 billion business loan program. This portion of the bill was a major point of contention between the parties and contains considerable oversight from both parties. The emergency loan program includes loans for both large businesses and municipalities dealing with the impacts of COVID-19. No children, spouses, or in-laws of lawmakers and executive officials may qualify for these loans.
- Supplemental unemployment insurance. The bill will increase unemployment insurance by \$600 per week for a period of 4 months. This benefit will be extended to contractor-type workers who are not receiving a paycheck from their employers but are still getting health insurance coverage. This \$600 is in addition any state paid unemployment salaries.
- Expanded hospital funding. The bill includes \$150 billion allocated toward hospitals treating COVID-19 patients, with \$100 billion to go directly to hospitals, \$49 billion to go toward medical equipment, and \$1 billion to go to the Indian Health Service (Federal Health Program for American Indians and Alaska Natives).
- State and Local Government Aid. The bill allocates \$150 billion to state and local governments dealing with the impacts of COVID-19.
- Direct Payments to Adults. Adults making \$75,000 or less annually (based on their latest tax returns) will receive a one-time check for \$1,200. Qualifying households will also receive a \$500 payment per child.
- Small Business Loans. The bill includes an allocation of \$367 billion to be directed toward providing loans for small businesses impacted by COVID-19.

The bill will require 60 affirmative votes in order to pass the Senate and both Democrats and Republicans are confident it will pass. The bill will then go over to the House. On Monday, March, 23, Nancy Pelosi announced that Democrats have their own \$2.5 trillion stimulus bill. To proceed more efficiently, it is possible that the House will adopt the Senate deal.

The voting process for the House may be complicated. Because many House members are currently working remote, lawmakers may be forced to approve the bill through a process known as “unanimous consent.” This process will allow the bill to pass even if most members are not physically present, provided no one objects to it. The risk is that this process would allow a single lawmaker to critically delay enactment.

Currently, the house is considering unanimous consent or voice voting with the members who will be present – not remote voting. The primary concerns regarding remote voting are that it directly contradicts our Constitution’s policy regarding Congress convening in person and could set an undesired precedent for future policy votes.

We will continue to monitor this bill as it moves through the legislative process and provide you with updates as they become available.