



COALITION ON HUMAN NEEDS

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May 8, 2020

New Unemployment Report Shows Record-Breaking Hardship – Congress Must Respond

Statement by Deborah Weinstein, Executive Director, Coalition on Human Needs

“The gravity of our national situation cannot be denied. With 20,000 – 30,000 new COVID-19 cases every day in the U.S., we will not be able to fully open our economy for some time. We are experiencing a pandemic-induced economic depression. April’s stunning [unemployment report](#) showed a total of nearly 44 million either out of work or involuntarily part-time. For Latinx, nearly one in five were unemployed (18.9 percent); for African Americans, 16.7 percent; for whites, 14.2 percent; for Asians, 14.5 percent, using the narrowest official definition of unemployment. Over and over again, the Bureau of Labor Statistics report noted the increases were the highest on record.

“The evidence of growing hardship is brutal. [Forty percent](#) of mothers with children under age 12 reported in late April they were unable to buy enough food for their family. In 2018, the comparable figure was 15 percent. While temporary moratoria on evictions are now in place, when they expire, analysts believe that in the absence of help we will see unprecedented numbers of tenants forced out of their homes. In Colorado alone, a recent [report](#) estimated 500,000 tenants would likely face eviction, close to one-quarter of all renters.

“The pandemic exposes and magnifies our nation’s ruinous inequality, by race, class, and immigrant status. A [Washington Post/Ipsos poll](#) shows even more recent than today’s April jobless statistics: 11 percent of whites, 16 percent of blacks, and 20 percent of Hispanics were laid off or furloughed. That figure rises to 32 percent of non-citizen Hispanics, many of whom are here legally. Hispanics, because they include many immigrants, have been far less likely to receive assistance. Only 47 percent got the one-time Economic Impact check, while 61 percent overall did. In a public health and economic emergency, we must leave no one behind. Immigrants are doing this nation’s work; they are part of our communities and must not be excluded from help.

“This is a crisis that urgently demands more action by Congress and the Trump Administration. We must provide more SNAP nutrition assistance immediately to states, territories, and tribes. We must extend unemployment benefits and ensure that states have the funding they need to respond to the surging need for assistance. Families will not make it through these depression conditions without more cash aid. Tenants need emergency assistance to pay rent and avoid eviction. We cannot let state and local health care, education, and other services crumble; if we do, we cannot rebuild our economy or protect our future.

“Franklin Roosevelt, in accepting his re-nomination for President in 1936, [said](#) “Better the occasional faults of a Government that lives in a spirit of charity than the consistent omissions of a Government frozen in the ice of its own indifference.” In a similar spirit, Speaker Nancy Pelosi rebuffed Senate Majority Leader McConnell’s recent [statement](#): “We’re going to take a pause here, do a good job of evaluating what we’ve already done.” She [said](#) “While I think it is important to learn from legislation we passed in every case, but that should not deter us or block us from meeting the urgent needs of the American people.”

“The needs of our children, our workers, our families **are** urgent. We must prevail over the icy indifference that has so far blocked adequate assistance to those most in need. The losses occurring now from sickness, hunger and joblessness will persist and worsen for years to come if Congress does not act.”