



COALITION ON HUMAN NEEDS

1825 K Street, NW · Suite 411 · Washington, DC 20006 · 202.223.2532 · Fax 202.223.2538 · www.chn.org

December 21, 2020

CHN Urges Swift Enactment of COVID-19 Relief Package, Calling it “Long Overdue”

CHN Executive Director Deborah Weinstein released the following statement Monday in response to bipartisan agreement on the COVID-19 relief package:

“The nation is in an emergency, and the COVID relief bill Congress has worked out is long overdue and must pass.

“Members of the Coalition on Human Needs are thankful that millions of the jobless will continue to receive unemployment aid, that the eviction moratorium has been extended through the end of January, and that \$25 billion in emergency rental assistance has been included. It is also very important that some of the people reporting that their households have been going without enough to eat will see an increase in SNAP/food stamps and other nutrition aid. The \$600 per eligible person direct one-time payment will also help millions of families, and we are especially thankful that Congress will no longer deny that assistance to citizens who live with immigrant non-citizens. Parents whose incomes dropped in the pandemic year will be able to stave off big cuts to their Earned Income Tax Credit and Child Tax Credit because of this bill. The nation badly needs assistance for schools, more funds for child care and Head Start, vaccine distribution support, and greater access to broadband. There are important down payments in all these areas.

“This is urgently needed emergency relief, but it is far from all that is needed. Employers will get a tax credit for providing paid leave, but there is no requirement they do so. Paid leave remains a vital element in the strategy to keep people safe and economically whole, and Congress has not done enough to secure it for millions of people.

“It is short-sighted to refuse to help states and localities trying to cope with lost revenues while carrying out essential functions. Economists know that preventing lay-offs of public workers and preventing loss of services is critically important in helping our economy to recover. This is a major failure of the relief package.

“It is disappointing that unemployment benefits will extend only to March 14. The bipartisan COVID proposal released last week would have continued the aid another 5 weeks. We are also concerned that because this has taken so needlessly long, some unemployed workers will see a temporary interruption in their benefits before they begin again. We are also disappointed that adult dependents will not receive the \$600 direct payment. Millions of adult dependents have disabilities and/or are older; their needs add to a household’s costs and should be recognized.

“As relieved as we are to anticipate the help soon to flow to millions of our neighbors, it has taken too long. We appreciate the efforts of Speaker Pelosi, Senate Minority Leader Schumer, and the bipartisan groups of Senate and House members who sought to move negotiations forward and ultimately

succeeded. Over and over again, we regret that the efforts of Senate Majority Leader McConnell were not constructive, and contributed to the needless delay.

“The pandemic’s impact on our nation’s health and economy has been harsh and the recovery will not be swift. In January, the new Biden-Harris Administration and the new Congress must immediately work to remedy the failings and expand the important help about to be provided.”