

Statement for the Record of Representative Anna G. Eshoo

H.R. 6800, the *Health and Economic Recovery Omnibus Emergency Solutions (HEROES) Act*
U.S. House of Representatives
May 15, 2020

Madam Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 6800, the *Health and Economic Recovery Omnibus Emergency Solutions (HEROES) Act*. Once again the Democratic House is leading the way by advancing a historic legislative package to support our nation's heroes and every day Americans who are essential to meet the challenges of COVID-19.

Since the first coronavirus death in the U.S. in February, over 80,000 Americans have lost their lives to COVID-19, more than 1.4 million Americans have been infected, and 36 million Americans have filed for unemployment. Workers, families, health care providers and students are all hurting because their financial wellbeing, employment status and health are being tested by the coronavirus.

The *HEROES Act* builds on the critical investments Congress made since this public health and economic emergency began. We passed a bipartisan \$8.3 billion funding package on March 4th to strengthen our nation's public health response to the coronavirus. A week later we passed the bipartisan Families First Act, which provided tens of billions of dollars to help working families and provide free coronavirus testing to anyone who needed one. At the end of March, we passed the largest aid package in American history, the bipartisan CARES Act, to fund health care providers; provide an additional \$600 per week in Unemployment Insurance; and funding for small businesses to retain their employees. On April 4th we replenished the Paycheck Protection Program and advanced a national testing strategy.

The *HEROES Act* goes further than any legislation passed to date by providing desperately needed financial support to families, workers, and those who are risking their lives to perform essential jobs. It includes support for states, tribes, and local governments who are working to contain the pandemic, and the legislation guarantees that no American will go bankrupt paying for treatment related to COVID-19. It mandates workplace standards and protections for front line health care workers, and it protects our most vulnerable in nursing homes by creating a 'strike force' to manage infection and reduce the spread of COVID-19. Importantly, the bill also funds the U.S. Postal Service and requires all states to provide no-excuse voting by mail for November's election. As we work to provide health care resources, we must protect constitutionally mandated elections and the health of our democracy.

Specifically, the *HEROES Act* includes:

- An additional round of \$1,200 stimulus payments to every American making less than \$75,000.
- A Heroes' Fund for essential workers, with \$200 billion to ensure that those who risk their lives for others during the pandemic receive hazard pay.
- \$4.5 billion for research and development of vaccines and therapeutics, with a focus on improving our nation's domestic manufacturing capacity.
- \$75 billion for testing, contact tracing and other COVID-19 monitoring and suppressing activities.

- An additional \$100 billion for health care providers who have lost revenue or experienced increases in costs related to COVID-19.
- \$500 billion to states to cover lost revenues due to the pandemic. The State of California is projected to receive more than \$47 billion, and local governments will receive \$375 billion to cover lost revenues due to the pandemic in two installments. This funding will be a lifeline to local governments providing critical services including much of the social safety net.
- An increase to the minimum and maximum SNAP benefits. The bill rescinds work requirements and Trump Administration regulations that limit eligibility for SNAP.

I'm especially proud that the *HEROES Act* includes many of my legislative priorities. The legislation requires the FDA to report foreign drug manufacturing sites and the volume of drugs manufactured overseas, and it authorizes the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine to convene a commission to report to Congress in 90 days on how to best bring the manufacturing of critical drugs and devices back to the U.S. Legislation I authored to allow the Strategic National Stockpile to sell soon-to-be-expired products to other governmental agencies and an expansion of the Federal Communication Commission's telehealth program are also included. The *HEROES Act* also includes a study on the short and long-term health impacts of COVID-19 because we have much more to learn about the effects of this novel virus on the human body.

The *HEROES Act* will not be the last legislation to address the public health and economic disaster wrought by coronavirus, but it's essential for the House to move expeditiously to stabilize our cascading economy, protect front line workers, help struggling families, and assist our state and local governments, and our health care providers so they can continue their heroic work.

I'm proud to support this legislation to help the American people in one of our nation's most crucial hours of need and I urge my colleagues to vote for the *HEROES Act*.