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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

November 5, 2020

Donald J. Trump
President of the United States
1600 Pennsylvania Ave
Washington D.C., 20515

Mitchell McConnell
Senate Majority Leader
United States Capitol
United States Senate
Washington D.C., 20515

Nancy Pelosi
Speaker of the House
United States Capitol
United States House of Representatives
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Dear President Trump, Speaker Pelosi, and Leader McConnell

With two months remaining in the 116th Congress, I urge you to act swiftly to reach a full agreement to fight the COVID-19 pandemic and provide relief to Americans who are suffering from the economic fallout. Not only is a relief package desperately overdue to the American people, but we are seeing cases of COVID-19 rapidly rising around the country. With the coming winter confining folks inside more and more, we must be ready to support our hospitals, health care workers, small businesses, and all Americans in these upcoming times.

The Midwest, including my home state of Iowa, is seeing record numbers of cases of COVID-19 with no end in sight. Doctors and health experts have warned us for months that the winter season will only make things more difficult. There is concern that a flu outbreak could create dual epidemics that our health care systems cannot handle. The dramatic spikes in our assisted living and nursing home facilities are resulting in some of the highest infection and death rates across the country. The public health risks that have led Governors and the CDC to issue eviction moratoriums during this crisis will only be exacerbated by the winter, and the CDC's moratorium also expires in December. Families will need support to get through the winter and to prevent a wave of evictions in January. Anyone who has experienced the winter in Iowa knows that heat is not optional, and we must help pay heating and utility bills to save lives.

At the beginning of the pandemic, Congress was quick to act. However, it has now been more than seven months since the CARES Act became law, and the lack of action on COVID relief since then has resulted in thousands of businesses closing their doors, millions of Americans worrying about their economic future, and has diminished our ability to effectively respond to this crisis. Now that campaigning has concluded, we must come together and pass a meaningful package of assistance for Americans.

The vast majority of the aid from the CARES Act has already been distributed, and the support it provided is rapidly fading. Vital support for families - including the \$1,200 rebates and enhanced

unemployment benefits - have expired, leading to an estimated 8 million more Americans living in poverty in September than in May. The struggle those families are experiencing is especially tragic because it could have been avoided had we acted sooner to pass additional COVID relief, before the additional unemployment benefits expired. The expiration of enhanced unemployment benefits cut the incomes of more than 20 million Americans by \$600 a week at a time when they desperately needed our support. We now face the December 31st expiration of the Pandemic Unemployment Assistance benefits that have allowed the self-employed and gig workers to receive aid during this crisis; that same expiration looms for the extended benefits which have offered continuing support for those who have been unemployed for more than 6 months.

Our small businesses are similarly struggling. While the Paycheck Protection Program provided critical aid to pay bills for 8 weeks, it's been clear for months now that more assistance is needed. More than 40% of restaurants may go out of business by March, and that forecast is likely to get worse as we enter the winter and outdoor dining ends. Further, the typical holiday travel and retail season which many businesses depend on will be weakened.

There is no campaigning left to distract and detract from negotiations; Americans cannot wait longer for aid. I urge you to finalize a COVID relief package expeditiously so that we can contain the spread of this virus and ensure that no American must fear homelessness, economic insecurity, job loss or business closure during this year.

Sincerely,



Cindy Axne
Member of Congress