

CYNTHIA AXNE  
3RD DISTRICT, IOWA

COMMITTEE ON FINANCIAL SERVICES  
INVESTOR PROTECTION, ENTREPRENEURSHIP,  
AND CAPITAL MARKETS  
HOUSING, COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT  
AND INSURANCE

COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE  
COMMODITY EXCHANGES, ENERGY, AND CREDIT  
CONSERVATION AND FORESTRY

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

December 1st, 2020

WASHINGTON, DC OFFICE  
330 CANNON HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING  
WASHINGTON, DC 20515  
(202) 225-5476

DES MOINES OFFICE  
400 EAST COURT AVE., SUITE 346  
DES MOINES, IA 50309  
(515) 400-8180

COUNCIL BLUFFS OFFICE  
501 5TH AVE.  
COUNCIL BLUFFS, IA 51503  
(712) 890-3117

CRESTON OFFICE  
208 WEST TAYLOR  
CRESTON, IA 50801  
(515) 400-8180

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi  
Speaker  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Mitch McConnell  
Majority Leader  
United States Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy  
House Minority Leader  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington D.C., 20515

The Honorable Charles Schumer  
Senate Minority Leader  
United States Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Speaker Pelosi, Minority Leader McCarthy, Majority Leader McConnell, and Minority Leader Schumer,

Across the country, COVID-19 cases and hospitalizations are increasing dramatically, with hospitals in Iowa and many other areas operating at capacity. Over the last week, Iowa's positivity rate is more than 40%. Meanwhile, not only has there not been a full COVID-19 relief package in more than 8 months, important COVID-19 assistance is set to expire on December 31<sup>st</sup>, which would leave our already struggling communities with even fewer resources to fight this global pandemic if they are not extended. We must come together, Republicans and Democrats, to pass much-needed relief and reauthorization now.

December 26<sup>th</sup>, the day after Christmas, will mark the last unemployment benefits for more than 10 million Americans unless we act. The expiration of these unemployment programs created in the CARES Act for the self-employed, gig workers, and independent contractors and the extended benefits to support those who've been unemployed more than six months would be disastrous for workers, families, and our economy if we do not pass an extension.

Only five days later, on December 31<sup>st</sup>, the Centers for Disease Control and Preventions eviction moratorium will expire, putting millions of families at risk of being kicked out of their homes. Putting people out on the street during both the worst COVID-19 outbreak and the middle of winter is dangerous and allowing it to happen to millions would be irresponsible. On the same date, protections against foreclosure for homeowners with federally backed mortgages will expire, and those borrowers will lose the ability to delay mortgage payments with loan forbearance. Also on December 31<sup>st</sup>, the more than 40 million Americans with a federal student loan will see important assistance disappear, as the deferment of loan payments expires. The Employee Retention Tax Credit which has encouraged businesses to keep workers on payroll even when operations are curtailed also expires at the end of the year.

Additionally, COVID-19 paid leave for sick or COVID-19-exposed employees will expire on the 31<sup>st</sup>, meaning that millions of Americans risk losing their job if they stay home when they are sick. We know that quarantining those who are ill is an effective measure to slow the spread of this virus, which is why we cannot allow this provision to expire. Not only is this a matter of public health and safety, but paid leave is providing an economic safety net to as many as 87 million Americans.

We risk removing all of this economic support at a time when economic indicators are weakening in many sectors. Iowa has seen new unemployment claims rise 6 weeks in a row, and workers are losing hours across the Midwest. Further, initial indications show that we are likely to see later this week that the recovery is slowing, and that the economy may even have lost jobs in November.

This only illustrates that our top priority must be to get COVID-19 under control. While the vaccine news recently has been very encouraging, much remains unknown about when and how vaccines will be broadly distributed. We must take the necessary steps to protect the lives of our seniors and those most vulnerable until we can get vaccines distributed to every American.

As a champion for rural health care and expanding telehealth services, I have been tirelessly fighting to ensure that telehealth services are widely available. Without a COVID-19 authorization that extends past the end of this year, reimbursements for telehealth for Medicare beneficiaries during this emergency period will expire. This will once again force Americans to choose between forgoing medical appointments or taking the added risk of an in-person visit. My bipartisan legislation on extending and protecting telehealth options shows that the House and Senate can, and must, come together on this issue to ensure telehealth support is extended.

Equally, rural and urban hospitals alike are struggling with the financial burden of COVID-19. We must provide direly needed funding to fight the pandemic to our hospitals and health centers, continue to support testing, and begin preparations for vaccine distribution. That is why we must pass legislation that includes eliminating cuts to the Medicaid disproportionate share hospital program as well as extending the Medicare sequester moratorium until the end of this public health crisis.

I have repeatedly urged you and all my colleagues to come together on a bipartisan package of COVID-19 relief that can get people and small businesses the aid they need, and will do so again. However, we have limited time before the end of the year, and, at a minimum, we should do everything we can to prevent existing support from fading. Accordingly, should you be unable to make progress on a larger COVID-19 package prior to passage of a Continuing Resolution or Omnibus, I ask that you extend these and other expiring programs in that bill.

The partisan gridlock has prevented us from getting this virus under control and providing relief to all Americans. We cannot allow this year to close without another COVID-19 relief package to support all those in need passed into law. I am ready to work with anyone – Democrats and Republicans – to get this deal done.

Sincerely,



Cindy Axne  
Member of Congress