

Americans to GOP Senators: We Need Additional Coronavirus Relief

After weeks of hitting “pause” on coronavirus relief and blocking action on the Heroes Act, Senate Republicans allowed critical assistance for Americans to expire on Friday. Across the country, over 30 million Americans – or one in five workers – have lost enhanced unemployment assistance and an evictions moratorium has expired for tens of millions of Americans. In addition, as cases surge, hospitals are overwhelmed and need additional resources. At a time when our nation needs Congress to act, Republicans continue to tell the American people: they are on their own. Here’s a look at what is happening in Senate Republicans’ states and the urgent need for additional assistance:

Alaska [Senators Lisa Murkowski and Dan Sullivan]: “Since April, out-of-work Alaskans on unemployment benefits have received an extra \$600 a week from the federal government. But the pandemic unemployment benefit expires this week... Ian Fox works in Alaska’s hardest-hit industry: Leisure and hospitality. He has two full-time jobs at two Anchorage hotels, but he’s been out of work for three months... ‘What I have to say about that is: Stop squabbling about a few bucks,’ Fox said. ‘This government, this state, this whole entire establishment has been bailing out these big corporations for all these years, while we’ve been getting peanuts. Okay, this a little bit that we’re getting that might be a little bit extra. We deserve it. We’re the ones who are building up these corporations and these companies.’ Fox said he’d rather be working, but he’s a banquet server, and the hotels aren’t hosting big banquets these days.” [Alaska Public Media, [07/29/20](#)]

Alabama [Senator Richard Shelby]: “The CARES Act Moratorium, designed to provide relief for renters during the pandemic, ended July 24. Now, tenants have 30 days from when their notice was given to pay their rent or face eviction. ‘You’ve got parents who are dealing with the hurdles of having to educate their children from home and all that comes with that on top of the fact that now they are being evicted from their home,’ said Laurie Mcfalls, Staff Attorney at Legal Services Alabama.” [WTVM, [8/3/20](#)]

Arkansas [Senators John Boozman and Tom Cotton]: “Tough times for those on unemployment as the extra \$600 from the Cares Act is coming to an end next week. There are still more than 92,000 Arkansans who are filing weekly unemployment. For them, next week will get more difficult when there is less money being depositing into their bank accounts. ‘It’s been a real struggle with the virus and jobs and everything like that,’ said Logan County resident Tinker Rollans... ‘The extra \$600 has been really great but with it coming to an end, it’s really going to put a struggle on my family financially wise and we are going to have to cut back on a lot of things,’ she said.” [5 News Online, [07/23/20](#)]

Arizona [Senator Martha McSally]: “Claimants in Arizona will receive the second lowest benefit in the country from the Department of Economic Security. ‘It’s going to be hard to live on \$240 a week,’ said unemployed Arizonan Kim Smith. ‘That’s not a lot of money.’ ...As unemployment claims in Arizona increased for the third straight week, [Todd] Serna says he is

tired of the misconceptions of why so many collect unemployment while looking for jobs. ‘People thinking that we’re just staying home, and were not looking for work, or we just don’t want to go back to work,’ Serna said. He says he hopes Congress acts fast, because his family is going to have to discuss what bills to pay and what bills to hold out on. ‘Not only [to] have the stress of how you’re going to put food on the table, and pay the bills, and pay your rent, and have a roof over your head -- but you have the fear and frustration of the pandemic,’ he explained.” [Fox 10 Phoenix, [7/25/20](#)]

Colorado [Senator Cory Gardner]: “For many out-of-work Coloradans, life will change after Saturday. That’s when the extra \$600 in weekly unemployment benefits from the U.S. government ends in Colorado, even as many hotels, restaurants, bars and other businesses have not fully reopened due to coronavirus restrictions. That includes Stacey Kroner... ‘It definitely helped me and I’m sure it helped everyone who needed the \$600,’ said Kroner.” [The Colorado Sun, [07/22/20](#)]

Florida [Senators Marco Rubio and Rick Scott]: “With this looming loss or decrease of funds, many in Florida and beyond face uncertainty. Naples resident Bonnie Armstrong has been furloughed from her job at a local seafood restaurant since March. Her employer hasn't been able to bring everyone back yet due to sustained declines in business amid the pandemic. Armstrong said the \$600 has been a godsend in helping to cover her bills while she has been jobless... ‘Without the additional \$600, I would not have been able to pay my rent or pay my bills,’ she said. ‘Losing that \$600 is definitely going to [affect] me negatively in paying my bills.’” [Fort Myers News Press, [7/27/20](#)]

Georgia [Senators Kelly Loeffler and David Perdue]: “Georgia hospital and health-care leaders pushed a top U.S. health official and U.S. Sen. Kelly Loeffler Monday for more federal funding amid a recent surge in COVID-19 cases... Representatives from the state’s largest hospitals and nursing-home associations detailed growing concerns over maintaining care and curbing infections due to tight finances, difficulty procuring test kits and health disparities in minority communities... Positive COVID-19 cases and intensive-care hospitalizations are still climbing, sparking worries among hospitals and providers that health-care finances already pummeled by the virus since March could get worse. ‘Our volumes are significantly higher in this wave than they were in the previous,’ said John Hauptert, president and CEO of Grady Health System in Atlanta.” [Online Athens, [7/27/ 20](#)]

Idaho [Senators Mike Crapo and James Risch]: “...As [Robert] Spendlove points out, recent Idaho Dept. of Labor data shows that on the week ending July 11, new initial claims for unemployment benefits actually rose 11% from the previous week. ‘Now, as we’re starting to see a resurgence of the cases, not only in the state but around the country, people are getting a little more reluctant, they’re getting a little more nervous, and we’re starting to see kind of a retrenchment and that’s causing some of those claims to go back up again,’ said Spendlove. And with the extra \$600 per week in enhanced benefits expiring this week, Spendlove says,

‘We could actually see another spike in unemployment once those benefits go away.’” [*Idaho News 6*, [7/20/30](#)]

Indiana [Senators Todd Young and Mike Braun]: “Indiana's moratorium on evictions is set to expire this Friday and leaders are now scrambling to address what's expected to be a major housing crisis. ‘One tenant shared with me how she was forced to move back in with her parents. Her and her husband both lost their jobs at the beginning of the pandemic and they have three small children,’ said Councilwoman Amanda Govaert Konrath. ‘Another resident shared how his hours were first cut and then he was furloughed. Unemployment took over a month to start paying out and in the meantime he fell further and further behind on his bills.’” [*WSBT*, [07/29/30](#)]

Iowa [Senators Chuck Grassley and Joni Ernst]: “Democrats want to extend the extra \$600 unemployment in aid. Republicans want it to be \$200 per week... One Des Moines mother said this change could hurt her family. Ka'Meka Lowery said she has a 10-year-old daughter and twin 5-year-old sons. She lost her job at the beginning of the pandemic. She said it is the first time in her life she's been unemployed. Even though her husband still has his job, she said they rely on that extra unemployment money to make ends meet. ‘For a lot of families, \$600 is going to make sure they have a place to stay. That they can have food. That they can have clothing. That they can get a prescription filled. And I know to legislators, it sounds huge, and there is concern for people taking advantage of the system, but for a lot of us, we are so looking forward to getting back to some form of normal,’ Lowery said.” [*KCCI News*, [07/31/20](#)]

Kansas [Senators Jerry Moran and Pat Roberts]: “As lawmakers work to come to a resolution on a new COVID-19 relief package, unemployed workers are preparing to lose the additional \$600 weekly federal benefit. Claimants tell 41 Action News losing the Federal Pandemic Unemployment Compensation benefit will have a significant impact on them. Lawrence resident Hillary Jones said the \$600 was a lifesaver for her and her children during the pandemic... ‘If it wasn't for the \$600 we received we wouldn't have survived.’” [*KSHB 41*, [7/31/20](#)]

Kentucky [Senators Mitch McConnell and Rand Paul]: “‘They already are dropping like flies. We’ve seen restaurants closing in Louisville everyday, and around the country at alarming rates,’ Lee said. ‘If there is another complete shutdown or the 25 percent holds, we probably have another month before to declare bankruptcy.’” [*The Kentucky.com*, [7/31/20](#)]

Louisiana [Senator Bill Cassidy and John Kennedy]: “Some people who are unemployed in Acadiana are demanding action from Louisiana's Senators. Protesters picketed outside the Lafayette offices of Senators John Kennedy and Bill Cassidy, calling for a second stimulus bill. ‘People who are collecting \$600 a week are not sitting at home counting their money they're sending it to their bills,’ said Mary Pritchard.” [*KACT 3*, [07/30/20](#)]

Maine [Senator Susan Collins]: “A proposal from Senate Republicans to reduce \$600 in weekly federal unemployment benefits in favor of a sliding-scale system could take months for Maine to implement as more than 80,000 workers here face steep income drops next week... The additional federal unemployment benefits, which passed as part of a \$2.2 trillion March stimulus bill, have been a lifeline for unemployed workers... ‘With the \$600, I’m making ends meet,’ Young said. ‘Barely making ends meet with nothing extra, but it’s doable and I don’t know what I’m going to do when the \$600 goes away.’” [*Bangor Daily News* [07/28/20](#)]

Mississippi [Senator Cindy Hyde Smith and Roger Wicker]: “Amy Benjamin has six kids. She and one of her children had COVID in March and are still feeling some long-term effects. Her husband lost his job of more than 10 years with a manufacturer in Tupelo around the same time. ‘The unemployment and the pandemic money has gone to pay our bills through that time,’ said Amy Benjamin. ‘Now that we don’t have that money or employment, the options are very small, very limited, as to what our choices are.’ That’s because their weekly payments have taken a drastic cut. Amy had been part-time in her job pre-COVID and her husband full time. But the added \$600 they were each getting allowed them to get by.” [*WLBT*, [07/28/20](#)]

Missouri [Senators Roy Blunt and Josh Hawley]: “...The U.S. Senate returns to work this week, there are urgent calls for legislators to act quickly to ensure all Missouri families can meet their basic needs during and after the COVID crisis. In the next two weeks, a moratorium on evictions will expire along with federal emergency unemployment benefits. Jeanette Mott Oxford, director of policy and organizing with Empower Missouri, said that could be a double whammy for the 4-in-10 Missouri households that have someone who has lost a job in recent months. ‘A lot of people are having real difficulty buying all the food that they need making sure that all their rent is paid,’ Mott Oxford said. ‘It’s a time of great instability and uncertainty; there’s just so much to worry about right now.’ The U.S. House passed the HEROES Act in May, a \$3 trillion aid package that includes a broad range of supports including extended unemployment benefits, hazard pay, housing assistance and funding for cities and states... The executive director of the Coalition on Human Needs - a national non-profit group - Deborah Weinstein, said it will help address the unprecedented challenges families are facing. ‘We have not experienced anything like this for 100 years: we’ve got a stubborn disease that is keeping our economy from functioning the way it should,’ Weinstein said. ‘We cannot let our families suffer in this way. The consequences to children are so grave.’” [*Missouri Public News Service*, [7/20/20](#)]

Montana [Senator Steve Daines]: “A new report from CNBC shows that 36% of Montanans are at risk of eviction. That’s because the eviction moratorium expires Friday... ‘Just spoke to somebody yesterday that is facing eviction because they are an at-risk person who has not been able to work their regular job because of COVID-19. They don’t feel safe to do so, and so they are facing eviction right now,’ Poverello Center executive director Amy Allison Thompson said.” [*NBC Montana*, [7/30/20](#)]

Nebraska [Senators Deb Fischer and Ben Sasse]: “‘A lot of people probably were able to pay their rent over the summer months when they were getting that additional \$600 a week,’ Sewick said. ‘But now that that’s run out, they are not going to be able to keep up with food, rent, utilities, child care expenses, all of that. So I think that we’re really going to see that there is a continued need throughout the next few months.’” [*Omaha World Herald*, [7/30/20](#)]

North Carolina [Senators Richard Burr and Tom Tillis]: “[Sherry] Lawrence was laid off on March 19, and filed for unemployment the same day — one of almost 1.2 million North Carolinians who have applied for unemployment benefits since the start of the coronavirus pandemic. Her first unemployment check didn’t arrive until mid-May. ‘By this time, rent was due,’ Lawrence said. ‘By the time I got unemployment, I was so overwhelmed because now my bills are behind. I’m struggling, going from food bank to food bank.’ ... Since mid-May, Lawrence said, she has relied on the extra \$600 in federal unemployment benefits that was legislated through the CARES Act in late March. Her unemployment pay from North Carolina came to just \$125 a week... Without the extra \$600 in unemployment benefits, North Carolinians are left with one the lowest-ranked unemployment insurance systems in the country in terms of amount paid and payment duration, according to data from the Department of Labor.” [*News & Observer*, [07/ 28/20](#)]

North Dakota [Senators John Hoeven and Kevin Cramer]: “People receiving unemployment will no longer see the extra \$600 in their accounts. The Federal Pandemic Unemployment Compensation ended this past week. This program allocated \$600 in addition to unemployment payments to each person collecting. It was one of three programs created within the CARES Act as a way to help people get through the pandemic. ‘Throwing that \$600 a week in there was really a really necessary and useful cushion for a lot of people because they could not survive simply for what they could qualify for on a regular unemployment benefit and that’s what we’re seeing right now,’ explained Sarah Arntson, the Communications Officer for North Dakota Job Service.” [*KTNET*, [07/27/20](#)]

Ohio [Senator Rob Portman]: “Kandiss Bondurant, of Blacklick, is among those filing continued claims and concerned about the potential loss of the \$600 per week federal supplement she has been receiving on top of the state’s regular unemployment benefit. ‘I have to financially support my children as far as paying rent, car payments, my kids’ activities, going back to school, things like that,’ Bondurant said... Bondurant lost her job as manager of the Epic Buffet at the Hollywood Casino when the stay-at-home order shut everything down. She is a single mother of three and has been unsuccessful in finding a new job. She said the \$600 weekly supplement has allowed her to stay on top of her bills. ‘Even if they reduce it down to \$200, it still impacts us a lot,’ Bondurant said.” [*WBKN 27*, [7/30/20](#)]

Oklahoma [Senators Jim Inofe and James Lankford]: “Hospitals and health care workers are under increasing stress as coronavirus cases rise in Oklahoma, underscoring the need for people to wear masks and take other precautions to slow the spread, local medical experts said during a panel discussion on Friday... ‘And we’ve seen our average cost for our labor ... go up

by about \$2 an hour since the start of covid. That equates to — over a one year time period — about \$10 million in additional health care costs just for this one single hospital.” [*The Oklahoman*, [8/1/20](#)]

Pennsylvania [Senator Pat Toomey]: “Andrew Washington, 64, is not used to relying on others. He’s worked for more than three decades as a data analyst and was an auditor for SEPTA before he was laid off in April because of the coronavirus pandemic. His unemployment payments have arrived sporadically, and he doesn’t want to ask his family and friends for help. He was counting on the \$600 in federal pandemic unemployment compensation to pay his mortgage, car insurance, credit cards, and late bills. ‘I’m now pulling my hair out. I haven’t been able to sleep. I can’t eat. I can’t think,’ the Wynnefield Heights man said. ‘You’re just worried about your situation.’” [*The Inquirer.com*, [8/1/20](#)]

South Carolina [Senators Lindsey Graham and Tim Scott]: “For the nearly 150,000 South Carolinians receiving unemployment insurance, maximum weekly payments will decrease from \$926 to \$326 after \$600 per week enhanced federal unemployment benefits expired Saturday... Estimates from the progressive Century Foundation found that reducing the payments to \$200 per week would result in South Carolinians receiving \$96 million less in unemployment benefits per week and \$863.8 million less by the end of September.” [*The State*, [7/31/20](#)]

South Dakota [Senators John Thune and Mike Rounds]: “‘Generally speaking, the situation is very dire,’ said Jim Speirs, executive director of Arts South Dakota, a non-profit arts advocacy organization. ‘If we don’t see another round of help from the federal government ... I think we would see some pretty serious repercussions in South Dakota.’” [*Black Hills Pioneer*, [8/1/20](#)]

Tennessee [Senators Lamar Alexander and Marsha Blackburn]: “On Friday, the federal moratorium on evictions for those who receive government-assisted housing or those with federally backed mortgages expired, leaving roughly 22 million people at risk of being kicked out of their homes. Black and Hispanic renters are expected to be hit the hardest. In Tennessee, the extra \$600 per week in unemployment also just ended, which Nashville Legal Aid Society Attorney Zac Oswald says will be devastating for many. ‘The people who weren’t able to pay their rent are only in a worse situation than they were two weeks ago, but now they can also be kicked out of their homes,’ Oswald said.” [*WZTV Fox 17*, [7/28/20](#)]

Texas [Senators John Cornyn and Ted Cruz]: “Texans like Marney Mason have relied on the additional payments since losing work when the pandemic began... ‘It’s helping me make my mortgage every month,’ he said. ‘I haven’t fallen behind on that. It’s helping me pay the bills, my car payment. Feed the family. I mean it. Without it, things would be almost too tight to take.’ ...Mason worries that if the payments run out, he and his wife won’t be able to put healthy food on the table for themselves and their two daughters, 16 and 12. ‘We’ve lived on very little money before, we can do it again,’ he said. ‘But the way that we do it ... we eat

garbage, it's all just beans and rice all the time. And that's not good." [*The Texas Tribune*, [07/23/20](#)]

Utah [Senators Mike Lee and Mitt Romney]: "Once new unemployment benefits kicked in for many laid-off workers, especially a \$600-a-week stipend in federal relief, the number of Utahns receiving food aid from the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program settled back to pre-pandemic levels. Now, however, with that bonus payment gone and the labor market still rocked by COVID-19 turbulence, Utah officials and advocates expect another wave of SNAP requests. 'The \$600 a week is ending, so there are going to be a lot of people who are still unemployed,' said Gina Cornia, executive director of Utahns Against Hunger. 'And we hope that folks who are losing those \$600 on unemployment will apply for food stamps. It's an important resource for families to buy food.'" [*The Salt Lake Tribune*, [8/2/20](#)]

West Virginia [Senator Shelley Moore Capito]: "Time is almost up for the extended unemployment benefits the federal government approved to help Americans stay afloat financially for months. Unemployment benefits and eviction protection end this weekend and there's no other plan to take its place... Americans on unemployment through the 'cares act' have been receiving 600 dollars a week, which ends Sunday, with no additional monetary relief in its wake... Americans on unemployment through the 'cares act' have been receiving 600 dollars a week, which ends Sunday, with no additional monetary relief in its wake." [*13WOWK* [07/24/20](#)]

Wisconsin [Senator Ron Johnson]: "'A lot of people are really concerned and want to see that benefit extended to keep our families and our communities afloat,' said Department of Workforce Development Secretary Caleb Frostman. People who received unemployment insurance were given \$600 a week on top of the state's unemployment benefits. Wisconsin's Department of Workforce Development would like those federal payments continue. 'If 8,9 or 10 percent of Wisconsin families don't have that supplement, that's going to be a large chunk of Wisconsin's workforce that, if they're still unemployed, will receive a maximum of \$370 a week which is really challenging,' said Frostman. 'Even to make it in Wisconsin, but let alone to help keep our economy afloat.'" [*Fox 11 News*, [07/29/20](#)]