

As the Coronavirus Pandemic Rages Across the Country, Where Are Republicans?

While Republicans ignore the coronavirus crisis, the COVID-19 pandemic is raging across the country:

- Over [260,000 Americans have died, and over 13 million Americans have been infected](#).
- The nation is [averaging over 150,000 cases and more than 1,000 deaths per day](#).
- [Hospitalizations continue to increase](#) with [over 96,000 people](#) in the hospital.
- Over 20 million Americans are unemployed. Meanwhile, the [12 million Americans](#) who are receiving assistance from the Pandemic Unemployment Assistance program or the Pandemic Emergency Unemployment Compensation program are set to lose their emergency assistance next month.
- [One in five small business have shuttered](#) their doors and millions more will close without action.
- [States are hemorrhaging funds](#) and struggling to keep our teachers, firefighters, police officers, first responders, and other essential workers on the payroll while also downsizing or eliminating programs that Americans rely on.
- [Over 8 in 10 parents](#) are estimated to have children learning remotely because of the pandemic.
- Millions of workers are at risk because the Occupational Safety and Health Administration [under the Trump Presidency has failed](#) to enforce workplace safety rules that would help keep frontline workers safe from getting COVID-19 on the job.
- [Eight million Americans have plunged into poverty](#) since critical funding for the CARES Act expired over the summer.
- [Child care services](#), which offer much-needed support to parents and children, are at risk of severe financial hardship.

And critical aid is set to expire, zeroing out vital assistance for families during this crisis and pushing more Americans into greater economic distress. Here is a look at the relief that is set to expire:

- The moratorium on evictions and mortgage forbearance for renters and homeowners,
- Forbearance for student loan borrowers,
- Paid sick and family leave for workers affected by COVID-19,
- Expanded eligibility for unemployment assistance to the self-employed, gig workers, and contract employees, as well as additional weeks of assistance due to the pandemic's economic effects;
- Funding to state and local governments that must be distributed by the end of the month.

It's clear this crisis is only worsening and relief is urgently needed. Democrats stand ready to deliver that aid, and House Democrats have acted not once, but twice.

[In May, House Democrats passed the Heroes Act](#), providing over \$3 trillion in coronavirus relief to:

- State and local governments to keep first responders, health workers, teachers, and other essential workers on the job;
- Testing, tracing, and treatment;
- Direct payments to ensure families can make ends meet;
- Additional assistance to help keep employees on the payroll;
- Emergency unemployment assistance;
- Protections for workers;
- Housing and nutrition assistance, among other provisions.

Nearly six months went by, and Senate Republicans willfully chose not to act. Mitch McConnell went as far as saying let the states go bankrupt. This crisis grew worse, and Republicans sat on their hands:

Senator Mitch McConnell: “I would certainly be in favor of allowing states to use the bankruptcy route. It saves some cities. And there’s no good reason for it not to be available. My guess is their first choice would be for the federal government to borrow money from future generations to send it down to them now so they don’t have to do that. That’s not something I’m going to be in favor of.” [CBS News, [04/23/20](#)]

In October, House Democrats passed an updated Heroes Act, a compromise measure that still provides the relief that families desperately need.

But where are Republicans? Still not at the table. Senator McConnell is moving away from compromise by lowering his proposal [from \\$1 trillion to \\$500 billion](#). President Trump is “[bunkered in the White House](#),” tweeting conspiracy theories about the election and ignoring the crisis. And House Republicans are enabling this dysfunction and chaos.

Economists, experts, and the American people are calling for additional assistance:

[The Economic Strategy group released](#) a bipartisan statement urging Congress to pass a bill to address the coronavirus crisis, saying: “Amidst a resurgence in COVID-19 caseloads and continuing economic devastation from the pandemic, we urge Congress to enact legislation that focuses on the core measures necessary to provide additional fiscal relief as quickly as possible and no later than the end of this calendar year... the pandemic resurges throughout the country. Our nation’s leaders should act on another round of fiscal relief now. At the same time, the administration should act aggressively to deploy the unspent resources it already has to combat the virus and support businesses. Our country and economy cannot wait until 2021.”

[Chairman Jerome Powell](#) continues to sound the alarm on the need for urgent relief, saying that “Too little support would lead to a weak recovery, creating unnecessary hardship for households and businesses. Over time, household insolvencies and business bankruptcies would rise, harming the productive capacity of the economy and holding back wage growth. By contrast, the risks of overdoing it seem, for now, to be smaller. Even if policy actions ultimately prove to be greater than needed, they will not go to waste.” [Washington Post, [10/6/20](#)]

[Seventy-four percent of Americans](#) want Congress to approve a \$2 trillion coronavirus relief package.

House Democrats have acted. It’s time for Senate Republicans to pass the updated Heroes Act or negotiate in good faith to reach an agreement. There is only one party refusing to compromise and reach a deal: the GOP.