

Durbin, Colleagues, Call For Direct Cash Assistance To Help Americans Weather Economic Fallout Of Coronavirus Outbreak

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WASHINGTON – As the economic fallout of coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak escalates, U.S. Senator Dick Durbin (D-IL) joined Senators Michael Bennet (D-CO), Sherrod Brown (D-OH), Cory Booker (D-NJ), and a group of his colleagues in sending a letter to Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-KY) and Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer (D-NY) outlining a bold new proposal to provide Americans with direct cash payments.

“Over the course of just one week, most of America went from business-as-usual to a virtual shutdown. Workers have seen their hours cut or eliminated entirely, and millions of American families are assessing how they will weather a potentially long-lasting economic paralysis,” wrote the Senators in the letter. “We must provide direct cash support to the American workers and families who need it most – to help them purchase essentials; pay the rent, mortgage, and bills; and otherwise weather the coming weeks and months.”

In the letter, the Senators outline a proposal to provide a \$2,000 immediate cash payment to every adult, child (or non-child dependent), and recipient of Social Security, Veterans Affairs (VA) benefits, and Supplemental Security Income (SSI). The proposal calls for additional cash payments should the public health crisis extend and the economy continues to struggle. The payments would phase-out for higher-income taxpayers.

This new proposal would build on Senate Democrats’ plan to provide comprehensive economic relief to Americans and businesses during this unprecedented public health and economic crisis. The proposal includes:

Immediate Payment:

- \$2,000 payment for every:
 - Adult, including those who receive Social Security, VA, or SSI benefits
 - Child and non-child dependent
- Eligibility:
 - Workers who filed for Tax Year 2019
 - Non-filers who file an Individual Income Tax Return (1040) separately
 - Does not include higher-income taxpayers, with a phase-out rate of 5% of the aggregate credit amount starting at higher incomes

Second Payment:

- \$1,500 payment if:
 - The public health emergency continues into July, as certified by the Secretary of Health and Human Services, and the Secretary of the Treasury makes an Economic Turmoil Designation
 - OR the unemployment in June is at least 1 percentage point higher than the three-month moving average from December 2019 to February 2020
- Half payment of \$750 per person if the June unemployment rate is 0.5 percentage point above the December 2019 – February 2020 average

Additional Quarterly Payments:

- \$1,000 per quarter if:
 - The Treasury Secretary makes an Economic Turmoil Designation and the unemployment rate in the last month of the previous quarter is up at least 1 percentage point compared to the December-February average
- Half payment of \$500 if the unemployment rate remains at least 0.5 percentage points above December 2019 – February 2020
- Payments continue quarterly until unemployment falls to within 0.5 percentage points of levels from December 2019 – February 2020.

Along with Durbin, Bennet, Brown, and Booker, the letter was also signed by Senators Chris Murphy (D-CT), Brian Schatz (D-HI), Angus S. King, Jr. (I-ME), Richard

Blumenthal (D-CT.), Jeanne Shaheen (D-NH), Tom Udall (D-NM), Maggie Hassan (D-NH), Bob Menendez (D-NJ), Tammy Baldwin (D-WI), Kirsten Gillibrand (D-NY), Kamala Harris (D-CA), Tim Kaine (D-VA), Bob Casey (D-PA), and Gary Peters (D-MI).