



March 17, 2020

## **Key Vote NO on the Families First Coronavirus Response Act, H.R. 6201**

On behalf of FreedomWorks' activist community, I urge you to contact your senators and ask them to vote NO on the Families First Coronavirus Response Act, H.R. 6201. This bill, the final version of which was pushed through the House mere minutes after the backroom "deal" was announced to members, costs tens of billions of dollars and creates mandates on private business, the effects of which would last far beyond the scope of the coronavirus pandemic.

As Rep. Ken Buck perfectly put it Saturday at 1:06 AM on Twitter after voting "no" on the bill in the House, "Nancy Pelosi squandered days trying to push wishlist items on us rather than engaging in a meaningful bipartisan discussion. This bill is a 110-page, multi-billion-dollar boondoggle shoved on us at the stroke of midnight."

This bill came to the floor without any committee discussion or debate in the primary committee of jurisdiction and without opportunity for amendments. Not only that, but the bill also was the result of a full day of closed-door, high-level discussions that left members -- who only want to find real ways that the government can enhance our nation's coronavirus response to best help citizens -- completely in the dark on what they would be voting on. Of course, the final product affects all constituents. The process for this bill is only one of the concerns we have, though.

At the beginning of March, Congress bipartisanly appropriated more than \$8 billion in emergency funding for the purpose of dealing with the spread of COVID-19, and it's not clear where all of that funding is headed. The open-ended boondoggle that H.R. 6201 would create will certainly come with another tremendous price tag, although it is difficult to estimate how big because it is being advanced too fast for the Congressional Budget Office to even make an estimate.

The budget deficit for FY 2020 is already projected to be in excess of \$1 trillion. This doesn't include additional supplemental spending that has already been approved by Congress, including the more than \$8 billion passed last week without any offsets. Without question, Congress utterly

failed to spend at responsible levels during this long period of sustained economic growth and properly plan for an inevitable economic slowdown.

Furthermore, it is deceitful of House Democrats to attempt to fast-track a bill to deal with a serious problem like the nationwide concern over coronavirus, which is not much more than a wishlist of government programs and policies that they would, make no mistake, like to see made permanent. These programs and policies include an increase in the Federal Matching Assistance Program (FMAP) formula for Medicaid, massive expansions of the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), and mandated paid leave of multiple varieties.

To make matters worse, many of these policies in the bill directly and unfairly harm small- and mid-sized businesses, with carveouts for large-sized employers. For example, the employer paid leave mandates requires every employer who does not have 500 or more employees to pay all workers who have been employed for at least 30 days, up to three months leave -- full pay up to two weeks and no less than two-thirds pay for each week thereafter, up to a total of 12 weeks.

Some members are even proposing further initiatives such as halting student loan debt collection or offering forms of mortgage forgiveness in connection with the coronavirus. Needless to say, these are clearly politically-driven issues that, if they are to be entertained in Congress, should have real debates where opponents and proponents can make their case for or against them on their merits or lack thereof.

Although the bill tailors most of these types of policy changes to apply only to COVID-19 or during the duration of the related emergency declaration, it represents a significant political step towards setting a precedent for having such policies at all times, not just in crisis. The very real panic in our country and around the world about coronavirus should absolutely not be used for political expediency to advance what are, in our view, tragically harmful policies.

FreedomWorks will count the vote for H.R. 6201 on our 2020 Congressional Scorecard and reserves the right to score any amendments, motions, or other related votes. The scorecard is used to determine eligibility for the FreedomFighter Award, which recognizes Members of the House and Senate who consistently vote to support economic freedom and individual liberty.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Adam Brandon', with a stylized, flowing script.

Adam Brandon  
President, FreedomWorks