

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

May 07, 2020

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker of the House
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Charles Schumer
Democratic Leader
U.S. Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Speaker Pelosi and Leader Schumer,

We write to elevate the concerns of our community advocacy partners and to emphasize the importance of our priorities for addressing the troubling disparities in health outcomes and available federal support for immigrant and Latinx families. The public health crisis precipitated by COVID-19 has further exposed longstanding, deep inequities in our economy and society. We are dismayed that the federal response thus far has been insufficient for communities of color, particularly the many immigrants and their families excluded from receiving relief.

This is particularly true for the Latinx community in Oregon, where 29.1 percent of the state's confirmed cases are Hispanic individuals¹ despite accounting for only 13.3 percent of the total population.² Many of these individuals face occupational exposure in the workplace as they carry out essential duties. In Washington County, Oregon, nearly 60 percent of the county's Hispanic or Latinx community members who tested positive for COVID-19 are frontline workers in health care, agricultural and outdoor labor, factory and warehouse work, or grocery and food service.³ We must redouble our commitment to providing those on the frontlines with the protections and supports they need as they continue to serve our communities in these crucial capacities.

We recognize and appreciate your ongoing efforts to achieve just and equitable policy results for these communities in the face of challenging political realities. As you continue to negotiate additional legislation in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, we urge you to continue fighting for those who are most exposed yet remain the least supported by the federal government.

We respectfully request that you focus on the following priorities as you develop upcoming legislation to address this unprecedented economic and health crisis:

- 1. Include mixed-status families and ITIN filers and dependents in direct stimulus payments.**
- 2. Remove barriers to eligibility for Unemployment Insurance based on immigration status.**

¹<https://www.oregon.gov/oha/PH/DISEASESCONDITIONS/DISEASESAZ/Emerging%20Respiratory%20Infections/COVID-19-Weekly-Report-2020-05-05-FINAL.pdf>

² <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/OR>

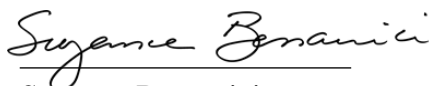
³ <https://pamplinmedia.com/bvt/15-news/465288-376826-latino-community-in-washington-county-hit-hard-by-covid-19>

3. **Expand access to COVID-19 testing and treatment, regardless of immigration status, with an emphasis on disproportionately affected communities of color.**
4. **Automatically extend work permits and status for immigrants with employment authorization.**
5. **Require improved language access and community partner engagement for culturally competent information about health services and benefit programs.**
6. **Provide adequate funding for Federally Qualified Health Centers and other safety net health care providers, particularly those serving minority, immigrant, rural, and low-income communities.**
7. **Reduce the use of detention in immigration enforcement to curb the spread of COVID-19 and mitigate the risk to particularly vulnerable populations such as older adults and individuals with underlying medical conditions.**
8. **Suspend implementation of the Public Charge rule.**
9. **Require protections to reassure individuals that personal information provided to access health care or benefits, including immigration benefits such as DACA or TPS, cannot be used for immigration enforcement purposes.**
10. **Increase access to Personal Protective Equipment for essential workers in healthcare, agriculture, grocery, and other critical sectors.**

Although our previous legislative efforts have provided much needed relief for many Americans during this crisis, millions of immigrants and their families remain left out. This not only harms and endangers those families, it weakens our national response and threatens local recovery by undermining efforts to reduce the spread of COVID-19 and maintain the health and economic security of the entire community.

We are grateful for your steadfast leadership and look forward to working with to you to secure immediate, tangible progress on these priorities.

Sincerely,



Suzanne Bonamici
Member of Congress



Ron Wyden
United States Senator



Jeffrey A. Merkley
United States Senator



Kurt Schrader
Member of Congress



Earl Blumenauer
Member of Congress



Peter A. DeFazio
Member of Congress