

GR Summary: Families First Coronavirus Response Act

The U.S. House of Representatives passed the *Families First Coronavirus Response Act* ([H.R. 6201](#)) on March 14, [363-40-1](#). The [measure](#) offers relief in the form of paid emergency leave, free coronavirus testing, strengthened unemployment benefits, expanded food assistance, and additional funding to states for the ongoing economic consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic. It resulted from bipartisan negotiations. A title-by-title summary can be found [here](#). The AAFP has [urged](#) Congress to adopt primary care priorities. The Senate is expected to clear H.R. 6201 for the President's signature.

- **Emergency Leave** – The bill authorizes emergency paid sick and family leave to respond to the coronavirus. However, health care providers, emergency responders can exclude employees from the leave. Small businesses with fewer than 50 employees would be exempt from paid leave requirements if the requirement “would jeopardize the viability of the business as a going concern”. Private sector employers with fewer than 500 workers and government entities would have to provide as many as 12 weeks of job-protected leave under the *Family and Medical Leave Act* through December 31, 2020 for employees who must quarantine because of exposure to or symptoms of coronavirus; provide care to a family member who's under quarantine; or care for child whose school or day care has closed because of coronavirus.
- **Employer Tax Credits** – The bill would provide refundable tax credits to employers to cover wages paid to employee under the sick and family leave provisions. The sick leave credit for each employee would be for wages of as much as \$511 per day or \$200 for each employee caring for someone else. The credit would not be available if they're receiving paid FMLA under the 2017 tax overhaul (P.L. 115-97).
- **Unemployment Insurance** – The measure provides as much as \$1 billion for emergency transfers to states in fiscal 2020 to process and pay unemployment benefits. States could modify certain unemployment policies, including rules related to job searches and initial payment waiting periods, on an emergency temporary basis to address the effects of COVID-19.
- **Food and Nutrition** – It provides \$500 million to the Women Infants and Children (WIC) nutrition program for low-income pregnant women or mothers with young children and \$400 million to assist local food banks meet increased demands during the emergency. It allows states to provide emergency food assistance to households with children eligible for free or reduced-price meals. It also provides \$250 million for the Senior Nutrition Program.
- **COVID-19 Testing** – It requires private health plans to cover COVID-19 diagnostic testing. It also provides COVID-19 testing without cost sharing or prior authorization for American Indians and Alaskan Natives, uninsured individuals, veterans, Defense Health and Medicare beneficiaries.
- **Medicaid** – The bill provides a temporary increase of 6.2 percentage points to states' federal medical assistance percentage for the duration of the public health emergency. States would be required to cover COVID-19 testing without cost sharing.

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