



Legislation Text

File #: 61459, **Version:** 1

Fiscal Note

No fiscal impact.

Title

Calling for Emergency Money to the People to provide critical relief to American families during the COVID-19 crisis and until our economy recovers; and calling on Congress to support and pass ongoing, direct cash payments.

Body

WHEREAS, Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) first appeared in December 2019 and has spread throughout the world, and on March 11, 2020, the World Health Organization declared the outbreak a global pandemic; and,

WHEREAS, on March 23, 2020, Madison Mayor Satya Rhodes-Conway declared a state of emergency to ramp up the city's efforts to prepare for and respond to local cases of coronavirus; and,

WHEREAS, on March 12, 2020, Wisconsin Governor Tony Evers declared a public health emergency to help the state prepare for a broader spread of COVID-19; and,

WHEREAS, On March 13, 2020, US President Donald Trump declared a national state of emergency concerning the novel coronavirus outbreak; and,

WHEREAS, Madison and Wisconsin are responding in strong and definitive ways to slow the spread and save lives, ordering residents to shelter-in-place and cease non-essential activities as of March 24, 2020; and,

WHEREAS, In order to comply with Safer-at-Home orders for public health, many businesses have shut their doors, temporarily or permanently, and laid off or terminated thousands of employees; and,

WHEREAS, As of July 1, 32% of American families were unable to pay their housing costs, roughly 10.1% of white workers and 15.6% of Black workers were unemployed in June and nationally 24.5 million workers are out of work because of the coronavirus; and,

WHEREAS, These levels of unemployment are at [historical highs](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/23/business/economy/unemployment-claims-coronavirus.html) <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/23/business/economy/unemployment-claims-coronavirus.html>, and economists have stated that despite the historic number of claims, they understate the extent of the economic crisis; and,

WHEREAS, the US Congress passed Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act at the end of March, which includes a package of relief and stimulus programs including \$500 billion for large corporations and one-time \$1,200 checks to individuals; and,

WHEREAS, those workers who are eligible for unemployment insurance are still getting only a fraction of what they would otherwise earn, and the additional Pandemic Unemployment Compensation provided through the CARES Act is a short-term augmentation that ends this month; and,

WHEREAS, some self-employed workers and independent contractors are now eligible for Pandemic Unemployment Assistance provided through the CARES Act, but those payments are capped at \$167 per week; and,

WHEREAS, neither of the unemployment benefit programs established through CARES are adequate to cover the extent and likely duration of loss of income; and,

WHEREAS, prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, nearly [12% of the population of the United States or close to 45 million](https://www.povertyusa.org/facts) <<https://www.povertyusa.org/facts>> people were living in poverty and for those who are employed, nearly [7% or about 7 million people](https://www.povertyusa.org/data) <<https://www.povertyusa.org/data>> were living in poverty; that is, people were working but did not have the resources to cover even the most basic necessities- food, housing, education and childcare; and,

WHEREAS, according to United States Census Bureau data, 17.9% of City of Madison residents live at or below the federal poverty rate, which is \$12,760 for an individual and [\\$26,200 for a family of four](https://aspe.hhs.gov/poverty-guidelines) <<https://aspe.hhs.gov/poverty-guidelines>> and which rate does not vary geographically nor take into account the cost of housing in Madison where the average monthly rent for an apartment is \$1,068; and,

WHEREAS, nearly 40% of Americans could not afford a single \$400 emergency prior to the pandemic, and rising income inequality is compounded by a growing racial wealth divide; and,

WHEREAS, in the last quarter of 2019 the median white worker made 28% more than the typical Black worker and 35% more than the median Latinx worker, and the median wealth of white families was more than \$100,000 while the median wealth of Black families was approximately \$10,000 prior to the pandemic; and,

WHEREAS, woman-particularly women of color-are the most likely to live in poverty, are overrepresented in low-paying occupations, and are far more likely to lack access to sick leave and health care benefits; and,

WHEREAS, Black women are paid 66 cents for every dollar that is paid to white men, and Latinas make even less at 58 cents for every dollar paid to white men; and,

WHEREAS, COVID-19 has had devastating economic impacts that are being felt most acutely by the poor and the working poor and millions who live paycheck to paycheck will be unable to survive for the extended duration of social distancing that is likely to be necessary to avoid the worst public health effects of coronavirus; and,

WHEREAS, even before COVID-19, tens of thousands of Madisonians were experiencing hunger and food insecurity; and,

WHEREAS, this crisis and its economic aftermath demand unprecedented action by all levels of government; and,

WHEREAS, the CARES Act one-time stimulus checks were insufficient to address the scale of this crisis for individuals and families and left out millions of people, mostly the poor and immigrant families; and,

WHEREAS, without providing the entire country with immediate financial assistance, there will be a risk of worsening the health and economic crisis related to COVID-19 and, the better we provide assistance to all people now, the quicker we'll return to work and get our economy and communities thriving; and,

WHEREAS, unlike a payroll tax cut, which would do little to benefit our most vulnerable workers, ongoing, direct cash payments put real money in the pockets of people across the country; and,

WHEREAS, these payments must include dependents and be available to non-citizens, including undocumented people, permanent residents, and temporary visitors whose stay exceeds three months; individuals who do not have a bank account, social security number, or permanent address; people living in

unincorporated territories or protectorates and Americans living abroad; and,

WHEREAS, according to [polling released <https://theappeal.org/majority-of-americans-support-monthly-cash-assistance-to-offset-pandemic-damage-to-economy/>](https://theappeal.org/majority-of-americans-support-monthly-cash-assistance-to-offset-pandemic-damage-to-economy/) by Data for Progress and the Justice Collaborative Institute, there is strong bipartisan support among people in the country for payments on a recurring basis, with [66% of the public preferring recurring payments of \\$2,000 <https://tjcinstitute.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/emergency-action-plan.pdf>](https://tjcinstitute.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/emergency-action-plan.pdf) until a year after the President declares an end to the federal state of emergency,

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the City of Madison supports ongoing, direct cash payments throughout the pandemic and until our economy recover, and calls on Speaker Pelosi and Leader McConnell to ensure such payments are included in the next stimulus package; and,

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that the Mayor and Common Council urge formal local advocacy efforts through the City Lobbyist to ensure such payments are included in the final stimulus package.