

**Congress of the United States**  
Washington, DC 20510

March 20, 2020

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy  
Republican Leader  
U.S. House of Representatives  
H-204, The Capitol  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Steve Scalise  
Republican Whip  
U.S. House of Representatives  
H-148, The Capitol  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Leader McCarthy and Whip Scalise,

In light of the public health and economic crises stemming from the novel coronavirus (CV-19) pandemic, I was proud to support the First and Second emergency legislative response packages, but clearly more must be done. My colleagues and I are now eager to pass the forthcoming package from the Senate, the CARES Act, so that we may provide broader relief to our healthcare system and our economy.

In Illinois, response efforts have evolved rapidly including statewide school closures, restaurant and bar closures, suspension of church services, and the closure of many public services. These mitigating measures, though necessary, have placed a difficult burden on health professionals with children and families. Medical providers in my district are able to test for COVID-19, but there are concerns that test results are taking too long to receive, at about three days. There are also concerns of the lack of personal protective equipment (PPE). While no providers in my district are out of supplies as of earlier today, several are running low and are uncertain when they will receive their next shipment. Thankfully, they have been connected with their local and state emergency response agencies, both of which are the first go-to for providers before they can request from the national stockpile.

Illinois small businesses are quickly finding themselves in dire straits. The biggest concern across multiple industries is potential employee layoffs. Additionally, there is large concern for loss of revenue and being unable to pay vendors. Most businesses and people did not foresee a nationwide virus and do not know what resources are available to them, such as the Small Business Administration's (SBA) Economic Disaster Loan. My office is doing all it can, but the inquiries keep coming.

I was pleased to see in the initial CARES Act addresses these issues, including through deferred tax filing deadlines; deferred payroll tax collections; direct household payments; loan forgiveness; flexibility for use of retirement funds, health savings accounts (HSAs), and flexible spending accounts (FSAs); increased charitable deductions; and more than \$200 billion in direct loans to severely distressed industries. While it is important that members and the American public understand that these measures are both extraordinary and temporary, intended to blunt the real and direct impacts the spread of this virus is having on the nation, I am optimistic that negotiations in the Senate will keep these provisions intact.

In terms of House consideration, there are provisions I would like to see either in this package or in subsequent legislation, including additional support for rural hospitals, flexible and responsive nutritional care for seniors and our most vulnerable neighbors, clearly defined liability standards to prevent frivolous lawsuits, and, importantly, a streamlined bureaucracy so that we can get these resources out.

Now more than ever it is imperative that we protect the critical healthcare infrastructure providing care within our communities, including rural communities. We have seen rural hospitals close at an alarming rate, and our current crisis will only increase the amount of closures across the country. In December of last year, I introduced H.R. 5481, the Rural Hospital Closure Relief Act, which would expand eligibility for certain rural hospitals to be designated as Critical Access Hospitals (CAH). Expanding eligibility for the CAH designation is an easy way to provide a lifeline to vulnerable rural hospitals as well as the patients and communities they serve. This legislation is being discussed for potential inclusion in the Senate package, and I encourage the House to support its inclusion as well.

Last, but certainly not least, we must immediately grapple with both misinformation and disinformation in the public. Many of us have seen examples of pervasive rumors about “potential” or “imminent” government actions, allegedly sourced by the FBI or National Security Council, which were flatly incorrect. Others are sending messages about receiving the forthcoming government assistance with the hope of getting users to open malicious files. Given these examples, as well as the recent cyber operation reportedly waged against federal health agencies, the federal government should drastically increase intelligence and national security operations to ward off threats. We should discuss establishing an interagency working group to monitor foreign interference and open-source domestic rumor mills in order to coordinate a rapid-response information campaign to put an end to damaging, untrue rumors that are causing widespread panic.

Again, I offer my support and whatever assistance or resources you may need in this endeavor, and I thank you for your leadership during these trying times. Should you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,



Adam Kinzinger  
Member of Congress  
Illinois' 16<sup>th</sup> District