



September 8, 2020

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Majority Leader
U.S. Senate
S-230, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker
U.S. House of Representatives
H-232, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Charles Schumer
Democratic Leader
S-221, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Republican Leader
H-204, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

Re: Oppose so-called “skinny” proposals and pass the “HEROES Act”

Dear Leader McConnell, Speaker Pelosi, Leader Schumer, and Leader McCarthy:

On behalf of UnidosUS, I write to condemn congressional inaction on COVID-19 relief, express my strong opposition to so-called “skinny” pandemic response proposals, and urge Congress to work in a bipartisan fashion to pass the “HEROES Act” or other comprehensive, inclusive legislation that meets the dire and growing needs of vulnerable American families.

[UnidosUS](#), previously known as NCLR (National Council of La Raza), is the nation’s largest Hispanic civil rights and advocacy organization and has built a stronger country by creating opportunities for Latinos for more than 50 years. Through its unique combination of expert research, advocacy, programs, and an [Affiliate Network](#) of nearly 300 community-based organizations across the United States and Puerto Rico, UnidosUS simultaneously challenges the social, economic, and political barriers at the national and local levels.


We supported the emergency coronavirus supplementals passed by Congress because they were a lifeline for so many families, small businesses, and state and local governments and infused our health care system with badly needed resources. However, more than five months have passed since the last of them—[the CARES Act](#)—was enacted, and the pandemic-imposed suffering continues nationwide. To date, more than 6 million people [have contracted COVID](#) in the U.S. and nearly 190,000 people have died. The [unemployment rate](#) is nearly double what it was in February and millions of Americans continue to struggle to make ends meet. More than 100,000 small businesses [have closed](#) forever and more are on the horizon. The number of uninsured [has increased](#), temporary [eviction protections](#) provide no relief to landlords or those with back-rent payments due in December, and long food lines reveal that almost one in eight U.S. households [doesn’t have enough to eat](#).

Like all Americans, Latinos and their families face these same challenges. But millions of them also confront added threats to their well-being, as our [white paper](#) documents, given the historic health and economic disparities that Latinos faced before the pandemic and Congress's deliberate exclusion of immigrants and mixed-status families including U.S. citizens from emergency relief bills passed into law. They work for the good of America in essential jobs such as in health care or along the food chain, which places them at greater risk of exposure to and death from COVID-19, but are categorically denied health coverage, even for COVID-19 testing and treatment. Latinos with an ITIN pay taxes but are excluded—along with their U.S. citizen spouses and children—from the Economic Impact Payments they need to pay the rent or purchase medicine. Latinos are twice as likely to experience food insecurity as Whites but are denied access to Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and left to go hungry for being an immigrant. The cruel exclusion from relief of so many in our community is both unfathomable and unconscionable.

The U.S. Senate and the Trump administration continue to deny the scope and urgency of the deep-seated health and economic challenges that Latinos and other families face and which have been exacerbated by the pandemic. Narrow, cobbled-together half-measures like the "[HEALS Act](#)," the "Delivering Immediate Relief to America's Families, Schools and Small Businesses Act," or the \$500 billion proposal which reportedly will be unveiled this week all fail to meaningfully address the dire needs of Latinos and their families, or reverse the historic racial disparities with which our country is now reckoning. The only solution to defeat the virus and protect working families is a bill that fully and equitably responds to the health and economic catastrophe bearing down on everyone in our country. The only proposal that has yet to meet this test is the "[HEROES Act](#)," which passed the House of Representatives nearly four months ago.

The letters I have written to you on behalf of UnidosUS throughout this pandemic (some of which are linked in this letter) have repeatedly urged you to enact policies that the Latino community needs from Congress to forestall deep, irreparable harm to our community. Now, the damage caused by this legislative gridlock is [undeniably under way](#). Please reject piecemeal measures that fail to respond to the magnitude of this crisis and send a robust, comprehensive, and inclusive package like the "HEROES Act" to the president's desk. Further delays, inadequate proposals, and failure to meet the needs of 60 million Latinos foretell an even grimmer future for our families and nation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Janet Murguía". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Janet Murguía
President and CEO
UnidosUS