

America Needs a Plan to Save Jobs and Save Lives

America continues to be in the throes of a profound crisis: a deadly disease, an economic downturn, and an erosion of families' financial security. Since May 15, when Congress passed the Health and Economic Recovery Omnibus Emergency Solutions (HEROES) Act, one person has died every two minutes from COVID-19 in the U.S.¹ With more than 188,000 deaths² to date and nearly 13.6 million Americans without jobs,³ the health and economic consequences of coronavirus in this country have been devastating.

To address this dire situation, our country needs a national science-based approach to the COVID-19 pandemic and a continuation of critical federal support for newly unemployed individuals to prop up the economy and save jobs. Without a coordinated and comprehensive strategy, states, cities, and communities, along with schools and businesses, will struggle to make informed decisions rooted in science. Widespread transmission will continue, and more people will die.

3,086 U.S. veterans have died from COVID-19.⁴

134,839 U.S. seniors have died from COVID-19.⁵

More than **6 million people in the U.S.** have contracted COVID-19.⁶

Communities of color are deeply and disproportionately impacted by this crisis:

Black or African Americans are **2.4 times** more likely to die from COVID-19 than whites.⁷

Hispanic or Latino Americans are **1.5 times** more likely to die from COVID-19 than whites.⁸

American Indians or Alaska Natives are **1.5 times** more likely to die from COVID-19 than whites.⁹

Without a coordinated and comprehensive strategy, our nation's economy and families will continue to suffer. Since February 2020, 7.8 million Americans became newly unemployed, and an additional 4.6 million left the labor force altogether.¹⁰ The nationwide unemployment rate has more than doubled, from 3.5% in February to 8.4% in August. The health care industry in particular has been hard hit, losing 711,000 employees, a 4.3% decrease in employment, since February.¹¹

The unemployment rate is even higher among African Americans, Asian Americans, and Latinos.¹²

For **Black or African Americans**, the unemployment rate increased from 5.8% in February to **13% in August**, the highest unemployment rate of any racial or ethnic group.

For **Asian Americans**, the unemployment rate increased from 2.5% in February to **10.7% in August**, the biggest increase of any racial or ethnic group.

For **Hispanic or Latino Americans**, the unemployment rate increased from 4.4% in February to **10.5% in August**.

For **white Americans**, the unemployment rate increased from 3.1% in February to **7.3% in August**.

Our elected leaders must act boldly now on behalf of families to protect their health and financial well-being and to combat the nation's gravest pandemic and health-incited recession in generations. This means Congress must provide continued and additional funding for a comprehensive science-based testing strategy that will help reduce transmission, reopen the economy safely, and ultimately save lives. Congress must also act to pass the financial support that was included in the HEROES Act for states, individual households that have lost jobs, businesses, and health care providers. It's time for Congress to pass legislation to bring back jobs and save lives. Families deserve a plan.

Endnotes

¹ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), National Center for Health Statistics, "Provisional Death Counts for Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)," accessed September 1, 2020, <https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/nvss/vsrr/covid19/index.htm>.

² Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), "United States COVID-19 Cases and Deaths by State," accessed September 7, 2020, <https://covid.cdc.gov/covid-data-tracker/#cases>.

³ U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, "Employment Situation Summary Table A. Household Data, Seasonally Adjusted," last modified September 4, 2020, <https://www.bls.gov/news.release/empst.a.htm> and U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, "Employment Situation News Release" last modified May 11, 2020, https://www.bls.gov/news.release/archives/empst_05082020.htm.

⁴ U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, "Department of Veterans Affairs COVID-19 National Summary," accessed September 7, 2020, <https://www.accesstocare.va.gov/Healthcare/COVID19NationalSummary>.

⁵ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), "Provisional COVID-19 Death Counts by Sex, Age and State," accessed September

7, 2020, <https://data.cdc.gov/NCHS/Provisional-COVID-19-Death-Counts-by-Sex-Age-and-S/9bhg-hcku/data>.

⁶ CDC, "Deaths by State."

⁷ The COVID Tracking Project, "COVID-19 Is Affecting Black, Indigenous, Latinx, and Other People of Color the Most," accessed August 27, 2020, <https://covidtracking.com/race>.

⁸ The COVID Tracking Project, "People of Color."

⁹ The COVID Tracking Project, "People of Color."

¹⁰ U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, "Employment Situation Summary Table A" and U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, "Employment Situation News Release"

¹¹ U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, "Table B-1. Employees on Nonfarm Payrolls by Industry Sector and Selected Industry Detail," last modified September 4, 2020, <https://www.bls.gov/news.release/empst.t17.htm> and U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, "Employment Situation News Release"

¹² U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, "Employment Situation Summary Table A" and U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, "Employment Situation News Release"

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