

Underwood 'Phase III' Coronavirus Aid Priorities to Help Fourteenth District of Illinois

As of March 19, 2020

Helping Illinois Families

- Ensure coverage of treatment, therapies, and vaccines for coronavirus without cost-sharing for all Americans.
- Ensure every American worker has access to paid sick leave.
- Pass an economic recovery plan for workers that provides immediate financial support for individuals.
- Create a temporary federal tax credit for families who incur additional childcare costs because of circumstances credibly related to coronavirus (i.e. parent is a clinician or first responder working overtime, normal caregiver is immunocompromised, coronavirus-related transportation or logistical barriers to normal childcare, etc.)
- Increase funding for the Child Care and Development Block Grant and temporarily expand eligibility to keep childcare options available for those who are working to respond to coronavirus.
- Increase and expand the child tax credit to offset families' additional expenses.
- Ensure independent contractors and those who are self-employed have access to worker protections, including income supports like paid leave and unemployment insurance
- Prevent credit reporting agencies from using adverse credit events related to coronavirus in determining a credit score, and from including them in consumers' credit reports.
- Allow deferral of student loan payments with no interest for the duration of this crisis and for a period thereafter as students and families get back on their feet.
- Ensure veterans' educational benefits are not automatically cut back due to the shift to online learning.
- Ensure equity in vaccine and treatment development for coronavirus, including babies and pregnant and lactating women.
- Condition industry bailouts on common-sense worker and consumer protections that ensure taxpayer funds are being used appropriately.

Aiding Community Organizations and Entities

- Immediately increase funding for our public health infrastructure and workforce.
- Immediately increase funding to facilitate the swift delivery of personal protective equipment (PPE) and coronavirus tests to rural and suburban communities.
- Create a new Hospital and Health System Disaster Fund that provides much-needed funding directly to our health systems, while ensuring that systems serving under-resourced and rural communities receive the full support they need to provide quality care.
- Postpone scheduled Medicaid Disproportionate Share Hospital cuts and suspend Medicare sequester cuts for the duration of this crisis.
- Immediately increase operational funding for the Community Health Center Fund so that community health centers can respond sufficiently to coronavirus.
- Temporarily expand allowed uses of Federal Transit Administration Sections 5307, 5337, and 5339 grants to include operating expenses during this crisis, so that transit providers and regional transit authorities can continue operations and avoid long-term financial harm.
- Create grant funding to reimburse organizations that are incurring additional costs to buy extra PPE or paying higher prices for it in order to protect health care workers, first responder, and others who need it. Grants should be reimbursable for these costs and for other supply costs related to coronavirus.
- Provide both funding and flexibility to address the surge in mental health needs related to coronavirus.
- Increase funding for Older Americans Act caregiver and supportive services to meet the increased needs related to coronavirus.
- Investigate easing requirements for colleges to return federal funding for student loss or absence related to coronavirus.
- Create retroactive grant funding for school districts that incurred unreasonable and unexpected costs (i.e. purchasing WiFi hotspots and laptops) to quickly shift students and teachers to distance learning.
- Investigate allowing schools and libraries to use Federal Communications Commission E-Rate funding to loan laptops, tablets, and hotspots to students and rural communities that need them, or to temporarily expand WiFi service to their parking lots so that people can access it in their cars while maintaining social distance.
- Eliminate the cap on state and local tax (SALT) deductions to give families tax relief and reverse undue pressure on state and local budgets.

Supporting Small Businesses

- Create targeted and immediate grant relief for restaurants, small hotel operators, and other small businesses at risk of closing or bankruptcy in the coming weeks.
- Temporarily ease certain requirements for unemployment insurance so that workers who are furloughed have income and businesses can quickly rehire as necessary.
- Set a 0% interest rate for all Small Business Administration (SBA) loans related to coronavirus, and provide extra funding for those loans in addition to that enacted by the Coronavirus Preparedness and Response Supplemental Appropriations Act.
- Eliminate the early payoff penalty on SBA loans related to coronavirus.
- Provide additional SBA funding for administration of these loans to ensure prompt processing of applications and disbursement of funds.
- Provide personnel assistance to guide small business owners through this crisis, potentially in partnership with local small business centers or community development financial institutions.
- Suspend the Trump Administration's retaliatory tariffs to provide economic relief to Illinois farmers and manufacturers.
- Ensure that farmers' access to the resources they need for a successful planting season is not unnecessarily affected.
- Create a federal tax credit for businesses who incur substantially higher costs for functions essential to responding to coronavirus as the supply chain adjusts to this crisis.
- Investigate longer-term solutions to address the fact that many insurance policies available to small businesses do not cover damages or business interruption injuries from communicable disease outbreaks, even in a case like this where the state has ordered closures.