

CONGRESSMAN

Jimmy Panetta

PROUDLY REPRESENTING THE 20TH DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA

Dear Community Member,

As we fight a pandemic unlike anything that we as a nation have ever experienced, our government at all levels has been focused on solutions for protecting our health and preserving our livelihoods. During this fight, our government continues to employ a strategy that is federally funded, state mandated, and locally executed. Thank you for doing your part at the local level by abiding by the social distancing and stay-at-home orders. Our governors and local leaders are providing necessary leadership and resources to respond to this crisis on the ground. Our federal government, including Congress, continues to take decisive action by crafting and passing legislation for the funding necessary to fight this pandemic and support communities of all sizes as we continue to press forward on the road to economic recovery.



Congressman Panetta this past Friday evening working at a food distribution site in Soledad

Congressional Legislation to Fund the Fight Against COVID-19:

On Thursday of this past week, Congress passed the Paycheck Protection Program and Health Care Enhancement Act. In this legislation signed into law by the President, we strengthened the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) with \$310 billion in additional funding, including \$30 billion for community-based lenders, small banks, and credit unions and \$30 billion for medium-sized banks and credit unions. We are expanding small business support beyond PPP by securing \$50 billion for Small Business Administration (SBA) disaster lending, totaling more than \$350 billion in loans and \$10 billion in SBA disaster grants. We have also secured strong protections to ensure that our nation's farmers have access to this vital assistance from direct payments and direct purchases of crops, dairy, and livestock. For hospitals and health care workers, we provided \$75 billion for resources, including personal protective equipment (PPE), to those on the frontlines. We also made important improvements to the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act by significantly lowering the interest rate on advance payments, lengthening the repayment schedule, and distributing payments from general revenues rather than the Hospital Insurance Fund. We secured \$25 billion for more testing of COVID-19, which is the key to reopening the economy and resuming our lives. Moving forward, the Administration must come up with a national strategic testing policy that will focus on increasing domestic testing capacity including testing supplies. The House also voted to establish the Select Committee on the Coronavirus Crisis. This bipartisan committee will provide Congressional oversight to monitor the Administration's implementation of the coronavirus relief funding.



Congressman Panetta on Thursday at the U.S. Capitol to vote for the Paycheck Protection

Program and Health Care Enhancement Act and the establishment of the Select Oversight Committee on the Coronavirus Crisis

Congress previously passed a historic \$2 trillion relief package, the CARES Act, to support Americans while they fight the pandemic through social distancing and other sacrifices. The wide-ranging economic package provides relief for individuals, businesses, and those responding to the pandemic on the ground. It includes direct monetary payments for most community members, an enhanced safety net for those losing their livelihoods, support for small businesses and other key employers, and billions of dollars towards programs to fight this pandemic.

The first two emergency relief bills that Congress passed last month helped guarantee free testing for the coronavirus, create paid sick and emergency leave programs, and support our frontline responders and hospitals as they do their heroic work.

Most Recent CARES Act Funding for the Central Coast As We Fight COVID-19:

Recently, a portion of the CARES Act funding was distributed to local programs and governments on the central coast of California, including:

- [\\$4.5 million](#) for community health centers
- [\\$4.9 million](#) for housing, shelter for homeless families, and local governments
- [\\$12.8 million](#) for local airports
- [\\$40 million](#) for local colleges and universities to help recover expenses and support students

Future Congressional Legislation and Funding for Local Communities As We Fight COVID-19:

More needs to be done legislatively in Congress for further funding for our communities, but it was critical that we passed the above bills for the safety and security of our community members. Going forward, we will continue to legislate for more resources to fight this pandemic, including more testing, another round of direct payments to the most vulnerable, more protections for essential workers, an extension of federal unemployment compensation, further support for small businesses, and direct payments to small state and local governments.

More flexibility and funding are needed for state and local governments to manage this crisis and mitigate lost revenue, doubling down on the investment secured in the CARES Act. In particular, smaller governments on the Central Coast must receive direct payments from the State and Local Coronavirus Relief Fund. That is why I recently [called on Treasury Secretary Mnuchin](#) to allow councils of governments, like the Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments, to access this funding directly and cosponsored the [Coronavirus Community Relief Act](#), which would provide \$250 billion in direct funding to smaller governments serving under 500,000 people.

Appointment to the White House Panel on Economic Recovery As We Fight COVID-19:

The bipartisan Opening Up America Again Congressional Group was created by the President of the United States [to help guide our nation out of the COVID-19 crisis](#). Thirty-two members of the House of Representatives, including myself, were appointed to serve on the bipartisan Congressional panel. While I disagree with the President on a wide range of issues, my job is to fight for the people of the central coast of California. So, when the President of the United States asked me to serve on this panel, I accepted the invitation to help ensure that our nation emerges out of this crisis and that our Central Coast values and voices are heard as we go forward.

During the first meeting of the group over the phone with the President, Vice President, and the Secretary of the Treasury, I pressed the Administration for more testing and widespread contact tracing in order to determine and deter the spread of this virus. In order to further this goal, I stated that the use of the Defense Production Act (DPA) by the President would help eliminate bottlenecks in the medical supply chain and procure necessary materials to ensure we have a robust testing regime. Without a vaccine, more testing is the only way that we can confidently get on the road to economic recovery.

Shortly after that meeting, I wrote a [letter to the President](#) asking him for a defined federal strategy to dramatically increase the production, training, and availability of testing for COVID-19. I, and several other members of Congress from the advisory group who supported and signed my letter, urged the Administration to develop a comprehensive, national testing strategy to test front line workers, include that plan in any guidelines for reopening the economy, and mobilize the Defense Production Act to procure all testing components for COVID-19.

The work by this bipartisan group of lawmakers and the White House hopefully will ensure that our nation is guided by science and sound public health policy as we persevere through this pandemic and proceed forward to prosperity.



[Link to recent local news coverage of Congressman Panetta's appointment to the White House bipartisan congressional panel on economic recovery](#)

Increased Testing and Contact Tracing As We Fight COVID-19:

In addition to my work on the bipartisan White House economic recovery panel, I will continue to legislate for more testing for COVID-19. Although the recent emergency relief legislation by Congress increased funds for testing, our capability to test remains far too limited, currently reaching less than one percent of our nation's population. That is why I am fighting for robust resources for health care providers, including hospitals and federally qualified community health centers (FQHCs), to expand capacity to the testing process. We can, and we should, make testing and treatment accessible and affordable for everyone as quickly as possible.

The Paycheck Protection Program and Health Care Enhancement Act secured \$25 billion for necessary expenses to research, develop, validate, manufacture, purchase, administer, and expand capacity for COVID-19 tests. Moreover, that legislation requires the Administration to develop a national strategic testing plan related to providing assistance for testing and increasing testing capacity.

Along with the above legislation, I introduced the [Immediate COVID-19 Testing Procurement Act](#). This legislation would require the President to mobilize the Defense Production Act (DPA) to direct emergency production, procurement, and distribution of supplies needed to increase testing for COVID-19.

As a part of the testing strategy, investments must be made in contact tracing programs to identify COVID-19 cases and trace contacts of every case of COVID-19. Only with a robust contact tracing program with reasonable privacy protections will state and local

governments be able to gradually lift social distancing measures and movement restrictions before a vaccine becomes widely available. That is why I also plan to introduce the Contact Tracing Workforce Act to provide grant money to state, local, tribal and territorial public health agencies to hire 100,000 workers to conduct contact tracing for COVID-19. This technique has been used effectively for decades to trace infectious diseases such as syphilis, acquired immune deficiency syndrome, and tuberculosis to help individuals and public health offices identify exposure and recommend containment. This bill will empower local and state public health officials to meet the needs of their community, better understand where the virus is spreading, and prevent its spread.

Support For Small Businesses As We Fight COVID-19:

The Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) provides forgivable loans through the Small Business Administration (SBA) to small businesses under 500 employees to cover operating costs and pay employees during COVID-19. The SBA will forgive the portion of the loans spent on payroll, rent, mortgage interest, or utilities, provided businesses to keep their employees on their payroll. Small businesses, 501(c)(3) non-profits, and veterans organizations, independent contractors, and the self-employed are all eligible for PPP loans. Small businesses may apply for these loans with their current SBA-approved lender, or can find a lender [by clicking this link](#).

The Paycheck Protection Program Extension Act that was passed by Congress and signed into law by the President this past week will significantly expand PPP assistance. The legislation attempts to ensure that every qualified small business will have access to the critical assistance they need to retain their workforce and cover basic operating costs for the full duration of the unprecedented coronavirus pandemic. This legislation will create an extension mechanism so that small businesses can easily extend their PPP loans, as the eight weeks of payroll provided by the PPP was not enough, and would provide additional funding to ensure that it does not run out of funds.

The Economic Injury Disaster Loan (EIDL) under the CARES Act provides small businesses with opportunity for \$10,000 advance grants within three days of applying for a disaster loan.

Many businesses, unfortunately, have been waiting for nearly two weeks for their grants, and the SBA is limiting these grants to \$1,000 per employee. Fortunately, the PPP Extension Act provides for \$50 billion in EIDL disaster loans and \$10 billion in EIDL disaster grants up to \$10,000. That legislation will assist the SBA in providing applicants with the full advance grants so that their small businesses can continue to sufficiently operate during this pandemic.

My office has helped hundreds of Central Coast small businesses, including businesses owners, non-profits, the self-employed, and independent contractors, with SBA loans. Recently, a small business owner and health care provider in Capitola contacted my office with questions about obtaining a PPP loan. We were able to quickly provide the owner

with answers that allowed her to successfully apply for PPP with a local bank on the first day that the program became available.

For assistance with the SBA, PPP, and EIDL, please visit my website for more information in [English](#) and in [Spanish](#).

Direct Monetary Payments For Individuals As We Fight COVID-19:

The IRS has begun distributing the CARES Act Direct Monetary Payments. The IRS will [deliver payments](#) of up to \$1,200 for individuals, \$2,400 for couples, and \$500 per child under age 17. Those with direct deposit will receive their payments first, and physical checks will be sent out starting in early May.

Those who have not filed a 2019 or 2018 tax return should do so and provide direct deposit information to the IRS to get their payment faster. For those who have filed but usually receive a paper check, the IRS has opened a portal, called “[Get My Payment](#),” allowing you to input your direct deposit information and check your payment status. If you do not normally file a tax return, either because your gross income was under \$12,200 (\$24,400 for married couples), you need to file a simple return in order to receive the payment and can do so [here](#).

If you receive Social Security retirement, disability (SSDI), or survivor benefits, or Railroad Retirement and Survivor Benefits, Supplemental Security Income (SSI), you do not need to file anything as the IRS will automatically directly deposit your refund. The IRS will also provide payments automatically to veterans and their families receiving non-taxable VA benefits, such as disability and survivors pensions.

For assistance with the direct monetary payment program, please visit my website for more information in [English](#) and in [Spanish](#).

Unemployment Insurance As We Fight COVID-19:

The CARES Act created a Pandemic Unemployment Assistance program to help people who are out of work because of COVID-19. California has started to implement new CARES Act federal unemployment insurance benefit payments of \$600.

For more information on how to apply and what claimants need to know, visit the [Employment Development Department \(EDD\) website](#).

For assistance with unemployment insurance program, you also can visit my website for more information in [English](#) and in [Spanish](#).

Protecting Farmers and Farmworkers As We Fight COVID-19:

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) recently released a summary of its Coronavirus Food Assistance Program (CFAP). This plan includes \$16 billion in direct payments to farmers and \$3 billion in purchases of meat, dairy, and specialty crops. Of the direct payment funds, \$2.1 billion are reserved for specialty crop producers. Estimated losses will be calculated by the USDA Chief Economist's Office, and we do not yet have per acre estimated payment rates. USDA expects sign up for the new program by the end of May and payments to go out to producers in late May or early June. The Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) will work with fruit and vegetable producers to determine their losses and forward that information to the Farm Service Agency (FSA), which will make the payments. Of the purchase program funds, USDA has allocated at least \$100 million per month in purchases of meat, dairy, and specialty crops, up to the \$3 billion. USDA will work with local food and regional distributors to deliver food to food banks, as well as community and faith-based organizations to provide food to those in need. USDA is hoping to have the distribution companies certified in the next two weeks and be able to start purchases and food deliveries in the next three to four weeks.

The CARES Act supports local resources that can be utilized by all community members, regardless of immigration status, including child care centers, food assistance programs, and hospitals and clinics. However, that bill leaves much more work to do in future stimulus legislation. As of now, some immigrant workers, who pay taxes and immeasurably contribute to our economy, are being left out of direct economic aid. I have cosponsored the Leave No Taxpayer Behind Act to allow individuals with Individual Taxpayer Identification Numbers (ITIN) to receive direct monetary payments provided by federal coronavirus response aid and I have called on House leadership to support and fund hazard pay and required workplace protections for essential frontline workers, like farmworkers.

My colleagues in Congress and I introduced the Coronavirus Immigrant Families Protection Act to help ensure that all community members, regardless of immigration status, are able to access COVID-19 testing and treatment, and other relief services provided in coronavirus relief legislation. The legislation would provide dedicated funding for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to conduct public outreach in multiple languages to hard-to-reach populations to ensure that vulnerable communities have access to COVID-19 relief measures and critical public health information. The bill also would temporarily modify immigration policies that deter immigrants from receiving the medical care they need throughout the coronavirus pandemic, such as the public charge rule. This rule has had a widespread chilling effect in discouraging even those not subject to the rule from seeking health care and other critical services due to confusion and fear about the rule's impact. I will continue to fight to ensure that all community members during these difficult times have access to the critical resources of our nation.



[Link to recent national news coverage of work by Congressman Panetta to protect farmworkers on the central coast of California](#)

Preventing Food Insecurity As We Fight COVID-19:

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), known as CalFresh in our communities, already supports over nine percent of the households on the Central Coast. As more and more people are unable to go to work due to this pandemic, this statistic is rising. In Congress, we are fighting to boost the maximum SNAP benefit by 15 percent, increase the monthly minimum SNAP benefit from \$16 to \$30, and place a hold on harmful rules proposed by the Executive Branch that weaken SNAP eligibility and benefits. I am also working to ensure that SNAP beneficiaries can access their benefits while they adhere to our Shelter-in-Place order. Starting April 28, 2020, individuals and families will be able to purchase groceries online using their Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) cards. More information about SNAP can be found at the CalFresh website or [here](#).

In order to bolster the SNAP benefits for students, I co-introduced the Emergency Ensuring Access to SNAP (EATS) Act. This legislation would ensure college students would not be rendered ineligible for the SNAP on the basis of their student status during this national emergency. Research shows that hunger is a significant issue facing college students, especially among low-income and first-generation students. However, under SNAP's rules, the majority of college students are ineligible for this essential assistance. The Emergency EATS Act would ensure that students otherwise eligible for the program could access SNAP for the duration of the public health emergency.

In order to expand SNAP participant's use of their benefits, I authored and will be introducing a bill that will allow use of SNAP benefits at our local restaurants during the pandemic. As more Americans struggle with hunger, and with so many of our Central

Coast restaurants seeking ways to continue serving our community, individuals should be allowed to use their SNAP benefits to purchase low-cost prepared meals.

Our food banks are on the front lines of this pandemic. That is why I am working in Congress to provide these organizations with the assistance they need to continue feeding our communities. As mentioned above, we are working with the USDA to provide food banks with fresh produce from our local producers with the direct purchase program. The food banks on the Central Coast are doing an outstanding job feeding our communities and it is our responsibility to ensure that Congress and this Administration work together for increased funding and expedited resources for our food banks.

For assistance with local food banks and nutrition assistance programs, please visit my website for information in [English](#) and in [Spanish](#).



Congressman Panetta recently assisting National Guardsmen at a food distribution site in Castroville

Bringing Home Community Members Stuck Abroad As We Fight COVID-19:

Recently, I helped 38 community members return home who were stuck in 16 countries plus Antarctica due to the COVID-19 pandemic. One community member from Watsonville was stuck in Nigeria due to COVID-19 orders imposed by the Nigerian government. His wife reached out to my office for help in bringing home her husband, who had a medical condition. In working with the U.S. State Department, we were able to place him on a priority list and bring him home. The story is detailed [here](#) by a local news station.

If you need help with a family member who is stranded abroad during the COVID-19 pandemic, please reach out to my Salinas office at 831-424-2229 or visit my website for resources in [English](#) and in [Spanish](#).



[*Link to local news coverage about Congressman Panetta's work to bring home constituents who were stuck abroad due to COVID-19 pandemic*](#)

Additional Information and Resources:

Health Care:

If you are uninsured, you can now apply for health care coverage through Covered California. Medi-Cal enrollment continues to be year-round. Find out more [here](#).

Tax Day:

Tax Day for federal income taxes [has been moved](#) from April 15 to July 15. All taxpayers and businesses will have this additional time to file and make payments without interest or penalties.

Census:

You can help drive social change while you social distance and stay at home. The 2020 Census count has started, and is critical to ensuring our communities get the resources we need for our hospitals, public schools, infrastructure, Medicaid, Head Start, and more. Taking the Census is safe and confidential and you can do it right at home from your computer. Go to <http://my2020census.gov> now to make sure that you are counted so that our community is protected.



Congressman Panetta with his 2020 Census questionnaire that he received in the mail

As your federal representative for the people of the Central Coast, please know that I

continue to fight this pandemic by continuing to serve you. For frequent updates on my work during this public health crisis, please follow me on [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#).

If you have any immediate questions or concerns that I or my staff can help you with, please feel free to call my Congressional offices in Salinas, Santa Cruz, or Washington, D.C. or contact me through my [website](#). Please do not hesitate to reach out and let me know how I can continue to best serve you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'J. Panetta', with a stylized flourish extending to the right.

JIMMY PANETTA
Member of Congress
20th Congressional District, California