

CONGRESSMAN

# Jimmy Panetta

PROUDLY REPRESENTING THE 20TH DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA

Dear Neighbor,

As you know, the coronavirus COVID-19 presents a grave and accelerating threat to public health and to the economic security and well-being of the American people, including our home on the central coast of California. As U.S. Representatives, my congressional colleagues and I have a solemn and urgent responsibility to take strong, serious, action to confront and control this crisis and ensure that our federal government provides the necessary response and resources to protect families and stimulate the economy.

## **Federal Action:**

Last week, we provided \$8.3 billion in [emergency funds](#) to support federal, state, and local efforts to treat and prevent the spread of COVID-19. This bipartisan funding package included \$3 billion for vaccine research, development, and therapeutics, \$2.2 billion for preparedness and prevention efforts, and \$1 billion for the purchase of medical supplies and support for community health centers.

Tonight, the House of Representatives passed the Families First Coronavirus Response Act. After negotiations with the Administration, we agreed upon a large-scale package meant to provide paid leave for workers, expand food aid, and support widespread testing for the illness at no cost to patients.

The legislation takes additional smart, strategic and science-based measures to put families first:

- To stop the spread of the virus: we have secured free coronavirus testing for everyone who needs a test, including the uninsured. We cannot fight coronavirus effectively unless everyone in our country who needs to be tested can get their test free of charge.
- For families' economic security: we secured paid emergency leave with two weeks of paid sick leave and up to three months of paid family and medical leave. We have also secured enhanced unemployment insurance, a step that will extend benefits to laid off and furloughed workers.
- For families' food security: we strengthened nutrition security initiatives, including SNAP, known in California as CalFresh. The bill includes more than \$1 billion to provide food to low-income pregnant women and mothers with young children, help local food banks, and feed low-income seniors. It ensures that

students who depend on schools and child care for free and reduce-priced meals continue to have access to nutritious foods during closures. It provides women, infants, and children with the flexibility to access food and infant formula without having to make unnecessary or unsafe visits to clinics.

- For families' health security: we increased federal funds for Medicaid to support our local, state, tribal and territorial governments and health systems, so that they have the resources necessary to combat this crisis



*The final vote total in the House for the Families First Coronavirus Response Act.*

As the Senate works to pass this bill in the coming days, the House will begin work on a third emergency response package to protect the health, economic security and well-being of the American people. We will do so in continued consultation with scientists, researchers, health care professionals, public health officials and community leaders, so that we can craft the most effective, evidence-based response.

In addition to the above legislative efforts, I continue to fight for further federal assistance for our communities. I cosponsored the [Paid Sick Days for Public Health Emergencies and Personal Family Care Act](#), which provides paid sick days to workers in light of COVID-19 and for future public health emergencies. I called for the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) to [evaluate the need](#) to extend the April 15th tax filing deadline due to the impact of COVID-19 on the tax return filing season. I also demanded [urgent action and clarity](#) from the Small Business Administration (SBA) to assist small businesses being impacted by COVID-19 and related containment efforts.

### **Local Action:**

Since it has been advised to avoid personal and close contact with groups of people, I am conducting person to person calls with healthcare professionals and leaders throughout the Central Coast. I am in contact with local and state leaders, first responders, and administrators of our hospitals, healthcare clinics, veterans care facilities, and senior home

care facilities. I will continue to monitor the situation and work closely with our local, state, federal, and healthcare leaders, who are committed to addressing the health and safety concerns of our community through consistent communication of accurate information.



*One of many calls with local healthcare administrators about response and prevention efforts.*

Recently, 19 passengers from the Grand Princess cruise ship were relocated to the state-owned Asilomar property. The State of California was authorized to take this action under the California State Emergency Act, which allows the state to use any of its properties for emergency services. The men and women from the ship were screened and are being treated and enduring a mandatory 14-day quarantine. At this point, no more than 24 people will be quarantined at the state-owned property. Specially trained teams of medical and security professionals are monitoring and attending to the passengers. Your local, state, and federal leaders are thankful to our neighbors for their compassion and we will work closely to ensure that the highest level of safety and security is provided to our community.

### **Local Resources:**

If a medical professional says that you are unable to work due to having or being exposed to the Coronavirus, you can file a [Disability Insurance claim](#).

Find out more about state benefits for workers impacted by COVID-19 [here](#).

Find Small Business Administration guidance for businesses and employers to plan and

respond to COVID-19 [here](#).

If you have questions about your local response, you can contact your county:

#### Monterey County

- Residents can visit Monterey County's Health Department [website](#) or call 211 or text "coronavirus" to 211-211 to stay informed

#### San Benito County

- Residents can visit San Benito County's Health and Human Services Agency [website](#)

#### Santa Clara County

- Residents can visit Santa Clara County's Public Health [website](#) or contact the call center at 408-885-3980

#### Santa Cruz County:

- Residents can visit Santa Cruz County's Health Service Agency [website](#) or call 211 or text "COVID 19" to 211211. [Preguntas Frecuentes En Español](#)

#### **Office Policy:**

As your federal representative, I am committed to protecting public health and to continuing to serve you. That is why all of my staff and I are following [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\)](#) guidance, including cleaning our hands often, practicing social distancing, and staying home as much as possible to further reduce risk of being exposed to or spreading COVID-19. We will continue to meet with constituents, but if you need to reschedule your appointment with one of our offices, or prefer to speak with our team over the phone, please let us know and we will accommodate. I will continue to do my duty as your representative, and you will get the same service from my constituent casework staff. The goal is to maintain consistent, uninterrupted constituent services to the Central Coast and keep the community members safe.

#### **CDC Guidelines:**

The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) has up-to-date information about COVID-19, tips for prevention, and [more](#).

- Clean your hands often. Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds especially after you have been in a public place, or after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing. If soap and water are not readily available, use a

hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol. Cover all surfaces of your hands and rub them together until they feel dry. Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.

- Clean AND disinfect frequently touched surfaces daily.
- Stay home if you are sick, except to get medical care.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick. Implement “social distancing,” by putting several feet of distance between yourself and others to reduce transmission risk, particularly when in large groups or crowded settings with little air circulation.
- If you are experiencing symptoms of COVID-19 and may have had contact with a person with COVID-19, or recently traveled to countries with apparent community spread, call your health care provider or local public health department first before seeking medical care so that appropriate precautions can be taken.

For more information on ways to prevent illness, [click here](#).

I know that COVID-19 is posing a challenge to our work and our lives. But, by being prepared, working together, and maintaining strong communication, we will surmount this challenge as a community. We must, and we will, continue to look out for each other.

Please know that I continue to closely monitor this public health concerns and will keep our community apprised of any updates. For hourly updates, 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 'Jimmy Panetta', with a stylized flourish at the end.

JIMMY PANETTA  
Member of Congress