

**March 06, 2020**

## **Congress Passes Coronavirus Funding**

On Thursday, the Senate voted nearly unanimously to approve an \$8.3 billion coronavirus response bill, it will now be sent to the White House to be signed by President Trump. The House voted on the same measures on Wednesday and approved it 415 to 2. Top appropriators in both parties negotiated the bill and described it as a noncontroversial, bipartisan measure. The measure will allow for “an aggressive, comprehensive, and swift response,” Senate Appropriations Chairman Richard Shelby (R-Ala.)

Two weeks ago the Trump administration sent their emergency request to Congress. The Administrations initially asked for \$2.5 billion, which is less than half of what was passed on Thursday. The administration’s request was heavily scrutinized by Democrats and some Republicans for being drastically too low.

The bill includes \$7.8 billion in discretionary funds to bolster vaccine development, research, equipment stockpiles and state and local health budgets. The package would also authorize \$490 million in mandatory spending by lifting constraints on Medicare’s payments for telehealth so beneficiaries can freely consult their doctors remotely, avoiding hospitals and physicians’ offices where they might risk exposure to the virus. About \$3 billion will go towards the development of vaccines, therapeutics and diagnostics; \$2.2 billion be given to the CDC to help public health agencies prepare and respond, including by boosting testing capabilities; and \$950 million will go to state, local and tribal governments.

The bill will also include \$1 billion in loan subsidies that would support \$7 billion in low-interest loans for small businesses impacted by financial losses as a result of the coronavirus

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COVID-19 Resource Center  
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outbreak. The Small Business Administration will receive \$20 million to administer these loans.

\$1.5 billion will be allocated to the State Department and the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) to protect Americans abroad and prevent the spread of the virus worldwide. \$264 million of the \$1.5 billion will be used to evacuate Americans and maintain consular operations overseas; and \$200 million will be given to the USAID's Emergency Response Fund to prepare for and respond to emerging health threats and working to prevent the spread of illness and infection before it reaches U.S. soil.

Below, please find additional information and resources for your business/organization, your community, and your family.

- Interim Guidance for Businesses and Employers
- Information for Communities, Schools, and Businesses
- U.S. Department of Labor: OSHA Resources for Workers and Employers on COVID-19
- World Health Organization: Get Your Workplace Ready for COVID-19
- Information for Travel
- U.S. Department of State: Travel Advisories
- U.S. Department of State: Traveler's Checklist
- U.S. Department of State: Smart Traveler Enrollment Program

## **Related People**

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