



INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF PROFESSIONAL & TECHNICAL ENGINEERS AFL-CIO & CLC

501 3rd Street, NW, Suite 701, Washington, DC 20001
202-239-4880 • FAX 202-239-4881 • www.ifpte.org

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December 15, 2020

Hon. Nancy Pelosi, Speaker
U.S. House of Representatives
H-232, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

Hon. Kevin McCarthy, Minority Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
H-204, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

Hon. Mitch McConnell, Majority Leader
United States Senate
S-230, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

Hon. Charles Schumer, Minority Leader
United States Senate
S-221, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Speaker Pelosi, Majority Leader McConnell, Minority Leaders Schumer & McCarthy:

As the executive officers of the International Federation of Professional & Technical Engineers (IFPTE), we are writing regarding your ongoing efforts to pass a year-end COVID package.

Today, Americans are struggling with deteriorating economic circumstances, job insecurity, and keeping their families and themselves safe during the worst of the COVID-19 surge. This includes IFPTE members who are employed in a diverse set of industries and sectors of the economy. Their jobs, their financial security, and their lives continue to be impacted and imperiled by the economic crisis, the pandemic, and the inadequate economic relief and public health response. While the relief package under consideration should be understood as providing interim relief and not long-term economic stimulus, Americans experiencing economic hardship need Congress to act urgently.

We request you to pass a COVID package that includes the priorities of IFPTE members:

- **Direct aid to state and local governments** – Include at least \$160 billion for state and local government aid. While this amount of funding only stabilizes these budgets for the short-term, it is a good step in the right direction to help preserve public sector jobs while maintaining critically important services to taxpayers, particularly those directly impacted by and responding to the COVID pandemic.
- **Payroll support for aviation and aircraft manufacturing jobs** - With the pandemic resulting in over 100,000 aviation workers and high-skill workers in the aircraft manufacturing industry laid off or furloughed, the industry is likely to face long-term impacts in this critical transportation and manufacturing industry. This relief package must include the payroll support extension for air carriers as well as the Aviation Manufacturing Jobs Protection Act of 2020 (H.R.8002) and the Aviation Manufacturing Industry Act of 2020 (S.3705). Both measures have bipartisan support and are endorsed by unions representing workers in those industries and industry employers.
- **Extend the Payroll Protection Program to include 501(c)(5) labor organizations** – Renewing the PPP is important for stabilizing employment and keeping small businesses afloat. Expanding PPP to include 501(c)(6) business leagues but excluding 501(c)(5) labor

organizations is tantamount to an ideological attack on labor organizations that are advocating for workers on the frontlines of the pandemic and working families impacted by the economic crisis.

- **Extend the Pandemic Unemployment Assistance and Pandemic Emergency Employment Compensation and include at least \$300/week supplemental benefit** – These benefits are vital to helping the unemployed weather the economic crisis, stabilizing housing, and mitigate the social and economic impact of mass unemployment on families, the community, and the economy.
- **Food Assistance** – As weekly unemployment filings rise sharply, local economies are strained, and food insecurity rises, any relief bill under consideration must include an increase the maximum Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefit.
- **Assistance for renters and student loan borrowers** – Extension of the eviction moratorium and the committing resources to rental assistance is vital as millions of Americans may lose housing when the current moratorium expires. Extending the student loan forbearance is also a commonsense measure to relieving the burden on borrowers during the economic crisis.
- **Support for USPS, public transit, and broadband infrastructure** – Targeted funds for critical infrastructure should be included in this relief package as these services support the economy and under fiscal strain due to public health and safety measures.

IFPTE is opposed to attempts to hold state and local government aid hostage in exchange for a blanket business liability shield. We urge lawmakers on both sides of the aisle to work in good faith and reject any such effort.

In IFPTE's view, the inclusion of a corporate immunity provision is wholly inappropriate in a targeted bill meant to provide relief to working people and support to state and local governments that are on the frontlines of the pandemic response. Corporate liability legislation is a longstanding policy proposal forwarded by employer associations and repurposing that demand during the pandemic is counterproductive.

Finally, the proposed relief legislation excludes a number of key IFPTE priorities. IFPTE will continue to advocate for economic relief and stimulus provisions that are not in the current proposal, such as direct cash support for working families, extending health insurance coverage for workers who have been laid off, maximum telework for federal employees during the pandemic, and meaningful Congressional oversight on the performance of the Treasury Department and Federal Reserve policies on preserving jobs.

Inaction carries a steep cost that is directly borne by working people and their communities, but ultimately impacts the long-term strength of our national economy. IFPTE appreciates your consideration of the following recommendations.

Sincerely,



Paul Shearon
President



Matthew Biggs
Secretary-Treasurer/Legislative Director