



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

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January 29, 2021

Dear Senator:

As the executive officers of the International Federation of Professional & Technical Engineers (IFPTE), we are writing to share our priorities for a COVID relief package to be passed at the beginning of the 117th Congress.

IFPTE members are employed in a diverse set of industries and sectors of the economy to continue to 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. We are encouraged by the Biden Administration's Rescue and Relief framework for addressing the COVID pandemic and the economic crisis, as well as administrative actions and policies to ensure occupational safety, strengthen domestic manufacturing, commit to the federal workforce and restore key federal worker protections, and base the national response to the pandemic on science and evidence. We now look to Congress as we work together to pass legislation that meets the urgent needs of American workers, families, and communities.

Therefore, IFPTE requests you to pass a COVID package that includes the following:

- **Direct flexible aid to state, county, tribal, and municipal governments** – A national plan to beat COVID-19 must include a swift and aggressive response from the federal government and recognize the necessity of ensuring states and localities have the resources and support necessary to meet the needs of working families, communities, and local economies during the public health and economic crises. We request at least \$350 billion in flexible funding for state and local government aid. This funding is critically needed to preserve public sector jobs, maintain and restore important services, and ensuring governments that are at the forefront of responding to public health and communities facing economic distress have the resources they need.
- **Payroll support for aircraft manufacturing jobs** - The pandemic's impact on the aerospace industry has resulted in the loss of over 100,000 aerospace manufacturing jobs. The continuing loss of revenue for the industry further threatens the jobs of high-skill high-wage workers in this strategic high-value export-oriented national industry. Because the aviation manufacturing supply chain and its workers have yet to receive targeted financial support, we request this upcoming COVID relief bill include the Aviation Manufacturing Jobs Protection Act of 2021, sponsored by Reps. Larsen and Estes. This legislation has bipartisan support, endorsements from aerospace manufacturing unions, and the backing of industry employers.
- **Extend the Payroll Protection Program to include 501(c)(5) labor organizations** – While PPP has already been expanded to include 501(c)(6) business leagues, excluding 501(c)(5) labor organizations from PPP 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. We urge you to provide balance to

PPP and prioritize extending this important employment stabilization program unions.

- **Restore and expand COVID paid sick leave and family and medical leave** - Working Americans must have the ability to take paid leave in order to quarantine, recover from COVID exposure, or to take care of family members exposed to COVID. In addition to restoring the Families First Coronavirus Response Act's paid leave requirements, the next COVID relief legislation should go further and provide 14 weeks or more of paid leave and cover federal and state local employees, as proposed by President Biden.
- **Sustaining and expanding health care coverage** -Measures to sustain health care coverage for workers and their families who have lost employer-sponsored health insurance as furloughs and laid offs should include a 100% COBRA subsidy. Additionally, we ask you include provisions for health care equity and coverage for individuals without coverage.
- **Extend the Pandemic Unemployment Assistance and Pandemic Emergency Employment Compensation and include at least \$400/week in supplemental benefits** – These benefits have proven to be 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. We urge the continuation of these benefits through 2021 and at least a \$400 per week supplemental benefit, as well as the inclusion of automatic triggers to extend these unemployment benefits for the duration of the economic crisis.
- **Food assistance** – As weekly unemployment filings rise sharply, local economies are strained, and food insecurity rises, this COVID relief package must include extending the 15% increase the maximum Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefit through the end of the fiscal year and allow for automatic triggers to further extend these benefits as economic conditions and food insecurity necessitate.
- **Direct financial assistance for adults and dependents** - Americans are long overdue for household economic relief. An additional \$1,400 per person payment, which together with the \$600 payment contained in the previous year-end COVID relief package, provides a necessary economic stimulus to help sustain households, local businesses, and the economy. We also ask Congress to include President Biden's commitment to extending direct relief to adult dependents and mixed status households in this relief package.

Lastly, we request inclusion of provisions supporting the national vaccination program, a new public health job corps for pandemic response efforts, and equitable resources for school systems to reopen safely. As we pass the one-year mark of the first reported COVID outbreak in the U.S., it is imperative that we turn the tide of the pandemic and move forward toward a post-COVID national economic recovery.

We thank you for considering our priorities. Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact either of us directly or contact IFPTE legislative representative Faraz Khan at 301-275-6038.

Sincerely,



Paul Shearon
President



Matthew Biggs
Secretary-Treasurer/Legislative Director