



Legislative Issues

McAllen Chamber of Commerce

On May 15, the U.S. House of Representatives will pass The Heroes Act. This is the latest legislation to address the continued public health crisis and provide desperately needed support for struggling families and essential workers, with funds for testing and tracing measures, key support for frontline workers and strengthened assistance for the American people.

Congressman Gonzalez recently released [a detailed estimate](#) of the direct benefits that the Heroes Act would provide to those in the 15th District of Texas.

He is proud to give a full endorsement of The Heroes Act and the Rules change that will allow the House to legislate and operate in a safe way during this pandemic. In the 15th District of Texas, workers, and families as well as cities and municipalities urgently need more relief to weather this public health and economic crisis.

Many of our frontline heroes are even at risk of losing their jobs as they risk their lives to care for us. We must come together to pass The Heroes Act and ensure that the House fulfills its obligations to protect South Texas families and ensure all our frontline heroes have the support they need to continue to save lives and keep our communities safe and healthy.

The Heroes Act provides state and local governments on the frontlines of this crisis with robust, desperately needed funding to cover coronavirus-related outlays and revenue loss and pay our health care workers, police, fire, transportation, EMS, teachers and other vital workers who keep us safe and are in danger of losing their jobs.

An analysis prepared by the Congressional Research Service estimates that the Heroes Act will provide \$35.4 billion in state funding for the people of Texas in addition to urgently needed funding for those in the 15th District of Texas communities. The Heroes Act also includes a \$90 billion fund to support state and local public education, including \$9,242,958 for Texas communities. This funding will help maintain or restore state and local fiscal support for elementary, secondary and public higher education and can be used to meet a wide range of urgent needs, including summer learning, after school programs, distance learning, and emergency financial aid for college students as well as coordination with public health departments to mitigate the spread of disease.

In addition to resources for our state, local, tribal and territorial governments, the Heroes Act provides transformative, far-reaching support to protect the lives and livelihoods of the American people and the life of our democracy.

- Provides strong support for our heroes by establishing a \$200 billion Heroes' fund to ensure that essential workers across the country receive hazard pay.

- Commits another \$75 billion for the testing, tracing and treatment we need in order to have a science-based path to safely reopen our country and helping ensure that every American can access free coronavirus treatment.
- Puts money in the pockets of workers with a second round of direct payments to families up to \$6,000 per household, new payroll protection measures to keep 60 million workers connected with their jobs and extending weekly \$600 federal unemployment payments through next January.
- Fixes Economic Impact Stimulus Payments for working people by allowing individuals with Individual Taxpayer Identification Number to file for stimulus checks.
- Supports small businesses by strengthening the Payroll Protection Program to ensure that it reaches underserved communities, nonprofits of all sizes and types and responds flexibly to small businesses by providing \$10 billion for COVID-19 emergency grants through the Economic Injury Disaster Loan program.
- Provides support for critical institutions with \$25 billion allotted for the hardworking people at the Postal Service and maintains the integrity of our elections for vote-by-mail.

Ensures further support for Texans and all Americans, including for:

Health security – with COBRA subsidies and a special enrollment period in the ACA exchanges for those without insurance.

Workplace security – requiring OSHA to ensure that all workplaces develop science-based infection control plans and preventing employers from retaliating against workers who report problems.

Housing security – with \$175 billion in new supports to assist renters and homeowners make monthly rent, mortgage and utility payments and other housing-related costs.

Food security – with a 15 percent increase to the maximum SNAP benefit and additional funding for nutrition programs that help families put food on the table. Protects the life of our democracy with new resources to ensure safe elections, an accurate Census, and preserve the Postal Service.

With The Heroes Act, we intend to honor the service and sacrifice of our nation's heroes and meet the needs of the American people through the remainder of this coronavirus crisis.

It is an honor to represent the 15th District of Texas during these difficult times. For further information, the Congressman's office may be contacted [online](#) or by phone at (888) 217-0261.