

Republican plan doesn't meet needs of families

Written by Sharon Kayne Communications Director, NM Voices for Children
Friday, 07 August 2020 03:57



Doesn't match scope of unprecedented economic challenges

ALBUQUERQUE—The Republican COVID-19 relief plan unveiled yesterday [July 27] doesn't meet the needs of New Mexico families and doesn't address our unprecedented state fiscal crisis, which means it will make the recession longer and more painful, James Jimenez, executive director of New Mexico Voices for Children, said in a statement today [July 28].

“Nearly 18% of New Mexico adults living with children reported that their children are not getting enough to eat because of the public health crisis and recession. This crisis is bigger than any in our lifetime, but the Republican proposal doesn't meet the needs of our state or the moment.

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“There is no increase in SNAP benefits to help people buy food for themselves and their families, no funding for homelessness services or additional rental vouchers, and substantially less money for laid-off workers even though Monday’s record number of COVID cases mean[s] that many people are unlikely to be able to return to work soon.

“And it does not include nearly enough aid to state and local governments to prevent layoffs of teachers and public workers and could force cuts to schools, Medicaid, or critical public services.

Sens. Tom Udall and Martin Heinrich must keep fighting to pass a better relief package, especially for state and local governments and low-income New Mexicans who have been hit the hardest by the pandemic and are facing the greatest financial hurdles,” Jimenez said.

New research released last week [week of July 19] by the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities shows the number of people struggling to get enough to eat has increased dramatically and a huge number of people are falling behind on rent – just as the national moratorium on evictions expires. While tens of millions of people are facing serious financial hardship, Hispanic, Indigenous, Black, and immigrant people have been hit the hardest because of structural racism that creates disparities in education, employment, housing, and health care.

During these negotiations, Congress must prioritize support for people hard-hit by the crisis by making sure they get the help they need and work to prevent states, cities, and towns from making deep budget cuts that will hurt tens of millions.

New Mexico Voices for Children is calling on Congress to immediately negotiate a bipartisan agreement that:

Provides additional federal funding for Medicaid programs and direct grants to states, territories, and tribes to protect core public services such as education, health care, and public safety, in addition to aid for local governments;

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Temporarily increases SNAP benefits and housing assistance so people can get enough to eat and keep a roof over their heads;

Temporarily makes the Child Tax Credit available to the lowest-income children and expands the Earned Income Tax Credit for low-paid workers not raising kids in their homes;

Creates an emergency fund for states to help people who are falling through the cracks and to create subsidized jobs programs when workers can participate safely; and

Continues expanded unemployment benefits.

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