



MAYORS FOR A GUARANTEED INCOME

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Chokwe A. Lumumba

(Jackson, MS)

Alex Morse

(Holyoke, MA)

President-elect Joseph R. Biden Jr.
Biden-Harris Transition
1401 Constitution Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20230

Vice President-elect Kamala Harris
Biden-Harris Transition
1401 Constitution Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20230

January 14, 2021

RE: Letter From Mayors Calling on President-elect Biden and Vice President-elect Harris to Pass Stimulus Checks Until the Economy Recovers

President-elect Biden and Vice President-elect Harris:

The Trump Administration's failure to get the COVID-19 pandemic under control has led to one of the most significant and unequal economic crises in modern history. The resulting loss of income for our families and businesses has forced more and more people to rely on our cities and states to help keep them afloat. With no end in sight to this crisis, we are in urgent need of substantial federal assistance to get our families and economy back on track.

We now have an opportunity to take bold action to help our communities and families thrive again. And as mayors from cities across the country, we know what's needed. We're calling on you, the leaders of the largest economy in the world, to urgently pass a robust stimulus that includes **recurring direct cash payments** to families until the economy recovers. Recurring direct payments will help families meet basic needs, reduce income inequality, boost state and local economies, and speed the recovery.

At least half of families have been impacted, with low-wage earners, women, and Black workers hit hardest. Nearly half of households have experienced serious financial trouble during the pandemic. And the impact has not been equal: Low-wage workers lost eight times more jobs than high earners at the height of the pandemic; women have been pushed out of the workforce at four times the rate of men; and the gulf in employment between Black and white workers has more than doubled since the pandemic began.



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Svante Myrick

(Ithaca, NY)

Shawyn Patterson-Howard

(Mount Vernon, NY)

William Peduto

(Pittsburgh, PA)

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(Shreveport, LA)

Lauren Poe

(Gainesville, FL)

Jerome A. Prince

(Gary, IN)

Satya Rhodes-Conway

(Madison, WI)

Katie Rosenberg

(Wausau, WI)

Andre Sayegh

(Paterson, NJ)

Libby Schaaf

(Oakland, CA)

Steve Schewel

(Durham, NC)

Sumbul Siddiqui

(Cambridge, MA)

Levar Stoney

(Richmond, VA)

Edward A. Sundquist

(Jamestown, NY)

Sylvester Turner

(Houston, TX)

Alan Webber

(Santa Fe, NM)

Victoria R. Woodards

(Tacoma, WA)

Direct payments have been an essential tool to keeping more from falling in poverty. While extended unemployment benefits have been essential, data show that unemployed Black workers are far less likely to receive unemployment benefits than unemployed white workers. Cash reaches millions who are struggling economically, including those who don't qualify for unemployment benefits. Cash payments were a primary reason the CARES Act drove poverty to fall in the early months of the recession.

Direct payments help state and local economies recover by putting more cash into local households and state budgets. The CARES Act payments increased Americans' incomes, boosting their spending and the tax revenue that consumer activity generates. That cash flow directly into households buoyed state revenues, and has given state budget writers facing shortfalls reason for optimism. More than 125 economists note that a stimulus at the scale of the recession will boost consumer spending, driving the economic recovery and shortening the recession.

Direct payments are tangible and popular. The 2009 ARRA was criticized for delivering aid largely through hidden pathways, and families didn't always feel the impact directly. But stimulus checks offer a direct and visible way to help families meet their basic needs. There is strong bipartisan support for direct cash payments, with 77% of voters supporting another one-time payment and 61% supporting ongoing cash payments until the crisis is over.

In addition, we encourage you to work to implement a guaranteed income program even when we are out of the COVID-19 pandemic. Before the pandemic, many households across the country were suffering economically, and that number will only grow after the pandemic is past. No two American households are identical in their needs, but more cash in people's pockets keeps families financially secure and stimulates the local economy.

This is not the time for timid solutions. It's critical that we quickly pass a robust stimulus to help promote a sustained and racially equitable recovery and help families and businesses get back on their feet. Recurring direct cash payments are the bold solution we need, now.

In Partnership,

Mayors for a Guaranteed Income