

June 4, 2020

The Honorable Mitch McConnell, Majority Leader  
The Honorable Charles Schumer, Minority Leader  
The Honorable Chuck Grassley, Chair, Finance Committee  
The Honorable Ron Wyden, Ranking Member, Finance Committee  
The Honorable Lamar Alexander, Chair, Health, Education, Labor & Pensions Committee  
The Honorable Patty Murray, Ranking Member, Health, Education, Labor & Pensions Committee  
United States Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Leader McConnell, Minority Leader Schumer, Chairman Grassley, Ranking Member Wyden, Chairman Alexander, and Ranking Member Murray:

On behalf of the working men and women and their families across the country, we urge swift Senate passage of the HEROES Act.

This bold legislation is what is needed now to protect Americans' health and restore our economy. It gives critical aid to our core institutions, including state and local governments, public schools and the U.S. Postal Service, and supports essential health coverage for laid-off workers grappling with the pandemic. It helps employers keep workers on payroll, extends enhanced unemployment benefits for those who are out of work through no fault of their own, offers additional food assistance and includes more direct payments to working people, and it provides relief for renters and homeowners.

The labor movement's unanimous view is that a major achievement of the HEROES Act is the support it provides for private pension plans. Division D of the Act, the Emergency Pension Plan Relief Act of 2020 ("EPPRA"), creates a special multiemployer pension plan partition program. The Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation ("PBGC") would relieve certain severely overburdened multiemployer plans of the benefit liabilities that block their paths to financial survival. EPPRA would also temporarily ease the funding rules to help fundamentally healthy multiemployer and single employer pension plans cope with the immediate economic crisis resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic and then maintain their financial stability. Most important, this legislation achieves its critical goals without jeopardizing the stability of the multiemployer pension system overall by saddling the plans with unsustainable funding requirements and PBGC premiums.

We do have concerns, however, about a second set of multiemployer plan provisions included in the HEROES Act. Within the labor movement we do not share the same sense of unanimity regarding Division N, the Giving Retirement Options to Workers ("GROW") Act. Since there is a lack of consensus in the multiemployer community regarding the inclusion of the GROW Act in this legislation, we ask that Division N, the GROW Act, be dropped from the HEROES Act and we urge swift passage.

For all the reasons we detail above, enactment of the HEROES Act is of the highest importance. The fundamental drive to protect working families from the severe health and economic threats now confronting our nation must continue unimpeded.

Sincerely,

Bonnie Castillo, NNU  
Thomas M. Conway, USW  
Kenneth Cooper, IBEW  
Lily Eskelsen García, NEA  
Rory L. Gamble, UAW  
Mary Kay Henry, SEIU  
James Hoffa, IBT  
Newton B. Jones, IBB  
Richard Lanigan, OPEIU  
Matthew Loeb, IATSE  
Robert Martinez, Jr., IAM  
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Cecil Roberts, UMWA  
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