

Warren calls for COVID-19 relief package to include undocumented immigrants

United States Senator Elizabeth Warren (D-Mass.) today joined Senator Mazie Hirono (D-Hawaii) and Representative Judy Chu (D-Calif.), along with 27 senators and 76 members of the House of Representatives, in writing to members of Congressional leadership to call for an inclusive coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) relief package that ensures that urgently-needed COVID-19 testing and medical care and relief benefits are accessible by all communities, regardless of limited English proficiency or immigration status. In their letter, the Members of Congress highlighted the immigrant workers who are on the front lines of the coronavirus response as health care workers, farmworkers, grocery store workers, and other essential service providers.

“As Congress responds to the critical needs of our country during the COVID-19 pandemic, we urge you to ensure that the vital protections and economic lifelines provided in coronavirus relief legislation are accessible to all communities, regardless of immigration status or limited English proficiency,” the Members of Congress wrote. “COVID-19 has caused one of the greatest public health and economic crises our Nation has ever faced, and it requires a whole-of-society approach. A response that leaves out immigrants-many of whom are on the front lines in our fight against COVID-19-will be ineffective and detrimental to our efforts to stop this pandemic.”

The Members of Congress continued: “We strongly urge you to build on the critical steps Congress has taken to protect families and workers in prior coronavirus relief packages by including the above-mentioned common sense measures in the

upcoming relief legislation. We also ask that you provide robust funding for government agencies and community based-organizations to provide information about these coronavirus services in at least the languages described as most encountered in the 2016 FEMA Language Access Plan.”

Earlier this month, Senator Warren also joined Senator Hirono, Senator Kamala Harris (D-Calif.), Representative Chu, Representative Raúl Grijalva (D-Ariz.), and Representative Lou Correa (D-Calif.) to release the Coronavirus Immigrant Families Protection Act, legislation that would provide critical assistance to vulnerable communities impacted by COVID-19, regardless of immigration status or English language proficiency. The legislation is supported by more than 70 organizations, including labor unions, civil rights groups, and immigrant rights groups.

In addition to Senators Warren and Hirono and Representative Chu, the letter to House and Senate leadership was signed by Senators Kamala Harris (D-Calif.), Edward J. Markey (D-Mass.), Kirsten Gillibrand (D-N.Y.), Tim Kaine (D-Va.), Tammy Baldwin (D-Wis.), Jacky Rosen (D-Nev.), Richard Blumenthal (D-Conn.), Catherine Cortez Masto (D-Nev.), Bernie Sanders (I-Vt.), Amy Klobuchar (D-Minn.), Cory Booker (D-N.J.), Ben Cardin (D-Md.), Ron Wyden (D-Ore.), Bob Casey (D-Pa.), Jack Reed (D-R.I.), Chris Van Hollen (D-Md.), Michael Bennet (D-Colo.), Bob Menendez (D-N.J.), Tom Udall (D-N.M.), Brian Schatz (D-Hawai’i), Jeff Merkley (D-Ore.), Sheldon Whitehouse (D-R.I.), Martin Heinrich (D-N.M.), Chris Coons (D-Del.), Sherrod Brown (D-Ohio), Tom R. Carper (D-Del.), Patty Murray (D-Wash.), and Representatives Lou Correa (D-Calif.), Raúl Grijalva (D-Ariz.), Jim McGovern (D-Mass.), Jesús “Chuy” García (D-Ill.), Jan Schakowsky (D-Ill.), Grace Napolitano (D-Calif.), Jimmy Panetta (D-Calif.), Yvette Clarke (D-N.Y.), Nydia Velázquez (D-N.Y.), Barbara Lee (D-Calif.), Jahana Hayes (D-Conn.), Ilhan Omar (D-Minn.), Peter Welch (D-Vt.), Chellie Pingree (D-Maine), Alan Lowenthal (D-Calif.), Rashida Tlaib (D-Mich.),

Frederica Wilson (D-Fla.), Eleanor Holmes Norton (D-D.C.), Bonnie Watson Coleman (D-N.J.), Ayanna Pressley (D-Mass.), Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (D-N.Y.), Pramila Jayapal (D-Wash.), Terri Sewell (D-Ala.), Ruben Gallego (D-Ariz.), Sylvia Garcia (D-Texas), Zoe Lofgren (D-Calif.), Jerrold Nadler (D-N.Y.), Ted Deutch (D-Fla.), Jamie Raskin (D-Md.), Bobby Rush (D-Ill.), Jason Crow (D-Colo.), Bill Foster (D-Ill.), John Larson (D-Conn.), Steven Horsford (D-Nev.), Hank Johnson (D-Ga.), Ed Perlmutter (D-Colo.), Dina Titus (D-Nev.), Darren Soto (D-Fla.), Mark Pocan (D-Wis.), Mark Takano (D-Calif.), Gregorio Kilili Camacho Sablan (D-CNMI), Adam Smith (D-Wash.), Ted Lieu (D-Calif.), Joaquin Castro (D-Texas), David Cicilline (D-R.I.), Joe Kennedy (D-Mass.), Adriano Espaillat (D-N.Y.), Danny Davis (D-Ill.), Kathy Castor (D-Fla.), Alcee L. Hastings (D-Fla.), Al Green (D-Texas), Suzanne Bonamici (D-Ore.), Thomas Suozzi (D-N.Y.), TJ Cox (D-Calif.), Mike Thompson (D-Calif.), Grace Meng (D-N.Y.), Ro Khanna (D-Calif.), Gil Cisneros (D-Calif.), Doris Matsui (D-Calif.), Rosa DeLauro (D-Conn.), Alma Adams (D-N.C.), Linda Sánchez (D-Calif.), Jerry McNerney (D-Calif.), Jackie Speier (D-Calif.), Jim Langevin (D-R.I.), Deb Haaland (D-N.M.), Bennie Thompson (D-Miss.), José Serrano (D-N.Y.), Jared Huffman (D-Calif.), Lucille Roybal-Allard (D-Calif.), Karen Bass (D-Calif.), Nanette Diaz Barragán (D-Calif.), Tony Cárdenas (D-Calif.), Don Beyer (D-Va.), Juan Vargas (D-Calif.), and Albio Sires (D-N.J.).

Senator Warren has cosponsored the Federal Immigrant Release for Safety and Security Together (FIRST) Act, introduced by Senator Booker and Representative Jayapal, to move immigrants out of detention and halt immigration enforcement against individuals not deemed a significant public safety risk during the pandemic.

In early March, she led a letter urging the Trump Administration to suspend all immigration enforcement actions in and around hospitals and other medical facilities.

She recently joined her colleagues in a letter to the U.S.

Department of Homeland Security (DHS), U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), and U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) pushing for the release of vulnerable and low-risk detained persons from DHS custody as the number of coronavirus cases continues to rise. She and her colleagues previously wrote to DHS, ICE, and CBP asking about their plans to prepare for the possible spread of COVID-19 within DHS facilities.

She joined Senator Durbin in urging President Trump to automatically extend work authorizations for recipients of Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals and Temporary Protected Status during the pandemic.

On March 11, she sent a letter with Senator Markey raising concerns about the U.S. Department of Justice's (DOJ) handling of COVID-19 prevention efforts in the immigration courts. Senator Warren later urged DOJ to close all immigration courts to prevent the spread of the virus.

She has also introduced the Prioritizing Pandemic Prevention Act (S. 3510), legislation to defund the border wall and direct those funds to combating COVID-19.