

Will Congress Move on Pandemic Relief?

This week, Congress has gotten more serious about passing a pandemic relief bill to get Americans the additional help they need. And not a moment too soon.

Why it matters: Surges in COVID-19 infections have pushed state and local governments to increase restrictions on business and social activities, hindering the economic recovery.

Small businesses who have struggled for months need more support, according to [Census data](#):

- In November, more small businesses reduced employment (12.2%) than increased it (4.3%)
- 38% of them saw a drop in revenue
- Nearly all the small businesses that received it have exhausted their Paycheck Protection Program funding
- Over 26% expect to need additional financial help in the next six months

Individual Americans are also feeling the financial stress and need help:

- On December 26, 12 million Americans will lose their unemployment benefits.
- Over 30% expect to [lose employment income](#) in the next month
- Nearly 8% are either [not current on their rent or mortgage](#) or have little confidence they can make next month's payment

Even with vaccines on their way, our economy will be in a precarious position for months to come. We expect Washington to take action to support American families and businesses through this difficult time.

What happened: This week, a bipartisan group of House and Senate members released an outline that could break the partisan gridlock that has prevented long-overdue pandemic relief.

Between this effort and the recent revisions to the Senate Republican proposal—which maintains critical elements especially with respect to liability protection—we believe there is an opportunity for Republicans and Democrats to negotiate a bill that can become law.

Bottom line: While it is critical that lawmakers get the details right, time is of the essence. American families cannot wait until next year. If Washington delivers pandemic relief, we can get through this challenge and build a stronger, healthier economy and country.

Take action: You can send a note to your Representatives in Congress urging them to support a bipartisan pandemic relief bill by using the [Chamber's "one-click" advocacy platform](#).

—Neil Bradley, Executive Vice President and Chief Policy Officer, U.S. Chamber of Commerce

