

What We Want to See Out of a Pandemic Relief Package

How Washington moves forward on the American Rescue Plan will not only determine the fate of COVID-19 relief and path we take in defeating the pandemic, but also the chances that Washington will be able to reach agreement on long-overdue priorities including infrastructure, immigration reform, and climate change.

Republicans and Democrats must engage in meaningful negotiations to find a compromise that can enjoy broad bipartisan support.

Since the beginning of the pandemic, the Chamber has urged a policy approach that **is timely, targeted, and temporary**. Legislative proposals should be focused on confronting the current crisis and should not be used as an opportunity to enact long-sought permanent policy changes.

Here are some thoughts on key policy areas:

Vaccination Program: We will not be able to fully reopen our economy until we beat COVID-19 and widespread vaccinations are the key to accomplishing that goal. We must remove all possible barriers to accelerating vaccinations and at the same time continue efforts to combat the spread of COVID-19.

K-12 Education: The Chamber supports funding for testing, to implement social distancing, and otherwise safely reopen K-12 schools. It is important that school district leaders and teachers' unions commit to the President's goal of reopening schools to in-person education within the next 100 days.

Childcare: For the millions of working parents with young children, it is critical that childcare programs be safely reopened. The Chamber supports additional funding to help reopen and support childcare providers, many of whom are small businesses themselves, and who are working hard to keep their staff and children in their care safe.

Small Business Support: We urge Congress to focus on ensuring existing programs have sufficient resources to meet demand while also extending the March 31 sunset of the Paycheck Protection Program.

Liability Protections: Businesses, schools, and non-profit organizations need temporary and appropriately targeted protections from unfair COVID-19 related lawsuits. Especially as businesses and schools try to reopen and heed the President's call for face coverings and other protective steps, these and other entities should not have to worry that their actions will invite costly and unnecessary litigation.

At the end of last year, after months of unnecessary gridlock, a bipartisan group of Representatives and Senators came together and found ways to bridge their differences and provide much needed support for millions of American families and small businesses. They

demonstrated what can be accomplished when lawmakers work in a bipartisan fashion. Their success was America's success.

Bottom line: We urge the administration and Republicans and Democrats in Congress to build on that success shown by moving forward with a bipartisan COVID-19 relief package.

[Read the letter](#) the Chamber sent to leaders in Washington.

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