

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

July 29, 2020

The Honorable Marco Rubio
United States Senator
284 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Rick Scott
United States Senator
716 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senators Rubio and Scott:

With each passing day, the COVID-19 pandemic continues to deteriorate the health and economic well-being of millions of Americans across the country. Sadly, our fellow Floridians – especially Latinos and communities of color – are disproportionately bearing the brunt of this suffering. As Florida experiences record-high COVID-19 cases and deaths, coupled with increasing unemployment cases, it is imperative that the federal government take swift and robust action to provide the assistance that our constituents desperately need. To that end, we urge you to do everything in your power to ensure that the Senate takes up H.R. 6800, The HEROES Act.

Despite the passage of previous COVID-19 relief legislation, a recent UnidosUS report found that legislation has not gone far enough to support Latinos. Nearly 36% of Latino households in Florida did not receive any support from CARES Act and 71% of Latinos in Florida believe the initial stimulus was insufficient.¹ These findings reveal the urgent need to pass The HEROES Act:

- **Latinos are disproportionately contracting and dying from COVID-19**, with Latinos representing 44% of confirmed cases in Florida, despite only making up 25% of Florida's population².
- **Latinos have been hit hard by the economic downturn** and are twice as likely to have been laid off as a result of the pandemic and experience a higher unemployment rate.
- **Latino and immigrant workers are overrepresented in essential jobs**, making up 54% of agricultural workers, 35% of meat processing workers, and 29% of medical assistants.
- **Latinos have not been fully included in COVID-19 relief and recovery legislation to date.** Many Latinos were excluded from the Economic Impact Payments under the CARES Act and only 4% of the first round of Payment Protection Program (PPP) loans went to Latino small business owners.

These disparities and the exclusion of Latinos from health and economic relief have deep, negative impacts on our state. According to a recent poll³, 56% of Latino households in Florida have experienced either a job loss or a pay cut. Among Latino small-business owners in Florida, 92% received no support to cover costs for equipment, Wi-Fi or data plans. Additionally, 228,000 U.S. citizens and green card holders living in Florida were excluded from CARES Act stimulus checks because their spouse or parent files taxes with an Individual Taxpayer Identification Number (ITIN).

Therefore, we urge you to call on your colleagues and Senate leadership to take up and pass The HEROES Act. This legislation offers a lifeline to Latinos and all Floridians bearing the brunt of the coronavirus pandemic by providing support for struggling families and essential workers with funds for testing and tracing measures, key support for frontline workers and expanded financial assistance, such as measures to ensure PPP loans reach underserved communities and that all taxpayers receive stimulus checks. Thank you for your consideration of this important matter.

Sincerely,



Darren Soto
Member of Congress



Debbie Mucarsel-Powell
Member of Congress

¹ <https://latinodecisions.com/polls-and-research/somos-unidosus-national-survey-of-latinos-covid-19-impact-and-heroes-act-national-survey-of-latinos-may-2020/>

² <https://covidtracking.com/race/dashboard>

³ <https://latinodecisions.com/polls-and-research/somos-unidosus-national-survey-of-latinos-covid-19-impact-and-heroes-act-national-survey-of-latinos-may-2020/>