



Labor & Employment Issues Client Alert

Pitta LLP
For Clients
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**“We believe in the ideas of family, mutuality,
the sharing of benefits and burdens
for the good of all, feeling one another’s pain,
sharing one another’s blessing
recognizing that at the heart of the matter
we are bound to each other.”**

-Mario M. Cuomo-

HOUSE MAJORITY UNVEILS NEW COVID-19 BILL THAT IT INTENDS TO PASS BY THE END OF THE WEEK

On May 12, 2020 the United States House of Representatives Speaker Nancy Pelosi introduced the fifth COVID-19 bill. Speaker Pelosi said that she intends to have a vote for its passage on Friday. The bill known as the “Heroes Act” (HR 6800) is a \$3 trillion bill that will provide state and local governments with \$875 billion to help balance budget shortfalls caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Speaker Pelosi said that the economic relief to state (\$500 billion) and local (\$375 billion) governments will help prevent layoffs of public workers, cuts to services or tax hikes. The bill will also reinstate the SALT itemized deduction for 2020 and 2021 and authorize State Medicaid adjustments which Governor Andrew Cuomo has long advocated for.

The Heroes Act will establish a \$200 billion “COVID-19 Heroes Fund” which Congress intends to use to pay essential frontline employees working in regular contact with others during the COVID-19 pandemic. Essential employees would be eligible for a \$10,000 premium bonus for any work done from January 27, 2020 until after the end of the COVID-19 crisis. “Highly compensated” essential workers earning above \$200,000, are eligible for premiums up to \$5,000.

The payments will be available to employees whose positions require them to have regular contact with the public or whose jobs require them to report for duty where social distancing is not possible. The Heroes Act prohibits premium pay for employees that teleworked during the pandemic.

The Heroes Act amends the Public Safety Officers’ Benefits Program (PSOB) to establish a presumption that officers who die or are disabled because of COVID-19 infection are eligible to receive disability and death benefits.

The Heroes Act will appropriate \$75 billion for mortgage relief and \$100 billion in assistance for renters. The legislation will also provide \$25 billion for the United States Postal Services which has warned Congressional leaders that it could go into bankruptcy by the summer without a bailout. The Act also includes another round of \$1,200 checks for adults making up to \$75,000, however, under this bill children would also receive \$1,200 instead of \$500.

The Heroes Act includes another \$10 billion for the Small Business Administration's Paycheck Protection Program for small businesses that haven't received funds from the last two COVID-19 bills. The proposed legislation also includes subsidies for continued coverage for furloughed workers and people using COBRA, a continuing health coverage plan for those who have lost work, even if they don't pay their premiums.

The Heroes Act also includes \$75 billion to help states ramp up COVID-19 testing and contact tracing which Governors across the country have stated is crucial to reopening state economies.

The Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell dismissed the House bill as "not something designed to deal with reality but designed to deal with aspirations" and said that he will continue to negotiate with the Trump administration.

The Heroes Act can be accessed [here](#).

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