



City of
Langley Washington

New COVID-19 Relief Bill

news from **Representative Rick Larsen**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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[Link](#) to *Larsen photo*

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**Larsen: Pandemic Relief is a Down Payment to
Protect Washingtonians' Health, Economic Security**

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WASHINGTON, D.C. – Today, Rep. Rick Larsen (WA-02) voted to deliver much needed relief to families and small businesses in Northwest Washington who continue to struggle from the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic.

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“With a third wave of COVID-19 spreading across the country, this long-overdue pandemic relief package addresses the continued public health crisis and delivers relief for Washingtonians. While the bill does not include every one of my priorities, it serves as a down payment to protect Washingtonians’ health and economic security.”

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“The public health response will lead to economic recovery. I will continue to work with community

leaders, the incoming administration and Washington state's congressional delegation to deliver real relief for Washingtonians in the new year."

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The bipartisan package addresses several of Larsen's priorities based on conversations with Second District families, business owners and community leaders.

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Support for Equitable Vaccine Distribution

The arrival of the first vaccines doses in Washington state is a light at the end of the tunnel. More than 26,300 people in the five counties of the Second District tested positive for COVID-19 and nearly 800 died since the pandemic began. The virus continues to disproportionately affect BIPOC (Black, Indigenous and People of Color) communities. The relief package includes \$69 billion for COVID-19 vaccine development and equitable distribution, virus testing, contact tracing and mental health programs.

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Unemployment Benefits, Direct Payments

During the week of December 6, nearly 3,000 people who live in the five counties of the Second District filed an initial claim for unemployment. The relief package includes a \$300 per week increase in federal unemployment benefits to help unemployed Washingtonians pay bills and put food on the table. The bill also includes \$600 direct economic impact payments for individuals making up to \$75,000 per year and \$1,200 for married couples making up to \$150,000 per year, including checks for mixed-status households

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Rental and Housing Assistance

Volunteers of America Western Washington's Dispute Resolution Center has experienced an increase of more than 1400 percent in cases for housing

assistance since March. One in five renters in Washington state has little to no confidence they will have the ability to pay next month's rent. The relief package includes \$25 billion in rental assistance and an extension of the federal eviction moratorium to ensure Washingtonians can stay in their homes.

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Emergency Funding for Child Care

With many school districts opting for remote learning, issues surrounding child care are exacerbated by the pandemic. According to the Washington State Department of Commerce, the capacity for child care in Whatcom and San Juan counties decreased by nearly 50 percent between the beginning of the pandemic and the end of June. The relief package includes \$10 billion for emergency child care assistance to help get parents back to work and keep child care providers open.

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Fighting Hunger

Feeding America estimates between 2018 and 2020, hunger increased by 48 percent in Snohomish County; by 42 percent in San Juan County; by 40 percent in Skagit County; by 36 percent in Island County; and by 30 percent in Whatcom County. The relief package includes \$13 billion to expand the monthly SNAP benefit by 15 percent and increases funding for vital nutrition programs to improve families' access to healthy, nutritious meals.

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Bridging the Digital Divide

Reliance on remote learning during the pandemic has highlighted inequities in access to computers and high-speed internet. For example, Arlington School District estimated that 20 percent of students at the start of the school year lacked adequate internet access for distance learning. The relief package includes \$7 billion to increase broadband access for

students, teachers and families.

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Support for Small Businesses, Nonprofits
The Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) has helped 8,570 Second District small businesses and nonprofits save more than 60,000 jobs during the pandemic. The relief bill improves and expands the PPP to ensure more small businesses, including those in underserved communities, can prevent layoffs and keep Washingtonians off unemployment.

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Support for State, Local, Tribal and Territorial Governments
State, local, tribal and territorial governments and employees are on the frontline of pandemic response in Northwest Washington. The relief package includes a one-year extension of eligibility for state, local, tribal and territorial governments to pay for pandemic-related expenses under the CARES Act. The package also includes \$10 billion for state Departments of Transportation and \$14 billion for local transit agencies.

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More funding for these frontline workers will be one of my top priorities in the next Congress.

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Saving Aviation Jobs
In response to the pandemic, Congress created the Payroll Support Program (PSP) which helped save 950,000 airline jobs in Washington state and across the country. The relief package includes \$15 billion for an extension of the PSP through March 31, 2021, and \$1 billion for aviation contractors, like Aviation Technical Services in Everett, to pay employees. The relief package also provides \$2 billion for the nation's airports and airport concessionaries.

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For a summary of COVID-19 relief included in the year-

[end funding package, click here.](#)

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