



ALASKA STATE EMPLOYEES ASSOCIATION

American Federation of State, County & Municipal Employees Local 52

April 20, 2020

Lisa Murkowski
510 L St. #600
Anchorage, AK 99501

Dear Senator Murkowski:

Thank you for your efforts to support the health and safety needs of working people and for fighting for funding for state and local governments. While some important funding for state and local governments was included for COVID-related expenses and additional assistance for education, child care, and more programs in the \$2.2 trillion CARES Act, more help is urgently needed. [DG1]

As you know, Alaska's local and state government needs more funding as businesses are closed, revenues aren't coming in and the demand for public services continues to increase as more people become ill and require care. I'm asking for your help again to request additional aid as Congress prepares another COVID-related aid package, including:

- **Federal Aid to State and Local Governments:** At this time, Congress must provide state and local governments with \$700 billion in aid consisting of at least \$300 billion in unrestricted aid and \$200 billion each in education and Medicaid funding. At least \$300 billion must be provided in additional direct, unrestricted funds for state and local governments (along with a clear requirement for money to be allocated to localities). In addition, states and localities need the flexibility to use these grants and the \$150 billion allocated through the CARES Act for necessary public services, including those that are not specific to COVID responses. This is essential as state and local governments continue to lose revenues that fund normal public services that communities rely on from trash removal to ensuring clean water.
- **Increase the federal match to Medicaid known as FMAP by at least 15 percentage points** to ensure states can fund rising Medicaid caseloads without diverting resources from other critical services. These higher rates should be made retroactive to January 1, 2020 and extended to December 31, 2021. The 6.2 percentage point bump was retroactive to January 1 and expires December 31, 2020. An FMAP increase is necessary to ensure Alaska can fund rising Medicaid caseloads without diverting resources from other critical services.
- **Backstop COVID-19 claims by assuming inpatient hospital and post-hospitalization costs** after the first \$5,000 with close monitoring of insurance company reserves to avoid an unjustified windfall for private insurers. In addition, inpatient cost sharing and copayments should be assumed by the federal government for COVID-19 treatments and all patients should receive COVID treatments at no cost. The federal government must cover the cost of health premiums through COBRA for

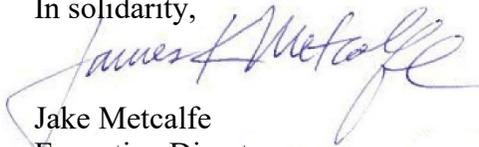


laid off, furloughed or unemployed workers so they can afford to maintain their coverage. The uncertain long-term impact of occupational exposure to the virus must also be studied and addressed.

- Protect workers on the front lines by: 1) passing into federal law an emergency infectious disease standard so front-line workers in all states are covered, and 2) getting all workers needed equipment (N95 masks, shields, gowns, gloves, hand sanitizer, etc.) and cleaning supplies (wipes, bleach, etc.) to be safe and directing the President to fully activate the Defense Production Act (DPA) to accelerate the production of necessary equipment and supplies and to centralize and prioritize their fair distribution.
- At least an additional \$200 billion for public education, including an additional \$175 billion for the education state stabilization fund to support K12 efforts, \$13 billion for IDEA, \$12 billion for Title I, and \$2 billion for the e-rate. School systems across the country are struggling to meet education needs at this difficult time as most shift to online learning and seek to revise teaching methods and support students who may be without access to either computers or high-speed internet.

I'm available to discuss the details and look forward to hearing back from you.

In solidarity,



Jake Metcalfe
Executive Director

Alaska State Employees Association (ASEA)/AFSCME Local 52

