



# NAACP

March 23, 2020

The Honorable  
United States Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

**RE: NAACP OPPOSITION TO H.R.748, THE LATEST INSTALLMENT OF THE ECONOMIC RESPONSE TO THE CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC AS CURRENTLY DRAFTED; *TOO MUCH IS MISSING***

Dear Senator,

On behalf of the NAACP, our nation's oldest, largest and most widely-recognized grassroots-based civil rights organization, I urge you to oppose final passage of H.R. 748, the latest response to the economic consequences of the coronavirus pandemic, unless it is substantially altered before or during floor consideration. We should not put the welfare of big corporations before the American people, and frankly the NAACP is outraged the U.S. Senate may do just that. After two failed cloture votes, it should be evident that the approach currently taken in H.R. 748 does not have the bipartisan, bicameral support that is called for by the needs of the American people in these extraordinary, and unprecedented times.

The *Families First Coronavirus Response Act*, which has now been signed into law, was a first step toward supporting U.S. families through this global health emergency. Everyone agrees much more needs to be done. Sadly, the response you are being asked to vote on, despite input from the NAACP and other organizations, fails to address even the most basic needs of too many of our citizens. The NAACP has developed our positions with input from our grassroots network throughout the nation – our mutual constituents.

The American people deserve truly representative Federal leadership. We all need to know in this time of crisis our government is watching out for us, and will protect all of us, regardless of our stage or station in life. Specifically, all Americans deserve high-quality and affordable health care access and coverage; we need to ensure adequate food assistance; paid medical leave to support all workers and their families so they do not put themselves or others at additional risk of infection and so they can care for one another; and unemployment assistance for all American workers, regardless of status as full time, part time, contractors, or self-employed; and we need to guarantee the mental health of everyone is protected in these times of isolation, crisis, and for too many people, despair.

We must immediately address the needs of our children. To ensure every child, regardless of their age, where they live, or how much their family income may be, has full wireless internet access as well as the necessary educational resources is a must. Parents are faced with numerous challenges when their child's school is closed; how to keep up in their classwork should not be one of them.

All Federal, state and local environmental protection laws must continue to be upheld. Our current national disaster should not be an excuse for one down the line.

We must also do all we can to protect our prison populations. This means an immediate review of who is in prison, and why. If an individual is incarcerated and does not pose a threat to another person or to society as a whole, then he or she should be released from a scenario likely to become a “viral hotbox.” This is especially true of people who are elderly, infirmed or in prison or jail simply because they cannot afford bond or bail.

We must also, in this first economic stimulus legislation, do all we can to ensure that our democracy and our commitment to our Constitution stay strong. This means adequate funding for states to ensure every qualified American is allowed to cast a secret, unfettered ballot and that their vote is counted. Likewise, we must provide adequate funding to fully and fairly administer the 2020 Census, and to ensure everyone is counted.

Lastly, too many Americans already saw too much of their paychecks going to repay their student loans. A temporary relief is not a genuine relief. An individual who had to delay the purchase of their first home or their first car because of massive student debt is unlikely to regain their economic footing following this crisis in the immediate future. That is why total loan forgiveness for frontline defenders--government workers, first responders, teachers and those who work in the nonprofit sector-- in what is sure to be a long recovery is so important. It will have a positive impact on the economy and eliminate one additional burden for those who care for the nation in crisis.

We must use this crisis to demonstrate to heretofore underserved, under-resourced, and marginalized communities that the U.S. government cares, and that they are not forgotten. I look forward to continuing to work with you to ensure that our specific recommendations are included in any final economic stimulus package you which will help all Americans. Thank you for your consideration of the NAACP’s position. Should you have any questions or comments, or for more information about our explicit proposals, please do not hesitate to contact me or Hilary Shelton, Director NAACP Washington Bureau, and Senior Vice President for Advocacy and Policy at (202) 812-1909.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D. Johnson', written over a horizontal line.

Derrick Johnson  
President & CEO