Reduction or elimination of FDA regulations on non-invasive medical devices: This reform should already be implemented for smart devices (such as Fitbits), glucose kits, and other comparable items. It could be expanded to include DIY COVID test kits.

Clarification and codification of Trump administration efforts to ease telehealth restrictions: President Trump has already begun to lift restrictions for Medicare patients, but not for other populations.

Waiving out-of-state medical licensing requirements: This reform is already happening slowly on a state-by-state level, but could be more aggressively championed—or mandated—at the federal level.

THANK YOU TO WASHINGTON STATE'S EDUCATORS

HON. RICK LARSEN

OF WASHINGTON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 7, 2020

Mr. LARSEN of Washington. Madam Speaker, I rise today to sincerely thank the teachers, paraeducators, food service workers, bus drivers, custodial staff and others keeping the education of kids on track in Washington state during the COVID–19 pandemic.

Schools are always adapting to suit the needs of their students. When Washington state closed schools to prevent the spread of COVID–19, education professionals rapidly adjusted to on line education, ensuring students would not fall behind.

Distance learning has forced schools to tackle serious student equity issues, including access to technology and broadband, and making sure thousands of students who rely on school meals do not go hungry. These educators need Congress to step up to help address these issues.

Madam Speaker, I rise to recognize the sacrifices teachers and school employees of all kinds across Washington state are making to provide for their students amid this public health crisis. And I call on Congress to provide necessary tools for school districts to ensure equitable online learning and sufficient resources for students during this pandemic and beyond.

MIDDLE CLASS HEALTH BENEFITS TAX REPEAL ACT OF 2019

SPEECH OF

HON. MARCY KAPTUR

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, March 27, 2020

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, H.R. 748 contains a critical provision that will be used to assist state and local governments in their response to the crisis engulfing our nation. Indeed, local governments are bearing the heavy burden of response with dwindling resources while helping terrified Americans manage as best they can. As the entities closest to the ground, these local governments are on the front line of the fight, and we must ensure they have adequate funding.

This provision, Section 5001 of the CARES Act, provides that Treasury will provide assistance directly, and not through the State intermediary to units of local government with more than 500,000 people. The provision, allows for a significantly broad definition of local governments and specifies that ''[t]he term 'unit of local government' [includes] . . . other unit of general government below the State level with a population that exceeds 500,000.'' Section 5001 explicitly allows any government that represents more than 500,000 and includes regional councils of government which are chartered under state law.

In Ohio, Chapter 167 of the revised code provides broad authority for a regional council of government to act as a local unit of government, to plan, enter cooperative agreements related ''to matters affecting health, safety, welfare, education, economic conditions, and regional development.'' See Ohio Revised Code, Sec. 167.03.

In drafting and approving H.R. 748, the House and Senate intended section 5001 to be administered liberally, and for Treasury and the Courts to construe the statute broadly so as to encompass all local government entities with more than 500,000 citizens to act directly, and not through the intermediary of a state government. In fact, the State of Ohio has specifically devolved local authority to the regional council of governments to act in the general welfare interests of their citizens as a unit of general government.

As Treasury promulgates regulations to implement this statute, the law intends for these regional councils of government to act as a general unit of local government, and envisions them to be eligible to certify and receive the state stabilization dollars.

MIDDLE CLASS HEALTH BENEFITS TAX REPEAL ACT OF 2019

SPEECH OF

HON. BRAD SHERMAN

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, March 27, 2020

Mr. SHERMAN. Mr. Speaker, over 122,000 cases of coronavirus, otherwise referred to as COVID–19, have been confirmed in the United States since the inception of the outbreak, including more than 5,000 confirmed cases in my home state of California alone. More than two thousand Americans have died as a result of the virus, and many more stand to do so if we do not act quickly to mitigate its spread and address the myriad of medical challenges.

While Congress has passed several measures to provide significant amounts of money for research activities at federal agencies, this is not enough. I am disappointed that H.R. 748 does not adequately fund nor provide incentives for, research and development into treatments and vaccines that leverage the expertise of the public and private sectors. Chiefly, the CARES Act fails to adequately support research on the National Institutes of Health (NIH) campus and at clinical research institutions across the country to pursue all reasonable avenues to develop treatments for the coronavirus, including diagnostic tests, therapies and vaccines. The NIH should have significantly more than $945 million to carry out COVID–19 related research and should also be directed to focus primarily on those possible treatments that are not subject to a patent and thus are not the focus of U.S. pharmaceutical companies.

Finally, the Trump administration uses this must-pass relief bill to advance their anti-reproduction rights agenda. The bill gives the Small Business Administration broad discretion to exclude Planned Parenthood affiliates and other non-profits serving people with low incomes and deny them benefits under the new small business loan program. Additionally, the bill attaches a harmful Hyde Amendment provision to a state stabilization fund for state, local, and tribal governments providing coronavirus relief. Reproductive health care is essential health care, and Planned Parenthood health centers are a critical component of the health care system. Attempting to limit access to reproductive health care services during a pandemic will only worsen the public health care crisis.

MIDDLE CLASS HEALTH BENEFITS TAX REPEAL ACT OF 2019

SPEECH OF

HON. NEAL P. DUNN

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, March 27, 2020

Mr. DUNN. Mr. Speaker, oftentimes, when both sides of the aisle acknowledge that a bill is not perfect, it ultimately means it is actually quite good. With that said, I do want to highlight some specific concerns that I have with provisions in this bill, both in their direct effects, and also the future precedent that they may set.

Historically there is little evidence that direct to consumers stimulus checks have a significant impact on the economy or that they lead to the kind of spending necessary to counteract an economic downturn. The Economic Stimulus Act of 2008 (signed February 13, 2008) provided $600 checks to individuals and cost $168 Billion. A study by the Bureau of Labor statistics later showed that, ultimately, nearly 70 percent of recipients either used the money to pay off existing debt, or simply put it into savings. Those are not activities that stimulate the economy, and unsurprisingly that effort failed to stop a four percent contraction in GDP, the loss of over eight million jobs, and the worst overall economic disaster since the great depression. Overall, I believe that this bill will help us to avoid the same fate, but that will be due to other more robust provisions that acknowledge the importance of our small businesses and job creators in the private sector.

The incentive and ability for anyone, regardless of their circumstances, to work hard and improve their life is a fundamental tenet of the American dream. It is essential that we do not allow this stimulus payment to serve as a pilot program for a Universal Basic Income, as some have suggested. Furthermore, it is true that this bill will at times create a situation where some people could actually earn more money by filing for unemployment if furloughed than they would by staying in the workforce. We must acknowledge the potential for this to set a damaging precedent.

This bill provides robust funding for our nation's hospitals and some needed flexibility in the telehealth space to ensure Americans, particularly seniors, are able to visit with their doctors in the lowest risk setting possible. I was disappointed however in the lack of a