GREGORIO SABLAN
NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

March 24, 2020

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker of the House
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Charles Schumer
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Speaker Pelosi, Leader McConnell, Minority Leaders McCarthy and Schumer,

We thank you for providing parity for the Americans we represent in the U.S. insular areas in many aspects of legislation now being negotiated to respond to the coronavirus crisis.

We want to highlight, however, four issues of particular importance to our constituents:

1) **Direct state and territory government aid for jurisdictions experiencing coronavirus-related revenue shortfalls.**

   The Senate bill does not meet this need, which we believe to be necessary.

   It does fund an Education Stabilization Fund to support public schools, however. And, absent any larger funding for general government operations, we recommend increasing that Fund from $20 billion to at least $40 billion to ensure continuity of schooling for our students and nationwide.

2) **Unemployment benefits for laid-off workers.**

   We support the Senate bill provision (H.R. 748, as amended) that uses the Disaster Unemployment Assistance program of the U.S. Department of Labor as a mechanism for direct cash payment to laid-off workers, given that the Northern Marianas, Guam, and American Samoa have no state-equivalent unemployment insurance systems though which to send aid to workers.

3) **Tax-based payments to individuals with cover-over to territories of full cost.**

   We support provisions in both Senate and House bills for 2020 refundable advance tax credits to individual and household taxpayers and appreciate the 100 percent federal funding of these payments.

   Any other tax-based payment, such as the House has proposed for the Child Tax Credit and Earned Income Tax Credit should likewise be 100 percent federally funded, as our

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local governments cannot take on any added fiscal responsibility in the middle of the current crisis. For this reason, Section 7001 of the Families First Coronavirus Response Act must be amended to provide for a cover-over of federal funds for the cost of the refundable tax credit to employers for employee paid sick leave.

4) **Medicaid: Enhanced FMAP/Repeal of limitation on funding.**

We support House proposals for enhanced FMAP for the duration of the crisis and equal treatment for our areas under the proposed formula.

In order to ensure there is adequate funding to address the healthcare demands of the coronavirus, we also request the current limitation on Medicaid payments that applies to our districts (42 U.S.C. 1308) be repealed.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

GREGORIO KILILI CAMACHO SABLAN
Member of Congress

STACEY PLASKETT
Member of Congress

AUMUA AMATA COLEMAN RADEWAGEN
Member of Congress

MICHAEL SAN NICOLAS
Member of Congress