

House Passes Families First Coronavirus Response Act with Sweeping Employment and Health Related Provisions to Address COVID-19

By Diana Feitl

The U.S. House of Representatives passed H.R. 6201 the “Families First Coronavirus Response Act” by a vote of 363 to 40 in the early morning hours on March 14, 2020. The House added the legislation to its agenda late Friday evening after House Democrats reached a deal with the Trump Administration on the specifics of the legislation. The Senate will likely begin consideration of the legislation on Monday and pass the legislation next week.

A summary of the legislation is listed below:

Funding and Waivers Related to Nutrition Programs:

- provides additional funding for: emergency food assistance needs; for senior meal programs; and for families who have children that are not attending school due to closures related to Covid-19
- loosens requirements and regulations for the school lunch program for schools providing meals to students during Covid-19 related closures
- expands access/funding for the food stamp program

Amendments to the Family Medical Leave Act (“FMLA”): amends the FMLA to provide employees of employers of less than 500 employees and government employers who have been on the job for 30 days the right to take up to 12 weeks of leave under the FMLA for Covid-19 related issues. Additionally, upon return, employees will receive a benefit from their employer equal to at least 2/3 of the employee’s usual pay. This provision takes effect 15 days after enactment.

Emergency Paid Sick Leave: requires employers of fewer than 500 employees and government employers to provide employees up to two weeks of paid sick leave for Covid-19 related absences.

Emergency Unemployment Insurance Provisions: provides funding to states to aid in processing and paying unemployment benefits and provides for additional funding for states that experience a spike in unemployment.

Tax Credits for Required Paid Sick and Family Leave: provides for a refundable tax credit equal to 100 percent of qualified paid sick or family leave wages paid by an employer for each calendar quarter related to Covid-19 absences.

Health Provisions:

- requires private and public health insurance plans to cover Covid-19 testing at no cost
- increases funding for Medicaid

The full text of the legislation can be found [here](#).

Roetzel will continue to monitor the progress of this legislation and provide additional updates and guidance once the legislation becomes law.

Lewis Adkins, Jr.

Practice Group Manager
Public Law, Regulatory and Finance
216.615.4842 | ladkins@ralaw.com

Todd Book

614.723.2010 | tbook@ralaw.com

Arthur Brumett II

216.615.4856 | abrumett@ralaw.com

Jason Dodson

330.849.6631 | jdodson@ralaw.com

Diana Feitl

216.615.4838 | dfeitl@ralaw.com

Daniel G. Hilson

614.723.2060 | dhilson@ralaw.com

Marcus Pringle

216.696.7077 | mpringle@ralaw.com

Galen Schuerlein

216.820.4238 | gschuerlein@ralaw.com

Sherri Warner

614.723.2110 | swarner@ralaw.com

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