



IndivisibleEB.org

Senator Dianne Feinstein
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To: Senator Dianne Feinstein
From: Indivisible East Bay
Date: April 10, 2020
Subject: Resisting the Trump Agenda

Congress' Response to COVID-19:

1. We thank Sen. Feinstein for fighting to include strong unemployment insurance and expanded payments to individuals in the last bill. The cash payments to individuals apparently still leave out some of the most vulnerable: dependents who are not children--often seniors and people with disabilities[1]. Can this be corrected during implementation? If not, it certainly needs to be fixed in the next bill. We also thank her and the Senate Democrats for holding out again for a larger, more inclusive bill rather than just going along with the latest completely inadequate Republican proposal for small business loans.
2. We are very concerned that Congress is not in session during this ongoing crisis. What is Sen. Feinstein's plan to respond to the American people's needs and provide oversight of a corrupt administration while taking measures to stay safe and healthy?
3. We also thank her for the many letters she wrote regarding people with special vulnerabilities during this crisis including [sexual assault survivors](#), [immigrants](#), [unaccompanied migrant kids](#).
4. And we thank her for her letters[2-4] about both recent inspector general firings. Will there be (remote?) oversight hearings in the Senate? Will there be any actual consequences for this administration? What will she and Sen. Grassley do if the President fails to respond to their April 13 deadline?

Requirements for next emergency package: [People's Bailout](#)

5. Increase election security and safe access to voting, including at least \$2 billion in financial support for states to implement vote by mail before November. We appreciate her statement[5] and want to see it put into action.
6. Provide universal paid sick leave, not just for some people — everyone
7. Make cash assistance payments recurring and available to all people, including immigrants
8. Place a moratorium on evictions, foreclosures, repossessions, and utility shutoffs; prohibit debt collection and prevent negative credit reporting
9. Expand SNAP, Social Security, Medicaid funding
10. Extend Unemployment Insurance provisions from the bill to people whose unemployment is not a direct result of the public health crisis
11. Enact an emergency OSHA Standard to protect frontline essential workers
12. Sen. Feinstein's COVID-19 Correctional Facility Emergency Response Act.
13. Immediately begin a special enrollment period to let people enroll in health care coverage. We thank her for calling on the administration to act, but if it won't, Congress must
14. End surprise billing for medical services
15. Expand Federal Reserve programs to support state and municipal bonds[6] (such as the ones already underway via the CARES Act). It's of great importance that states and municipalities[7] not be forced to make austerity cuts.
16. Provide additional protections for federal whistleblowers and oversight of executive branch agencies. The scale of devastation out-paces what's seen in comparable advanced industrialized nations and that suggests that there is mass incompetence, corruption[8], and self-dealing. Mishandling of medical

supplies must be investigated and prosecuted. We disagree with Rep. Clyburn's[9] assessment that the COVID-19 panel should be exclusively forward-looking. The lapses that have led to tens of thousands of deaths need to be investigated. There were too many warning signs, including via the IC, that went unheeded.

17. Student loan forgiveness. Suspension of federal student loan payments (CARES Act) is not enough for students with loans from private lenders[10]. Recent graduates will not be able to join/rejoin the workforce for months or years.
18. Sen. Feinstein's Utilizing and Supporting Evacuated Peace Corps Volunteers Act[11]
19. Allow people over age 62 to draw on Social Security without having to pay that money back in order to receive their full benefits later

Requirements for future recovery/stimulus package

20. Enact a federal jobs program that focuses on creating green and health security jobs and invests in a green economy including remediation of abandoned oil wells and other contaminated sites.
21. Focus resources in frontline communities that are the hardest hit by the twin crises of coronavirus and an exploitative economy (e.g. food service, home health care, childcare, retail, domestic workers)
22. Lock in automatic stabilizers for the economy, such as cash payments to all individuals triggered by specific signs of a recession like a rise in unemployment[12].

Requirements for working elections

23. First and foremost: it should not be necessary to risk one's health and even life to be able to vote. It is obscene to be forced to choose between the two. We are very concerned that what happened in Wisconsin [will happen](#) again, both in upcoming primaries and in November. Too many election officials are overwhelmed and not getting the support they need. Wisconsin's poll closures should be taken as seriously for elections as we have taken Italy's troubles in our pandemic response.
24. We want to thank the Senator for coming out strongly in defense not just of early voting but of the [need to defend our democracy](#). Despite [attempts to make this partisan](#), we do not believe this should be a partisan issue, and [neither do a large majority of Americans](#). We urge you to be relentless on this point.
25. Money for conducting elections and for enabling voters to vote by absentee ballot [must be a part of the next stimulus bill](#). We strongly urge you to not yield on this point. We do not believe that trying to pass it as a separate bill stands any serious chance of success given the track record on election funding even before the crisis.
26. Voting by absentee ballot must be an option for every voter. Doing this right is not simply a matter of sending ballots to registered voters. There are numerous issues of [chain of custody](#) and [security](#) which must be considered. But there are effective ways to implement it. We particularly want to draw attention to the work of [Vote At Home](#), which has codified the lessons from implementing safe and high turnout in Colorado. They have both a [state-by-state plan](#) and a [detailed timeline](#) for 2020, and address problems election officials are both encountering and those they have not had a chance to consider yet.
27. Cooperation between election officials across states should be encouraged. While the option to vote by mail is complex to do properly, [numerous states have working systems that can be models for other states](#).
28. Ensure ballots are actually received by voters.
29. Guarantee time to count absentee ballots.
Expectations on reporting results need to change. California and other states have shown that it is possible to both not rush to certify the count and still have a reliable election.
30. The needs of vulnerable populations need to be explicitly addressed as they are the most likely to both face [voter suppression](#) and to be threatened by the pandemic.
 - a. African-American voters are not just subject to the most active suppression but are also disproportionately [likely to be both infected and to die of COVID](#).
 - b. Older voters are the most vulnerable to the virus.

- c. Voters with disabilities who would require assistance voting face concerns with ballot secrecy.. [Privacy concerns can be addressed](#) but there must be enough time and money set aside to make that possible.
- d. Rural and Native communities have [serious concerns about actually receiving their ballots](#).

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