

Congress of the United States  
House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515-2804

August 19, 2020

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi  
Speaker of the House  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Speaker Pelosi,

We write today to respectfully request that the House make a strong effort to push forward bipartisan negotiations with the Senate on the now-expired supplemental unemployment benefits our constituents desperately need. When the supplemental benefits expired in July, Nevadans and New Mexicans alike were left without the means to pay their bills and put food on the table for their families. While we await progress in these bipartisan negotiations with the House and Senate, we urge you bring forward stand-alone legislation that provides relief to millions of Americans who are facing record unemployment amidst the COVID-19 health pandemic, as well as provide a one-time payment to help Americans who are able to reenter the workforce.

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, Americans have witnessed over 170,000 lives claimed by the virus, and millions of workers have lost their jobs as a result of the public health emergency. The consequences of mass unemployment in our districts are staggering—in January 2020, prior to the COVID-19 public health crisis, Nevada's unemployment rate was at a record 3.6 percent. By April 2020, the pandemic had caused Nevada's unemployment rate to shoot up to a record high of 30.1 percent. Likewise, in New Mexico, 87.6% of those facing unemployment worry they will not be able to pay their rent or mortgage in the coming months. Although we have been able to begin gradually reopening the economy in certain sectors, we know this crisis is far from over. The week ending in August 8<sup>th</sup>, unemployment claims *increased* from the prior week in both Nevada and New Mexico, as our local economies continue to brace the impact of statewide stay-at-home orders and decreased tourism.

While an overwhelming number of workers saw some relief from Congress's COVID-19 relief efforts to bolster the unemployment compensation program, we continue to hear from our constituents who are struggling to make ends meet. That is why we joined together to introduce the *Back on Your Feet Act*, which would extend unemployment compensation through January 31, 2021, protecting over 30 million workers from losing the federal unemployment benefits enacted as part of the *CARES Act*.

This legislation also includes additional provisions that build on the *CARES Act* and ensure that workers who are able to reenter to the workforce also receive the help they need. Our bill would provide a one-time back to work payment of \$3,600 to help Americans cover the increased costs of child care, transportation, and PPE that enable them to return to work. This is not intended to force workers back to work if they are not safe, and would protect workers from losing their benefits if they are unable to return to work safely, or if they received past benefit overpayments

through no fault of their own and cannot repay them. Lastly, the measure would also provide an additional \$2 billion to assist states improve their technology systems and administer unemployment benefits to claimants.

Unemployment compensation has and will continue to be crucial in helping families pay their bills, put food on the table, and deal with the ongoing impact of the pandemic. We remain hopeful that a bipartisan agreement will happen on the next economic and pandemic package. We strongly urge the House to pass the *Back on Your Feet Act*, expeditiously providing relief to struggling families in Nevada, New Mexico, and across the country.

Thank you for your consideration to this request and I appreciate your diligent and committed work during this crisis.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Steven Horsford". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name and last name clearly distinguishable.

Steven Horsford  
Member of Congress  
Nevada's Fourth Congressional District

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "X Torres". The signature is stylized, with a large, sweeping initial "X" followed by the first name and last name.

Xochitl Torres Small  
Member of Congress  
New Mexico's Second Congressional District