



Friend –

We hope this message finds you well ahead of the holidays. Below please find the Murphy office update on COVID-19.

As always, if you need assistance, please don't hesitate to contact our Hartford or Washington, D.C. offices.

Here's what you need to know this week:

- On Monday, Congress [passed a COVID-19 relief package](#) that includes direct cash payments to qualified individuals, extends the enhanced unemployment benefits, increases SNAP benefits and eligibility, a new round of the Personal Protection Program (PPP) loans, additional funding for schools, and state funding to support vaccine distribution. While Senator Murphy acknowledged the bill does not go far enough and fought for larger cash payments and additional funding for states and cities, this bill will provide critical relief to people in Connecticut who are in desperate need of help. While Congress has done its job to help the American people fight COVID-19 and boost our economy, President Trump threatened to veto this critical legislation and lifeline for millions of Americans in need. We ultimately believe this bill will still become law despite the president's threats.
 - On Tuesday, Senator Murphy and Senator Blumenthal held a press conference in Hartford to tout this critical legislation and acknowledged that more work needs to be done.
 - **For more information on what is in the bill and how it will impact people in Connecticut, please visit murphy.senate.gov/coronavirus for up to date answers to frequently asked questions.**
- In addition to COVID-19 relief, [Congress also passed a major omnibus funding bill, which includes key funding priorities and legislation Murphy authored to help Connecticut](#). Specifically, the legislation repeals the mandate to sell Plum Island and includes \$18.9 million to clean up the island, provides \$700 million for Amtrak's Northeast Corridor and an additional \$1 billion in COVID relief funding to Amtrak, provides \$30.4 million in funding for the Long Island Sound Geographic Program, and includes \$135.5 million for construction of a new courthouse in Hartford. The bill also includes the *Mental Health Parity Compliance Act*, legislation Murphy introduced with U.S. Senator Bill Cassidy (R-La.) that will provide federal and state health insurance regulators with additional tools to monitor and assure compliance with mental health parity laws.

- At the advice of the attending physician of the U.S. Congress and the continuity of government, Senator Murphy [received his first dose of the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine](#) this week.
- Senator Murphy [visited UConn Health](#) to tour their facility and see how their vaccine distribution program operates. During his visit, Murphy thanked health care workers and staff, encouraged people to get vaccinated when the vaccine becomes available to them, and reminded people to continue to get tested for COVID-19 and follow public health guidance.
- Senator Murphy [congratulated Connecticut Education Commissioner Miguel Cardona](#) on his nomination to become the next U.S. Secretary of Education. His role will be essential in helping our schools operate safely as we navigate out of the pandemic.
- Governor Lamont [announced that Connecticut has extended its eviction moratorium through February 9, 2021](#).
- [PURA has extended the enrollment period for programs to prevent heat source shut-offs for both residential and non-residential customers through at least February 9, 2021](#). Further, the Winter Protection Program, which protects eligible households during the winter months, is also in effect from November 1, 2020 through May 1, 2021. If you are experiencing difficulty paying your utility bill, you can contact your utility company and ask if you are eligible to be “coded hardship” and enrolled in the Winter Protection Program. If you are ineligible for hardship status or a non-residential customer, ask to enroll in a COVID-19 Payment Plan. [Additional information regarding these programs and other assistance can be found here](#).
- As we approach the Christmas holiday, please take a moment to review guidance on [how to safely prepare for holiday gatherings](#). The best thing you can do to protect yourself, friends, and family during the holidays is to only celebrate in-person with members of your immediate household. The best way for us to keep cases down in the state is to stay home and away from others, and celebrate with those outside of our household virtually.

For information on federal coronavirus relief, including help for small businesses, direct cash payments and more, visit murphy.senate.gov/coronavirus. This page provides answers to frequently asked questions and gives a summary of available programs and funding.

For the latest information about keeping you or your family safe go to cdc.gov/coronavirus. For resources and information about Connecticut’s response visit ct.gov/coronavirus.

I hope you found this letter helpful. You can get the latest updates on Senator Murphy’s work in the Senate by following him on [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#). If you have questions, please don’t hesitate to reach out to our offices in Hartford or in Washington, DC.



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[If you would like to opt-out of future coronavirus updates, please click here.](#)

