



Friend –

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:

- This week, Senator Murphy spoke on the U.S. Senate floor to [outline the key priorities he wants to see in the next COVID-19 relief bill](#) currently being debated in Congress. While discussing the popularity of President Biden's American Rescue Plan, Murphy spoke about the need to see more funding to support summer enrichment opportunities, speed up the pace of vaccine production by funding the Defense Production Act, and build up a global pandemic infrastructure to fortify our defenses against any future viruses. Murphy also stressed the broad popularity of the Biden's American Rescue Plan, which is supported by nearly 7 in 10 Americans. In addition, early this morning, Congress passed legislation that is a first step to bringing additional COVID relief to Connecticut families and communities.
- Senator Murphy and Senator Tammy Baldwin of Wisconsin [introduced legislation to provide a \\$10 billion investment in rapidly expanding the domestic manufacturing for pandemic supplies](#). This funding will support President Biden's executive action and his American Rescue Plan to fully utilize the Defense Production Act to accelerate manufacturing and delivery of medical equipment and supplies needed for our COVID-19 response.
- This week, Senator Murphy and Republican Senator Roy Blunt of Missouri re-introduced [legislation that allows any health care professional in good standing with a valid practitioners' license to render services—including telehealth—anywhere for the duration of the COVID-19 pandemic](#). Currently, health care professionals must maintain licenses in each state in which they render services. While most states have expanded licensing rules and reciprocity, their actions have been varied, inconsistent, and time-limited, which has created licensing barriers to a comprehensive COVID-19 response.
- This week, Senator Murphy and Senator Maggie Hassan of New Hampshire introduced legislation to support students with disabilities. [The Supporting Children with Disabilities During COVID-19 Act](#) would provide an additional \$11 billion to support students with disabilities. The legislation would help ensure that all students—no matter their disability—receive the support and resources they deserve.

- Senator Murphy also introduced bipartisan legislation with Senator Joni Ernst of Iowa to assist families who are struggling to afford diapers during the COVID-19 pandemic. The [COVID-19 Diaper Assistance Act](#) would provide \$200 million in additional funds through the Social Services Block Grant program for diaper assistance.
- This week, Senator Murphy [recognized Branford's Wren Laboratories as this month's "Innovator of the Month."](#) Based on a request from the Connecticut Department of Public Health, Wren recently introduced a saliva-based COVID-19 PCR detection testing system. In November 2020, Wren received Emergency Use Authorization from the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) for its first-of-its-kind collection kit designed to be used for home, school, or workplace testing without medical personnel. The test includes a special buffer that stabilizes the viral signature ensuring accuracy as well as neutralizing the virus in the saliva, which reduces any possible harmful exposure in transit.
- Senator Murphy [introduced Connecticut Education Commissioner Miguel Cardona](#) at his hearing in front of the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee to be the next Secretary of Education. Murphy highlighted Cardona's career of service as an educator and his family's connection to the community in Meriden. Murphy and Cardona discussed some of Senator Murphy's top education priorities, including making schools safer by reducing suspensions and expulsions as well as promoting racially and socioeconomically diverse schools.
- Governor Ned Lamont [announced the launch of new services at the Connecticut Department of Motor Vehicles \(DMV\)](#) that will enable residents to renew their driver's licenses and non-driver ID cards online without having to visit an office in-person. The DMV's new online renewal option has already been offered to residents whose driver's license or non-driver ID expired within the last 45 days. As part of the soft-launch of the new service during the last two months, more than 20,000 individuals have already successfully renewed online.
- Last week, President Joe Biden announced plans to [re-open enrollment for the federal Health Insurance Marketplace](#), and took additional steps to strengthen Medicaid and the Affordable Care Act, and protect women's health.

For information on federal coronavirus relief, including help for small businesses, direct cash payments and more, visit [murphy.senate.gov/coronavirus](http://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](http://cdc.gov/coronavirus). For resources and information about Connecticut's response, including updates about vaccine distribution, visit [ct.gov/coronavirus](http://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.



Washington, DC  
136 Hart Senate Office Building

Hartford, CT  
120 Huyshope Ave, Suite 401

Washington, DC 20510  
Phone: (202) 224-4041

Hartford, CT 06106  
Phone: (860) 549-8463