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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 today, July 31<sup>st</sup>:

- Earlier today, Senator Murphy and Senator Blumenthal held a press conference in Hartford demanding the U.S. Senate immediately pass an extension for enhanced unemployment insurance during the pandemic. The enhanced federal unemployment benefit, known as Pandemic Unemployment Compensation (PUC), officially ends Friday, and Republicans in the Senate have refused to act. As a result, thousands of Connecticut residents are at risk of not being able to pay for housing, groceries, and other essentials.
- Senator Murphy and Senator Chris Van Hollen of Maryland [introduced the COVID-19 Medical Debt Collection Relief Act](#), legislation to prevent health care providers from taking drastic steps to collect medical debts from patients – including seizing bank accounts and garnishing wages.
- The Connecticut Department of Housing and the Connecticut Housing Finance Authority launched a new website to help manage the eligibility and screening process for two new programs that provide housing assistance amid the COVID-19 crisis. The Temporary Rental Housing Assistance Programs (TRHAP) offers rental assistance, while the Temporary Mortgage Assistance Program (T-MAP) offers mortgage assistance, for those struggling to pay their housing costs due to the job loss, reduction of work, furlough, or closing of business as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Details on TRHAP and T-MAP program eligibility can be accessed by visiting the Department of Housing's website at [portal.ct.gov/doh](https://portal.ct.gov/doh) or the Connecticut Housing Finance Authority's website at [www.chfa.org](https://www.chfa.org).
- The [regional travel advisory](#) between Connecticut, New Jersey, and New York that went into effect last month and directs incoming travelers from states with a significant community spread of COVID-19 to self-quarantine for a 14-day period was updated this week to include Illinois, Kentucky, Minnesota, Puerto Rico, and Washington, DC. The quarantine applies to any person arriving from a state with a positive test rate higher than 10 per 100,000 residents over a 7-day rolling average or a state with a 10 percent or higher positivity rate over a 7-day rolling average.
- This week, Senator Murphy and Senator Blumenthal joined 32 of their senate colleagues in [a letter urging the United States Department of Agriculture \(USDA\) to continue critical flexibilities that have allowed students to access much-needed meals](#) throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. If extended throughout the 2020-2021

school year, children would maintain access regardless of school opening status, and struggling school nutrition programs would benefit from additional financial relief.

- Earlier today, [Senator Murphy visited Goodwin School in East Hartford](#) to assist with meal distribution and thank the staff and volunteers who are ensuring no child goes hungry during the pandemic.
- Senator Murphy and Senator Elizabeth Warren of Massachusetts this week [sent a letter to Federal Trade Commission \(FTC\) Chairman Joseph Simons](#) urging the FTC to take immediate action to protect workers suffering undue harm from the imposition and enforcement of employers' non-compete agreements during the pandemic, and to finalize a rule the FTC discussed [earlier this year](#) that would restrict these agreements, protecting workers and helping foster competition.
- Due to concerns of high electricity rates, Connecticut's Public Utilities Regulatory Authority ordered Eversource Energy to immediately restore rates to where they stood on June 30. If you still need assistance with your utility bill, you can call your utility company and ask to be coded with "Hardship" or "Winter" protection. As a reminder, Connecticut's commercial utility protection moratorium ends tomorrow on August 1.
- Reminder: People who have fully recovered from COVID-19 for at least two weeks are encouraged to consider donating plasma, which may help save the lives of other patients. You can find out more about donation at the FDA's website: <https://www.fda.gov/emergency-preparedness-and-response/coronavirus-disease-2019-covid-19/donate-covid-19-plasma#donate>.
- It is important to get tested for COVID-19. Check out [CT's 211 Testing Locator](#) and enter your town, zip code, street address, or county to find locations closest to you.

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 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.



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