

April 20, 2020

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi  
Speaker  
United States House of Representatives

The Honorable Mitch McConnell  
Majority Leader  
United States Senate

The Honorable Chuck Schumer  
Minority Leader  
United States Senate

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy  
Minority Leader  
United States House of Representatives

Dear Speaker Pelosi, Majority Leader McConnell, Minority Leader McCarthy, and Minority Leader Schumer:

As national, state, and local advocates we are writing to urge Congress to ensure that during the coronavirus pandemic, all benefits, programs, services and assistance provided through COVID-19 response legislation are open to all persons who are eligible and in need, free from discrimination.

As the coronavirus pandemic continues to profoundly impact the lives of all Americans, communities of color, women, and LGBTQ+ people will be disproportionately affected. In Michigan African Americans make up 35% of coronavirus cases, and 40% of deaths, despite representing only 14% of Michigan's population; Illinois and North Carolina show similar trends. Evidence that Asian-Americans are increasingly subject to racist discrimination amid the coronavirus is mounting<sup>ii</sup>. There is overwhelming evidence that Black women are already subject to discrimination in the provision of health care<sup>iii</sup>. Given that 18% of Latinxs are uninsured compared to around 5% of non-Hispanic Whites, and uninsurance rates were on the rise for Latinx children prior to the start of this pandemic the crisis will have a devastating effect on this population<sup>iv</sup>. 1/3 of U.S. households have people with disabilities and people with disabilities are some of the most vulnerable to severe health problems caused by the novel coronavirus<sup>v</sup> - and to discriminatory rationing of care policies<sup>vi</sup>. LGBTQ people have long faced discrimination in the health care system which has negatively impacted their health outcomes and has additionally made them wary of accessing services in the first place<sup>vii</sup>. Women are overrepresented in many frontline jobs yet are paid less than men for the same work; for example, women grocery store cashiers earn on average just 65 cents for every man's dollar<sup>viii</sup>. We must not exacerbate existing health and economic inequities by allowing qualified individuals to be turned away from federally funded services.

Thus, we urge Congress to include provisions in future COVID-19 response legislation to ensure that no eligible person in need is excluded from participation in, denied the benefits of, or subjected to discrimination in the administration of programs and services funded by federal COVID-19 response legislation based on non-merit factors such as (but not limited to) age, disability, sex (including sexual orientation, gender identity, and pregnancy, childbirth, and related medical conditions), race, color, national origin, immigration status, or religion; and to ensure that fund recipients treat as valid all marriages that are valid under federal law.

Denying eligible people needed COVID-19 response services weakens public health and the economy. We call on Congress to prevent such exclusions by including specific language prohibiting discrimination in all COVID-19 response bills.

Sincerely,

National Organizations:

A Better Balance  
Advocates for Youth  
The AIDS Institute  
American Association of University Women (AAUW)  
American Atheists  
American Civil Liberties Union  
American Council of the Blind  
Americans for Financial Reform  
Americans United for Separation of Church & State  
Asian & Pacific Islander American Health Forum  
Asian Pacific Institute on Gender-Based Violence  
Association of Asian Pacific Community Health Organizations  
Athlete Ally  
Autistic Self Advocacy Network  
Baptist Joint Committee for Religious Liberty (BJC)  
Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law  
Black and Pink  
Catholics for Choice  
Center for American Progress  
Center for Constitutional Rights  
Center for Disability Rights  
Center for Inquiry  
Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP)  
Center for LGBTQ Economic Advancement & Research  
Center for the Study of Social Policy  
Center for Public Representation  
CenterLink: The Community of LGBT Centers  
Children's Defense Fund  
Children's Rights  
Clearinghouse of Women's Issues  
Coalition of Labor Union Women  
Coalition on Human Needs  
Disability Rights Education & Defense Fund (DREDF)  
Disciples Justice Action Network  
Faith in Public Life  
Family Equality  
FORGE, Inc.

The Forum for Youth Investment  
Foster Care to Success  
Futures Without Violence  
Gay Parent Magazine  
GLBTQ Legal Advocates & Defenders (GLAD)  
GLMA: Health Professionals Advancing LGBTQ Equality  
The Global Justice Institute  
GLSEN  
Hispanic Federation  
House of Blahnik, Inc.  
Human Rights Campaign  
Impact Fund  
Indivisible  
Interfaith Alliance  
International Association of Official Human Rights Agencies (IAOHRA)  
Japanese American Citizens League  
Jewish Women International  
Justice for Migrant Women  
Justice in Aging  
Juvenile Law Center  
Lambda Legal  
Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law  
The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights  
Legal Aid at Work  
Legal Momentum, the Women's Legal Defense and Education Fund  
MALDEF  
MAZON: A Jewish Response to Hunger  
Men Having Babies  
Modern Military Association of America  
MomsRising  
Movement Advancement Project  
Muslim Public Affairs Council (MPAC)  
NAACP  
NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc.  
NASTAD  
National Association of Councils on Developmental Disabilities  
National Association of Counsel for Children  
National Association of the Deaf  
National Center for Civil and Human Rights LGBTQ Institute  
National Center for Learning Disabilities  
National Center for Lesbian Rights  
National Center for Transgender Equality  
National Center for Youth Law  
National Center on Adoption and Permanency

National Coalition Against Domestic Violence  
National Coalition for LGBT Health  
National Coalition for the Homeless  
National Council of Asian Pacific Americans (NCAPA)  
National Council of Jewish Women  
National Council on Aging  
National Education Association  
National Employment Law Project  
National Equality Action Team  
National Health Law Program  
National Latina Institute for Reproductive Justice  
National LGBT Cancer Network  
National LGBTQ Task Force Action Fund  
National Low Income Housing Coalition  
National Network to End Domestic Violence  
National Organization for Women  
National Partnership for Women & Families  
National Resource Center on Domestic Violence  
National Trans Bar Association  
National Women's Law Center  
National Queer Asian Pacific Islander Alliance (NQAPIA)  
NETWORK Lobby for Catholic Social Justice  
North American Council on Adoptable Children  
Northwest Network of Bisexual, Trans, Lesbian, and Gay Survivors of Abuse  
Not Dead Yet  
OCA-Asian Pacific American Advocates  
Out & Equal Workplace Advocates  
People for the American Way  
PFLAG National  
Planned Parenthood Federation of America  
Polygon Education Fund  
Positive Women's Network-USA  
Poverty & Race Research Action Council  
PowerOn, a program of LGBT Technology Institute  
Pride at Work  
Public Advocacy for Kids (PAK)  
Raise A Child  
Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice  
SAGE: Advocacy and Services for LGBT Elders  
Secular Coalition for America  
Secular Policy Institute  
SEIU International Lavender Caucus  
The Sikh Coalition  
SisterSong: National Women of Color Reproductive Justice Collective

SOJOURN

SPLC Action Fund

Swipe Out Hunger

Transgender Law Center

Transgender Legal Defense & Education Fund

Treatment Action Group

The Trevor Project

True Colors United

Ujima Inc.: The National Center on Violence Against Women in the Black Community

Union for Reform Judaism

United Church of Christ, Justice and Witness Ministries

Voices for Progress

Whitman-Walker Health and Whitman-Walker Institute

YWCA USA

ZAMI NOBLA: National Organization of Black Lesbians on Aging

State and Local Organizations:

Agape Missions, NFP

AIDS Foundation of Chicago

AJL Consulting

Atlanta Pride Committee

Arkansas Transgender Equity Collaborative

Auburn Seminary

Black Women's Blueprint

California LGBTQ Health and Human Services Network

The Center on Colfax

Chinese-American Planning Council

Cityworld Family Practice

Coai, Inc.

Colorado Organization for Latina Opportunity and Reproductive Rights (COLOR)

embrella. Embracing and Empowering Families

Empire Justice Center

Equality California

Equality Florida

Equality Illinois

EqualityMaine

Equality North Carolina

Equality Ohio

Fenway Health

Freedom Overground

Fundacion Latinoamericana De Accion Social, Inc. (FLAS)

Gender Justice

Georgia Equality

GLAA  
GoodWorks: North Alabama Harm Reduction  
Housing Choice Partners  
JustUs Health  
Juxtaposed Center for Transformation, Inc  
Latino LinQ  
Legal Voice  
LGBT Bar Association of New York  
Los Angeles LGBT Center  
Massachusetts Transgender Political Coalition  
Mazzoni Center  
Miami Valley Positives for Positives  
Nebraska Appleseed  
North Idaho Pride Alliance  
The NW Network of Bisexual, Trans, Lesbian, and Gay Survivors of Abuse  
The NYC Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual & Transgender Community Center  
Oasis Legal Services  
OCTOPUS LLC (Organizing Communities Transgender Outreach Promoting United Support)  
Oklahomans for Equality  
One Colorado  
OutCenter of Southwest Michigan  
OUT Georgia Business Alliance  
OutFront Minnesota  
Pacific Center for Human Growth  
Pathways to New Connects  
Peter Cicchino Youth Project, Urban Justice Center  
Peoria Proud  
Public Justice Center  
QC Pride  
Resolve New England  
Resource Center  
RESULTS DC  
Santa Clara County Wage Theft Coalition  
Silver State Equality-Nevada  
Southern Arizona Gender Alliance  
The Source LGBT+ Center  
Tennessee Equality Project  
Trans Housing Atlanta Program, Inc.  
Transgender Resource Center of New Mexico  
Uniting Pride of Champaign County  
Union Theological Seminary  
Walker  
We All Rise  
Witness to Mass Incarceration

The Womxn Project (TWP)  
Van Ness Recovery House

i Julian Kossoff, *The Coronavirus Seems to Kill Disproportionally African Americans, According to the Few States Providing Data on the Race of Victims* NEWS.YAHOO.COM (Apr. 6, 2020) <https://news.yahoo.com/coronavirus-seems-disproportionately-kill-african-141931540> (last visited Apr. 7, 2020)

ii Alexandra Kelley, *Report Highlights Emerging Trends of Asian American Discrimination amid Coronavirus Pandemic* THEHILL.COM (Apr. 2, 2020), <https://thehill.com/changing-america/respect/equality/490803-report-highlights-emerging-trends-of-asian-american> (last visited Apr 7, 2020).

iii Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health, *How Discrimination can Harm Black Women's Health* HSPH.HARVARD.EDU (2018) <https://www.hsph.harvard.edu/news/hsph-in-the-news/discrimination-black-womens-health/> (last visited Apr. 7, 2020)

iv Kelly Whitener et al., *Decade of Success for Latino Children's Health Now in Jeopardy* CCF.GEORGETOWN.EDU (Mar. 10, 2020) <https://ccf.georgetown.edu/2020/03/10/decade-of-success-for-latino-childrens-health-now-in-jeopardy/> (last visited Apr. 7, 2020)

v Rebecca Cokley, *Coronavirus Proposals Leave the Disability Community Behind* AMERICANPROGRESS.COM (Mar. 27, 2020) <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/disability/news/2020/03/27/482378/coronavirus-proposals-leave-disability-community-behind/> (last visited Apr. 7, 2020)

vi Amy Silverman, *People With Intellectual Disabilities May Be Denied Lifesaving Care Under These Plans as Coronavirus Spreads* PROBUBLICA.ORG (Mar. 27, 2020) <https://www.propublica.org/article/people-with-intellectual-disabilities-may-be-denied-lifesaving-care-under-these-plans-as-coronavirus-spreads> (last visited Apr. 7, 2020)

vii Shabab Ahmed Mirza et al., *Discrimination Prevents LGBTQ People from Accessing Health Care* AMERICANPROGRESS.COM (Jan. 18, 2018), <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/lgbtq-rights/news/2018/01/18/445130/discrimination-prevents-lgbtq-people-accessing-health-care/> (last visited Apr. 7, 2020).

viii Jasmine Tucker, *Women Experience a Wage Gap in Nearly Every Occupation* NATIONAL WOMEN'S LAW CENTER NWLC.ORG (Apr. 2018) <https://nwlc-ciw49tixgw5lbab.stackpathdns.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/Wage-Gap-Fact-Sheet-Occupation.pdf> (last visited Apr. 13, 2020)