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Klobuchar, Schatz, Wyden, Brown Introduce Legislation to Help Nonprofits Hire Workers During Pandemic

The WORK NOW Act will help organizations meet increased service demand due to coronavirus pandemic and help newly unemployed Americans return to work serving their communities

WASHINGTON – U.S. Senator Amy Klobuchar (D-MN), along with Senators Brian Schatz (D-HI), Ron Wyden (D-OR) and Sherrod Brown (D-OH), introduced legislation to help nonprofit organizations meet an increase in demand for their services due to the coronavirus pandemic while helping newly unemployed Americans get back to work. *The Work Opportunities and Resources to Keep Nonprofit Organizations Well (WORK NOW) Act* will create a major new grant program to help nonprofit organizations retain their employees, scale their service delivery, and provide unemployed men and women with new jobs serving their communities.

"Nonprofits are on the front lines of this crisis helping millions of Americans in need. From food banks, to shelters, to counseling centers, charitable organizations are doing incredible work to help families put food on their table, provide housing assistance, and serve people with disabilities," Klobuchar said. **"But as demand for their services soars, many of these organizations are struggling financially. At the same time, over 36 million men and women have lost their jobs and are looking for work. We need to help charitable nonprofits keep their doors open, scale their invaluable services, and provide opportunities for unemployed men and women to return to work serving their communities."**

"Nonprofits are fast, they are nimble, and they are on the frontlines. These institutions are pivotal to our survival and our recovery and they need help. Our bill will put people back to work and give nonprofits the resources they need to help more families get through this crisis," Schatz said.

“Nonprofits have been hit with a one-two punch: giving is down, while demand for their services is at an all-time high with 36 million Americans out of work and struggling to put food on the table,” Wyden said. **“Our bill would provide needed resources to overwhelmed charities and help connect them with workers who are unemployed. It's critical that organizations like food banks have both the funding and manpower needed to serve their communities during this unprecedented economic and public health crisis.”**

“During this crisis, non-profits have stepped in to fulfill the needs of our communities,” said Brown. **“But like many, they are feeling the financial strain of this pandemic, while the need for their services continues to grow. One of the best things we can do to provide relief for our communities, is to help these organizations maintain the workforce needed to continue their services.”**

In addition to Klobuchar, Schatz, Wyden, and Brown, the legislation is cosponsored by Senators Tom Carper (D-DE), Ed Markey (D-MA), Jeff Merkley (D-OR), Tammy Duckworth (D-IL), Richard Blumenthal (D-CT), and Chris Coons (D-DE).

“Delawareans and Americans across the country find themselves in dire straits through no fault of their own. Too many families are struggling to pay their rent and bills and are worried about how they are going to put food on the table. And just this week, our nation’s unemployment rate reached nearly 15% -- the highest since the Great Depression. Now, more than ever, we must do everything we can to support our nation’s food banks, shelters and other charitable groups that are serving as a critical lifeline to so many families during this pandemic,” said Carper. **“That’s why I am proud to join Senators Klobuchar, Schatz, Wyden, Brown, Markey, Merkley, Duckworth, Blumenthal, and Coons to introduce the WORK NOW Act, a bill that will help get people back to work while also ensuring that our nation’s nonprofit organizations have the workforce and resources necessary to continue providing critical services to our communities.”**

The legislation is endorsed by the following groups: National Council of Nonprofits; United Way; Boys and Girls Clubs of America; Goodwill Industries; YMCA, Habitat for Humanity; Jewish Federations of North America; Mentor, Orthodox Union; Lutheran Services in America; Catholic Charities of St. Paul and Minneapolis; Minnesota Council of Nonprofits; Lutheran Social Services Minnesota; Aspire Minnesota; St. David’s Center for Child & Family Development; Lutheran Social Service of Minnesota; and Hawai’i Alliance of Nonprofit Organizations.

“America’s 1.3 million charitable nonprofits embody the best of America. They feed, heal, shelter, educate, inspire, enlighten, and nurture people across the country. But with even more people relying on them now, nonprofits need help in meeting the enormous demand created by the coronavirus pandemic,” said **Tim Delaney, President and CEO of the National Council of Nonprofits**. **“The WORK NOW Act is a crucial piece of legislation that will help nonprofits retain and rehire their employees, expand services to meet the skyrocketing human needs, and put newly unemployed men and women back to work for the common good.”**

“Workers at non-profit organizations around the country are fighting to help individuals and families make it through this unprecedented health and economic crisis,” **said Brian Gallagher, President and CEO of United Way Worldwide.** “Our sector is the third-largest employer in the U.S., but our resources and budgets are incredibly strained as people’s needs are at their greatest. The *WORK NOW Act* will provide non-profits with the support we need to meet our missions, offer critical services like access to food pantries and shelters, and set the stage for a stronger economic recovery. I appreciate Senator Klobuchar recognizing the critical role that our sector plays in American society and fighting for this important legislation.”

“Nonprofit organizations like Habitat for Humanity are uniquely situated to play a vital role in the country’s recovery by serving the low-income families who are bearing the brunt of this economic crisis,” **said Jonathan Reckford, CEO of Habitat for Humanity International.**

“Unfortunately, financial pressures have already forced Habitat for Humanity organizations to make deep cuts—including significant layoffs—endangering our ability to resume our work with full force. The *WORK NOW Act* will enable nonprofits like Habitat to continue and expand our service to communities hit hard by the COVID-19 pandemic. We thank Sen. Klobuchar for her leadership, and urge the Senate to include this legislation in its next relief package.”

YMCA of the USA said, “Whether feeding hungry kids, providing childcare to working families, sheltering the homeless or promoting health and well-being, the YMCA provides critical programs and services to neighbors in need. Community-based nonprofit organizations like the Y are offering these services through the pandemic. But without the kind of support that only government can provide, many charitable organizations will not only struggle to continue these essential services, but will be challenged to keep their doors open once recovery begins. The *WORK NOW Act* will help nonprofits like the Y sustain important programs that strengthen their communities. Thank you to Senator Klobuchar, Senator Schatz and others for supporting the important work of our nation’s nonprofits. We hope this becomes a bipartisan priority for the entire Senate.”

“Our staff are on the front lines of the COVID-19 pandemic every day working relentlessly to ensure the most vulnerable in our communities are not left further behind. This requires a significant investment of resources and time, which to-date has not been recognized in federal relief packages,” **said Tim Marx, President and CEO of Catholic Charities of St. Paul and Minneapolis.** “The *WORK NOW Act* is critical to the sustainability of our organizations. We call on Congress to take action without delay, as Americans who rely on these services for housing assistance, food and other basic needs cannot wait.”

“Lutheran Services in America commends Sen. Klobuchar for introducing the *WORK NOW Act* to ensure that nonprofit organizations of *all* sizes receive vital support at such a crucial time. The vital financial support provided in the *WORK NOW Act* empowers health and human service workers across our national network of 300+ Lutheran social ministry organizations to continue serving our nation’s most vulnerable in more than 1,400 communities across 45 states. The ability to scale services to meet unprecedented demand during the coronavirus pandemic is essential for our members on the frontlines to effectively combat this deadly disease while

keeping themselves and those they care for safe,” said **Charlotte Haberaecker, President & CEO, Lutheran Services in America.**

“During this unprecedented time, youth services such as Boys & Girls Clubs will be even more critical to kids, families, and communities,” said **Jim Clark, president and CEO of Boys & Girls Clubs of America.** “We applaud Senators’ Klobuchar, Schatz, Wyden and Brown for the WORK NOW Act, which will help offset the financial impact to non-profit organizations that are on the front lines during this pandemic, serving communities who need them now more than ever.”

“Senator Klobuchar’s proposal gets to the heart of our nonprofit members’ strengths – nonprofits that have long provided housing, nutrition assistance, mental health and counseling services, child care, and disability assistance to our communities are seeing increased demands — their ability to help keep our communities thriving is threatened by a sudden lack of financial resources,” said **Jon Pratt, Executive Director of Minnesota Council of Nonprofits.** “Increasing funds for nonprofit staffing allows our members to do the essential work of keeping community members in their homes, food on their tables, and their children cared for, among many other services.”

At the same time that the need for many nonprofit services is soaring, charitable giving and other revenue streams have declined precipitously as a result of the coronavirus pandemic, forcing many nonprofits to lay off workers and cut back on services. This legislation will provide a major mobilization of resources so American men and women recently separated from the workforce can get back to work helping our nonprofit organizations meet the massive needs of this moment.

The program will be administered by the Treasury Department and allocations will be made to states and local governments—with all funding channeled to eligible nonprofits meeting needs that have increased as a result of the pandemic and the attendant economic crisis. National nonprofit organizations will be invited to apply directly to the Treasury Department on behalf of themselves and their local chapters across the nation. The majority of federal funding must be used for employee compensation—paying the wages, salaries and benefits of either existing employees or new employees. Some funding may also be used to help nonprofits innovate in delivering services in new ways to meet the challenges imposed by the pandemic.

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