



DAILY COVID-19 UPDATE

December 16, 2020

WHAT HAPPENED TODAY

Today, Congressional leaders are approaching an agreement on a roughly \$900 billion coronavirus stimulus package. Due to continuing negotiations, elements of the package are still subject to change but it is **expected to include** another round of \$600 or \$700 stimulus checks; \$300 boosted unemployment benefits; \$300 billion to the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP); \$25 billion in rental assistance; student loan forbearance extension; and additional funding for schools and vaccine distribution, among other items. Additionally, state and local aid and liability protections are likely to be left out of the package as they are major sticking points and could complicate passage.

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-KY) **said** “major headway” has been made over the last 24 hours, and he expressed optimism the proposal will be able to pass both chambers of Congress. Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer also sounded upbeat about negotiations, and stated lawmakers are “very close” to a deal. However, he added Democrats “would have liked to go considerably further” with the stimulus.

LATEST PMJ RESOURCES

[Drug Shortage and Medical Supply Chain Tracker](#)

[Coronavirus State Reopening Tracker](#)

[Lame Duck Preview Memo](#)

[President Trump EO Tracker](#)

[COVID-19 Legislative Outlook](#)

[State Responses to EO on Unemployment Insurance](#)

[Healthcare Chart on COVID Legislation](#)

[Liability Reform State of Play](#)

[CARES Act State Funding](#)

Additionally, unlike previous COVID-related proposals, there has been no widespread objection from lawmakers to the package thus far. While unemployment benefits and direct payments are less than progressives have pushed for, Rep. Pramila Jayapal (D-WA), Congressional Progressive Caucus Chair, has not indicated the group will oppose the bill. Rep. Hakeem Jeffries (D-NY) also **predicted** “strong support within the House Democratic Caucus.”

Notably, President-elect Joe Biden **lauded the progress** towards a bipartisan coronavirus relief package, but classified the proposal as a “down payment” on additional aid that will “have to be done” early next year. He called the impending stimulus package “encouraging” and complimented the direct cash payments.

While lawmakers have indicated substantial progress has been made on COVID-related aid and the omnibus, it is possible they will need to pass another continuing resolution (CR) to fund the government past Friday to complete a deal.

[State and Local Funding Bills](#)

[COVID Legislative Tracker](#)

[Global COVID-19 Export Controls](#)

[Memo - Federal Reserve COVID-19 Announcements](#)

[Federal Reserve Lending Facilities Deck](#)

ECONOMIC UPDATE

Administration

FEDERAL RESERVE

- The Federal Reserve Board and Federal Open Market Committee **released economic projections** from the December 15 to 16 FOMC meeting.
- The Fed issued its **FOMC statement**.

Articles of Interest

- 12/16 Politico published an article titled, **“Fed sees less severe recession this year on vaccine hopes.”**
- 12/16 The Wall Street Journal published an article titled, **“Fed Updates Plans for Bond Buying, But Makes No Changes to Asset Purchases.”**
- 12/16 The Wall Street Journal published an article titled, **“Congressional Leaders Discuss Adding a Second Round of Stimulus Checks.”**

PUBLIC HEALTH UPDATE

Congressional

HOUSE

- Rep. Krishnamoorthi (D-IL), Chairman of the House Oversight Committee's Economic and Consumer Policy Subcommittee, sent a [letter](#) to Peter Navarro, Assistant to the President and Director of Trade and Manufacturing Policy, requesting information about all pandemic-related government contracts in which he played any role.

SENATE

- Sen. Majority Leader McConnell (R-KY) delivered [remarks](#) from the Senate floor regarding COVID-19 relief, stating: "Congressional leaders on both sides are going to keep working until we get it done."
- Sen. Chuck Grassley (R-IA) delivered [remarks](#) from the Senate floor urging passage of his legislation to provide the Special Inspector General for Pandemic Recovery expedited hiring authority for staffing and oversight operations.

Administration

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

- HHS [announced](#) the CDC will award \$140 million for COVID-19 vaccine preparedness and almost \$87 million for tracking and testing to 64 jurisdictions, including all 50 states and U.S. territories.
- HHS' Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) [announced](#) it has completed review of Phase 3 applications from the Provider Relief Fund (PRF) program and will distribute \$24.5 billion to over 70,000 providers.
- HHS' Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) published a [blog post](#) titled, "Expanding Telemedicine in the Age of COVID-19."

CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION

- CDC released an [infographic](#) titled, "How to Select, Wear, and Clean Your Mask."

Articles of Interest

- 12/15 NPR published an article titled, "[Fauci Predicts U.S. Could See Signs Of Herd Immunity By Late March Or Early April.](#)"
- 12/15 Morning Consult published an article titled, "[The Public Turns to Family, Health Officials Over Celebrities for COVID-19 Vaccine Guidance.](#)"
- 12/15 The New York Times published an article titled, "[U.S. and Pfizer Are Negotiating Deal for More Vaccine Doses Next Year.](#)"
- 12/15 Stat published an article titled, "[One-quarter of the world may not get a Covid-19 vaccine until 2022, experts warn.](#)"
- 12/16 Axios published an article titled, "[Rural America will have a harder time getting vaccinated.](#)"