

# Congress of the United States

## House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND REFORM

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March 17, 2020

President Donald J. Trump  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue  
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear President Trump:

In view of the exigent circumstances caused by the coronavirus outbreak, we urge you to use existing statutory authorities to direct all federal agencies to advance employees up to 30 days of sick leave and to direct the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) to establish an emergency leave transfer program to allow federal employees to donate their unused sick leave to any other federal employees.

The increasing number of coronavirus cases in the United States amid a global pandemic portends an outbreak that is likely to affect thousands of federal employees, if not more. Telework and other flexible work arrangements will address many, but not all, situations.

Thousands of federal employees engage the public directly every day, providing vital services to the American people. They cannot work from home. These employees include postal delivery workers; Transportation Security Administration screeners; Social Security Administration caseworkers and other support personnel; doctors, nurses, and administrative staff at Department of Veterans Affairs hospitals; census enumerators; prison guards, and many others who serve our nation. If these frontline federal employees do not have access to paid leave, they may have to choose between paying their bills or making the right public health choice to stay home. We do not want to force federal employees to make these impossible choices, particularly when Congress has vested you with authorities that help prevent these circumstances.

Under existing law, you have the authority to ensure that federal workers have access to adequate sick leave during this public health crisis.

1. Section 6307 of Title 5 of the U.S. Code provides: “When required by the exigencies of the situation, a maximum of 30 days sick leave with pay may be advanced for serious disability or ailment;” and
2. Section 6391 of Title 5 of the U.S. Code states that the President may require OPM to set up this leave share program “in the event of a major disaster or

emergency, as declared by the President, that results in severe adverse effects for a substantial number of employees.”

We urge you to take these steps immediately to make full use of these flexibilities that allow federal employees at the forefront of this outbreak to make the right choices for their own health and for the health of our great nation.

Sincerely,



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Gerald E. Connolly  
Chairman  
Subcommittee on Government Operations

Enclosure

cc: The Honorable Jody Hice, Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Government Operations