

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND REFORM

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Opening Statement
Chairwoman Carolyn B. Maloney
House Committee on Oversight and Reform
Full Committee Business Meeting of Coronavirus Relief Measures
February 12, 2021

I want to open this incredibly important markup by telling you about something unusual that happened to me this week.

I was handed a letter written by a woman named Kathy Catazaro Perry, a mother of six and grandmother of five who's juggling her family responsibilities with her work as the Mayor of a small town in Northeast Ohio called Massillon.

Massillon's tagline is the "City of Champions."

The steel plants of the past have been replaced by new goals for the future—goals of better infrastructure, a revitalized downtown, and fresh economic development.

In her letter, the Mayor of the City of Champions was looking for a champion in Washington.

She was asking her representative—our colleague Congressman Bob Gibbs—to support a proposal in President Biden's American Rescue Plan to provide \$350 billion in direct relief to state and local governments.

On the other side of the state, the Mayor of Lima, Ohio, in Mr. Jordan's district, wrote a similar letter. Mayor David Berger said,

"The irony is that only a year ago, January 2020, Lima, Ohio, was experiencing an economic high point of the last four decades, with low unemployment, a surplus of jobs, exciting economic development projects, a balanced budget, and very healthy carry-overs in the General Fund and proprietary funds of the city. The picture today is totally opposite. The ravages of COVID-19 must be understood in that context."

Mayor Berger, too, asked that Congress take immediate action to deliver the local assistance proposed in President Biden's plan.

Dozens of urgent letters have poured into our Committee from all over the country. One of them was signed by over 420 Mayors, all underscoring the same stark reality: Americans are hurting, and relief can't come fast enough.

The work we've come together to accomplish today could not be more urgent. More Americans have now died from coronavirus than were killed in World War II, and thousands more of our family and friends will lose their lives and livelihoods before this is over.

States and local governments, Republican and Democratic alike, are desperate for help.

Today, we are considering a bill to provide \$350 billion in relief to states, local governments, Tribes, and territories.

This money will allow these governments to distribute vaccines faster, expand testing more broadly, and maintain vital services across the country.

It will also help heal Main Street economies and save the jobs of our teachers, first responders, and other essential workers.

Our legislation also expands emergency leave for federal and postal workers through September 30th so they don't have to choose between their job or caring for loved ones who get infected with coronavirus.

Finally, this package contains \$117 million for increased transparency and accountability as we do everything we can, as fast as we can, to get vaccines into people's arms, to get resources to struggling communities, and to get Americans back to work.

I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting this bill. If we can pass this bill, Congressman Gibbs can let the Mayor of the City of Champions know that she's got \$15 million in relief on its way.

And Congressman Jordan can tell the Mayor of Lima, Ohio that he can expect a lifeline of \$25 million to help heal the damage to his city.

Thank you, and I recognize our Ranking Member, Mr. Comer, for his opening statement.

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