

October 31, 2023

Dear Majority Leader Schumer and Minority Leader McConnell:

The Senate is preparing an emergency supplemental appropriations bill to respond to the ongoing humanitarian and military crises in Ukraine, Israel, Gaza, and elsewhere. We support providing that funding without delay. As part of that bill we ask that you include an equal amount of funding to address the urgent and growing emergencies facing the American people.

The supplemental cannot just be about responding to emergencies abroad. In America today, working families, the children, the elderly, the sick and the poor are struggling to deal with major crises at home that demand our immediate attention.

How can we tell our constituents who are struggling to pay for the basic necessities of life that Congress can immediately provide tens of billions of dollars in taxpayer funding to deal with emergencies abroad, but we somehow cannot afford to respond to the severe economic pain that they are feeling at home?

We have a responsibility to act boldly to respond to ALL of the major emergencies we face – both at home and abroad.

Our child care system is in a state of emergency. As a result of the child care funding cliff, 3.2 million kids in our country are in danger of losing the child care they currently have, over 70,000 child care programs will likely shut down, and over 230,000 child care workers could lose their jobs. Congress must provide adequate funding in the supplemental to make sure that every working family in America has access to affordable and high-quality child care.

Our primary health care system is in a state of emergency. In America today, it has been estimated that 68,000 people die each year because they cannot afford to go to a doctor when they get sick. Moreover, tens of millions of Americans are unable to access the primary care, dental care and behavioral health care that they desperately need. The massive shortage of primary care doctors, nurses and dentists in our country is a major reason why life expectancy in America is in decline and is at its lowest level since the mid-1990s. We must address the crisis of lack of access to health care in the supplemental.

The lack of affordable housing in America is an emergency. In America today, evictions and foreclosures are skyrocketing as the price of rent and monthly mortgage payments become increasingly unaffordable. Nearly 600,000 Americans are homeless on any given night and some 18 million families are paying over half of their limited incomes on housing. The supplemental must include funding to address the affordable housing crisis in America.

The opioid crisis in America is an emergency. Last year, more than 105,000 Americans died from opioid overdoses - up more than 60 percent from five years ago. The supplemental must not only include funding to prevent fentanyl from coming into our country, it must also provide

emergency funding to address the severe shortage of addiction specialists and behavioral health professionals in America.

Food insecurity in America is an emergency. In America today, 34 million Americans including some 9 million children are food insecure. That should not be happening in the richest country in the history of the world. At a minimum, President Biden’s full Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC) must be included in the emergency supplemental to prevent pregnant mothers and babies from being put on waiting lists for their urgent nutritional needs.

Natural disasters impacting our communities are an emergency. This year, the United States broke the record for the number of disasters causing over \$1 billion in damages, a figure that is expected to increase due to global climate change. The federal government has a responsibility to help communities, businesses, and farmers recover from these disasters and rebuild sustainably and resiliently to mitigate the impacts of future disasters—that means substantial investments in emergency relief programs through federal agencies outside of FEMA, like the Community Development Block Grant – Disaster Recovery program.

We look forward to meeting with you soon to discuss how we can work together to address these crises as soon as possible.

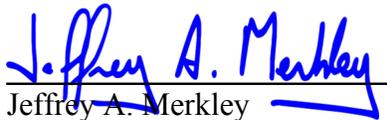
Sincerely,



Bernard Sanders
United States Senator



Elizabeth Warren
United States Senator



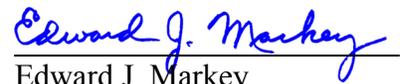
Jeffrey A. Merkley
United States Senator



Peter Welch
United States Senator



Mazie K. Hirono
United States Senator



Edward J. Markey
United States Senator