

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

February 2, 2021

Mr. Brian Deese
Director
National Economic Council
Eisenhower Executive Office Building
Washington, DC 20502

Dear Director Deese:

We look forward to working with you to address the effects of the coronavirus pandemic on all sectors of our economy. This includes the disproportionate impact that the pandemic has had on women's employment and labor force participation. As the Biden Administration seeks to help our country rebuild, we hope that you will prioritize efforts to help women return to work.

The coronavirus pandemic has erased some of the hard-fought gains women made in recent decades and poses long-term challenges to women's economic security.¹ While job totals are down across the board since the pandemic began in early 2020, women have lost nearly one million more jobs than men during this time—with job losses disproportionately impacting Black and Latina women.² The most recent monthly data shows an even greater divergence between job loss rates for working men and women. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the American economy shed 140,000 jobs in December 2020, with women accounting for 156,000 net jobs lost, compared to a net increase of 16,000 jobs for men.

Many women have been forced to leave the workforce during the pandemic due to family considerations or because they disproportionately work in industries that have been among the hardest-hit. Women also make up a higher share of state and local government workers and workers in the service industry, which have both experienced high rates of job loss and furloughs. Many working mothers have also had to cut back their work hours or leave their jobs altogether to take on increased responsibilities as caregivers due to school closures.³

We look forward to working with you to make progress in addressing a number of structural and long-standing policy issues that have historically undermined women's ability to work — including challenges in accessing affordable child care, the lack of a national paid leave policy, and ongoing gender pay disparities. We also believe that implementing and improving workforce development and job training programs specifically targeted towards women can also help alleviate the disproportionate job losses suffered by women during the pandemic.

¹Edwards, Kathryn. (Nov. 24, 2020). *Women Are Leaving the Labor Force in Record Numbers*. The Rand Blog. <https://www.rand.org/blog/2020/11/women-are-leaving-the-labor-force-in-record-numbers.html>

²Kurtz, Annalyn. (January 8, 2021). *The US economy lost 140,000 jobs in December. All of them were held by women*. CNN Business. <https://www.cnn.com/2021/01/08/economy/women-job-losses-pandemic/index.html?fbclid=IwAR1xPFkxfiNODRtK5HJgVVMkLm4tdNa3CKJ4aCo53UU8i5cQePuB72DBWx>

³Saujani, Reshma. (Dec. 7, 2020). *COVID has decimated women's careers — we need a Marshall Plan for Moms, now*. The Hill. <https://thehill.com/blogs/congress-blog/politics/529090-covid-has-decimated-womens-careers-we-need-a-marshall-plan-for>

We commend the Biden Administration on its recently announced American Rescue Plan, which includes several provisions intended to address these issues. This includes a significant investment in Child Care Development Block Grant Funding, expansion of the Child Tax Credit and the Child and Dependent Care Tax Credit, and expanded paid sick, family, and medical leave.

Without significant focus and attention to women's workforce issues at the federal level, the disproportionate economic impact of the pandemic on women threatens to harm our nation's overall recovery and reverse decades of progress. As your partners in Congress and as longstanding supporters of a range of legislative solutions to address the challenges outlined above, we look forward to working with you to address these issues and helping women re-enter the workforce.

Thank you for your time and attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,

/S/ Amy Klobuchar
Amy Klobuchar
United States Senator

/S/ Kirsten Gillibrand
Kirsten Gillibrand
United States Senator

/S/ Sherrod Brown
Sherrod Brown
United States Senator

/S/ Richard Blumenthal
Richard Blumenthal
United States Senator

/S/ Robert Menendez
Robert Menendez
United States Senator

/S/ Benjamin L. Cardin
Benjamin L. Cardin
United States Senator

/S/ Tammy Duckworth
Tammy Duckworth
United States Senator

/S/ Jacky Rosen
Jacky Rosen
United States Senator

/S/ Dick Durbin
Richard J. Durbin
United States Senator

/S/ Mazie K. Hirono
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United States Senator

/S/ Chris Van Hollen
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United States Senator

/S/ Sheldon Whitehouse
Sheldon Whitehouse
United States Senator

/S/ Jack Reed

Jack Reed

United States Senator

/S/ Tina Smith

Tina Smith

United States Senator

/S/ Catherine Cortez Masto

Catherine Cortez Masto

United States Senator

/S/ Tim Kaine

Tim Kaine

United States Senator

/S/ Bob Casey

Robert P. Casey, Jr.

United States Senator

/S/ Jeffrey A. Merkley

Jeffrey A. Merkley

United States Senator

/S/ Martin Heinrich

Martin Heinrich

United States Senator

S/ Dianne Feinstein

Dianne Feinstein

United States Senator