

# Common Good Iowa

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Statement:

## **Iowa Senators must push for COVID relief bill that matches the scope and scale of the crisis**

*This is a statement from Anne Discher, executive director of Common Good Iowa:*

Today the U.S. Senate expects to vote on a disappointing COVID-19 relief bill — a “skinny” package that fails to meet the challenge of the unprecedented crisis we face.

The effects of the pandemic and the deepest economic downturn since the Great Depression are not over by a mile. Thousands of Iowans are still out of work and need help paying rent and putting food on the table. Our child care industry is struggling, and our state and local governments face budget shortfalls that are sure to bring teacher layoffs and cuts to health care and other services that keep our communities going.

Black, Latinx and immigrant families — disproportionately left out of relief programs to date — have been particularly hard hit as the crisis has exacerbated long-standing inequities in health care, education and housing stemming largely from structural racism.

Iowans are counting Sen. Grassley and Sen. Ernst to oppose this package — and any package — that fails to adequately respond to challenges Iowans face. Both have voiced support for some important measures left out of or insufficiently funded in the bill, including boosts to child care and food assistance.

By contrast, this Senate bill includes no increase in SNAP benefits to help people buy food for their families, and its child care provisions represent a fraction of what is needed to stabilize providers and keep children safe and healthy. There’s no housing assistance to prevent people from being evicted; no new fiscal aid to states, cities or counties. It fails to restore adequate unemployment benefits for laid-off workers — even though our state’s high COVID numbers mean few are likely to return to work soon.

The bill, which is not expected to pass out of the Senate, cannot be the end of the story. We urge Sens. Ernst and Grassley to work with the Senate leadership and the Administration to pass a strong COVID relief package that matches the scale and scope of this crisis — not half-measures that ignore the thousands of Iowans struggling to get by.

**Common Good Iowa** is a new organization built on a collective 50 years of experience of two respected Iowa organizations — the Child and Family Policy Center and the Iowa Policy Project. Learn more at [www.commongoodiowa.org](http://www.commongoodiowa.org).