

116TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

S. 3534

To amend the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act to provide assistance to individuals affected by a pandemic, and for other purposes.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

MARCH 19, 2020

Ms. HARRIS introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs

A BILL

To amend the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act to provide assistance to individuals affected by a pandemic, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Pandemic Disaster As-
5 sistance Act of 2020”.

6 **SEC. 2. ASSISTANCE FOR PANDEMICS.**

7 The Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emer-
8 gency Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 5121 et seq.) is amend-
9 ed—

1 (1) in section 102(1) (42 U.S.C. 5122(1)), by
2 inserting “or pandemic” after “catastrophe”;

3 (2) in section 301 (42 U.S.C. 5141), by insert-
4 ing “or an emergency due to a pandemic” after
5 “major disaster” each place the term appears;

6 (3) in section 408(e) (42 U.S.C. 5174(e)), by
7 inserting “or an emergency due to a pandemic”
8 after “major disaster” each place the term appears;

9 (4) in section 410 (42 U.S.C. 5177)—

10 (A) in subsection (a), by inserting “or an
11 emergency due to a pandemic” after “major
12 disaster” each place the term appears; and

13 (B) by adding at the end the following:

14 “(c) ASSISTANCE DURING A PANDEMIC.—In the case
15 of an emergency due to a pandemic—

16 “(1) assistance authorized under this section
17 shall be made available to an individual regardless of
18 whether the individual is entitled to any other unem-
19 ployment compensation (as that term is defined in
20 section 85(b) of the Internal Revenue Code of
21 1986); and

22 “(2) the minimum weekly benefit shall be 1.5
23 times the national average State unemployment com-
24 pensation weekly benefit for the previous year.”;

25 (5) in section 412 (42 U.S.C. 5179)—

1 (A) by inserting “or an emergency due to
2 a pandemic” after “major disaster” each place
3 the term appears; and

4 (B) by adding at the end the following:

5 “(d) ASSISTANCE DURING A PANDEMIC.—In the case
6 of an emergency due to a pandemic, for purposes of pro-
7 viding benefits under this section, the Secretary of Agri-
8 culture shall provide an alternative to the in-person inter-
9 view requirement for all applicants for such benefits. This
10 alternative shall be consistent with the alternative that is
11 required to be provided for applicants entitled to accom-
12 modations during a major disaster.”; and

13 (6) in section 502(a) (42 U.S.C. 5192(a))—

14 (A) in paragraph (7), by striking “and” at
15 the end;

16 (B) in paragraph (8)(B), by striking the
17 period at the end and inserting a semicolon;
18 and

19 (C) by adding at the end the following:

20 “(9) provide unemployment assistance in ac-
21 cordance with section 410; and

22 “(10) provide assistance in accordance with sec-
23 tion 412.”.

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