



# THE FLORIDA SENATE

Tallahassee, Florida 32399-1100

March 19, 2020

The Honorable Ron DeSantis  
Governor of the State of Florida  
The Capitol  
400 S. Monroe Street  
Tallahassee, Florida 32399-0001

Dear Governor DeSantis:

Florida's history is rich, its people are diverse, the foundations of our economy are strong, and we will recover from the Covid-19 pandemic. But we must admit – these are trying times for Florida's families.

The recent executive orders and agency measures your administration has taken to mitigate the spread of Covid-19 are commendable, but community spread of the virus will continue to drastically affect public health and our economy. Additional measures must be taken to lessen the economic pain that Covid-19 will wage on the citizens of our state.

We respectfully request that you take executive action to enact the following policies:

- The expansion of Medicaid to cover all adults up to 65 years of age who earn up to 138 percent of the federal poverty line;
- A suspension of terminations for Medicaid and Florida KidCare benefits;
- Tax credits offered to businesses that provide paid sick leave to their employees;
- A temporary suspension of evictions and foreclosures statewide; and
- A temporary expansion and expedited processing of reemployment assistance for those affected by Covid-19.

The expansion of Medicaid will not only protect public health and lead to greater access and utilization of health care services, but it will also positively impact the state's budget and revenue. It is a policy long overlooked by Florida's leadership, but in the face of this pandemic, it is exceedingly necessary. Florida's uninsured population, totaling more than 2.6 million, will be at risk of infection of Covid-19 with no healthcare coverage, meaning they will likely forego testing and treatment – a consequence that could accelerate community spread of the virus.

We understand that businesses are facing serious, negative impacts on earnings, and many would struggle to provide their employees with paid sick leave in the event that they contract Covid-19. By offering state tax credits to businesses that provide paid sick leave, Florida can appropriately address both the public health crisis and this negative economic impact on businesses.

Senate's Website: [www.flsenate.gov](http://www.flsenate.gov)

**BILL GALVANO**  
President of the Senate

**DAVID SIMMONS**  
President Pro Tempore

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Businesses across the state are facing revenue loss, a consequence that will lead to thousands of layoffs in Florida. Last Tuesday, the Economic Policy Institute forecasted that three million jobs will be lost in America by the summer. A temporary suspension of evictions and foreclosures should be instituted statewide, as has been done in Miami-Dade County, to allow workers who have been laid off to remain in their homes.

The federal government is now allowing states to amend their reemployment assistance eligibility. According to a national survey conducted by NPR and PBS, approximately 18% of American households reported at least one family member losing their job or having their hours significantly reduced due to the pandemic.

While we understand this influx of reemployment assistance claims will require additional state resources, expedited processing of these claims is crucial to ensuring hardworking Floridians can pay their bills, feed their families, and contribute to our economy. The website to apply for reemployment assistance is becoming slow and difficult to use due to increased web traffic and our state must take all steps necessary to ensure this process works for all Floridians who need assistance.

We appreciate your attention to these proposals. In these uncertain times, we hope to display a collective strength for our constituents. We look forward to continued collaboration and communication with your administration as we mitigate this unprecedented crisis.

Sincerely,



Lori Berman  
Senator, District 31



Janet Cruz  
Senator, District 18