



December 9, 2020

Senator Dianne Feinstein
Senator Kamala Harris
Representative Barbara Lee
Representative Eric Swalwell
Representative Ro Khanna

Re: Support for Equitable Economic Aid for COVID-19 Relief and Beyond

Dear Alameda County Delegation,

Federal lawmakers are considering new proposals to advance additional economic aid as our country is currently facing an unprecedented crisis in the COVID-19 pandemic. Once again, California is facing widespread stay at home orders that will be experienced inequitably across our communities. The virus is taking a devastating toll on communities that have long faced historical injustices and violence, and we are seeing COVID-19 exacerbate existing inequities in real time.

At First 5 Alameda County, we have been doing everything in our power to provide relief for families with young children ages 0-5. Thankfully, the infrastructure we had before the pandemic allowed us to quickly redistribute our resources to best help families. Some of our recent efforts include:

- Purchase and distribution of concrete needs and essential supports for providers and families, working with Alameda County Community Food Bank and SupplyBank.Org, in partnership with the Alameda County Social Services Agency
- Funding school districts throughout the county to provide support for families and children transitioning from preschool to kindergarten
- Investment in local family childcare providers in partnership with the Alameda County Social Services Agency, Low-Income Investment Fund, and Silicon Valley Community Foundation

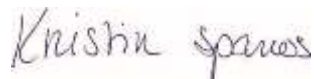
COVID-19, racism and poverty are not separate issues and should not be treated as such in legislation. Not only do these issues pose a threat to public health, they are a threat to the overall wellbeing and economic survival to a significant number of communities. It is essential that the following points are integrated in the next COVID-19 relief bill:

- **Direct support to individuals, families, and communities in need—not corporations.** Individuals, families, and communities need immediate economic assistance, food assistance, and policies that will support their ability to take care of their own health, such as paid sick leave.
- **Support Black, indigenous, Latinx, and other communities of color.** In addition to economic and health assistance, we need policies that will reverse the disproportionate impact of the coronavirus on communities of color and position those communities to be able to achieve a just and equitable recovery. This includes supporting essential workers—43% of whom are people of color.

- **Provide funding for child care, with an equity lens.** Child care is the backbone of the economy, crucial to economic reopening efforts. Yet, the industry has been among the hardest hit and least supported during the COVID-19 pandemic. Research estimates that in California, the average cost to operate a family child care home during the COVID-19 pandemic increased by 75%. As a more affordable option to center-based care, family child care homes are a critical resource for families with low incomes. They are also primarily staffed by women, especially women of color, who have been disproportionately impacted by the health and economic consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic. Women of color make up 20% of the American population, but they represent 40% of the child care workers in the United States. We also know that access to child care is key to women's ability to work outside the home, now more than ever.
- **Provide direct funding for state and local governments.** State and local governments are staring down enormous budget deficits after having stepped up to meet their residents' needs during this crisis. Without federal assistance, they will have to cut health and social services, education, environmental protection, and other crucial programs.
- **Protect immigrant families during and beyond the COVID-19 pandemic.** The laws that Congress has enacted so far to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic have excluded immigrants and their families—a tragic slight that has left all of us more vulnerable. The next COVID-19 stimulus bill needs to work for immigrants and their families.

These priorities will help in assisting our communities this current moment of need. The investments will also ensure the country comes out of this crisis stronger and with a deeper commitment to equity, and therefore each other, than before.

Sincerely,



Kristin Spanos
Chief Executive Officer
First 5 Alameda County

CC:

Alameda County Administrator Susan Muranishi
Alameda County Supervisor Keith Carson, Chair of Personnel, Advocacy, and Legislation (PAL) Committee
First 5 Alameda County Commission Chair Renee Herzfeld
First 5 Alameda County Commissioner Alameda County Supervisor Wilma Chan
Alameda County Supervisor Richard Valle, Board President
Kris Perry, Deputy Secretary, CA Department of Health and Human Services Agency for Early Childhood Development, and Senior Advisor to the Governor
Giannina Pérez, Senior Policy Advisor for Early Childhood, Office of the Governor
Melissa Stafford-Jones, Executive Director, First 5 Association
Margot Grant-Gould, Policy Director, First 5 Association of California