



CONGRESSWOMAN

ANN MCLANE KUSTER

Jobs and Opportunity Agenda

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Jobs & Opportunity Agenda

Dear Friend,

The COVID-19 pandemic continues to cause major disruptions to our economy and the daily lives of Granite Staters. While the House of Representatives passed the HEROES Act in May and updated version of this proposal in October to help workers and businesses get through this crisis, the inaction of the Senate and White House has left workers without unemployment benefits, local governments without the resources they need to keep basic public services running, and millions of Americans on the verge of eviction.

It's abundantly clear that more must be done to alleviate the impacts of this crisis and get our country on the road to recovery. Outlined below are proposals Congress can pass today to help us build back better. First, we must focus on helping workers get through the pandemic. This starts with making sure we take care of our essential workers who have been on the frontlines of this crisis since its inception. At the same time, we must provide robust support for workers who are unemployed because of the COVID-19 crisis. While unemployment rates in New Hampshire have fallen over the summer, we must ensure that workers are getting the skills, support and services needed to get back to work. It is critical that Congress works together to provide unemployment assistance to workers who have been laid off, while creating new pathways and opportunities to succeed and thrive. We should also double down on our workforce development investments to make sure that workers who permanently lose their jobs can learn the skills necessary to land new ones. Job training was an urgent need before this crisis and it will be even more important in its aftermath.

We should also increase support for main street businesses. The Paycheck Protection Program provided an important lifeline for thousands of Granite State businesses, but additional stimulus is needed to ensure that small businesses can bounce back. By providing businesses with the resources they need to get through this crisis, we can make sure our economy is positioned to quickly recover when the public health situation allows.

A critical element to my *Jobs and Opportunity Agenda* is advancing policies that expand access and affordability to child care. Granite Staters will not be able to get back to work if there is not a safe place for their children while they are working. This agenda includes ambitious proposals to lower the cost of child care for families and ensure that child care facilities can stay open during the pandemic. Recognizing that families need additional support as well, my agenda includes legislation to ensure that no child goes hungry in American and a bold proposal to expand the child tax credit - pushing millions of children out of poverty.

Throughout my time in Congress, I have worked to ensure every Granite Stater has access to quality, affordable health care. That goal is more important than ever as we battle a global pandemic. My agenda contains proposals to ensure Americans with pre-existing conditions do not lose their health care and to train the next generation of health care workers to keep Americans healthy. As we battle the pandemic, we must continue to address the tremendous impact addiction has on our state. That's why my agenda contains proposals to help people struggling with addiction and support for communities working against this terrible disease.

One of the most pressing issues facing our state is access to affordable housing. With tens of thousands of Granite Staters struggling to pay rent and maintain their household, it is imperative that Congress advances comprehensive legislation that spurs new affordable housing starts and improves access in rural communities that are frequently underserved. My agenda helps create more affordable housing by providing increasing funding for the affordable housing trust fund and making it easier for Americans to access credit to buy a home.

The policies outlined in this agenda are a down payment on the future of our country and will help Granite Staters build back better in 2021.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Annie Kuster". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Annie Kuster

Empowering Workers to get Through the Pandemic and Build Back Better

- **Opportunities for Heroes Act (Rep. Kuster):** Essential workers are truly the heroes of the COVID-19 pandemic. Thanks to their courage, Granite Staters are able to buy food for their families, call for help during an emergency, and receive treatment if they are sick. We owe these heroes a debt of gratitude. This legislation will honor their service by allowing essential workers to pay off student debt and have the opportunity – should they want it – to further their education or learn new skills once the crisis has subsided.
- **Worker Relief and Security Act (Rep. Kilmer):** In March, Congress took decisive action to ensure workers that are laid off due to the COVID-19 pandemic would receive an additional \$600 in unemployment benefits so they could support their families while waiting for the public health crisis to subside. By putting cash in the pockets of Americans, Congress prevented the pandemic from impoverishing working families and sending our economy into a depression. Rather than moving to extend this lifeline through the end of the year, as the House did in May through the HEROES Act, Republicans in Congress and the White House refused to take action and now working families are paying the price. The Worker Relief and Security Act would extend the \$600 weekly federal unemployment compensation benefits through the duration of the COVID-19 public health crisis, provide for unlimited unemployment coverage weeks through January 2021, and then continue providing enhanced compensation and additional coverage weeks determined by national and state total unemployment rates. This legislation will ensure families will have the resources they need to get through the pandemic.
- **Multi-State Worker Tax Fairness Act (Rep. Pappas):** Roughly 15 percent of Granite Staters work in Massachusetts and thousands more work in Vermont. Under normal circumstances, they pay income tax in the state where they physically work despite being residents of New Hampshire. However, because of the COVID-19 pandemic, many of these Granite Staters are now working from home -- right here in New Hampshire -- yet they are still being taxed in the state where their employer is located. The Multi-State Worker Tax Fairness Act would clarify federal law to ensure workers are only taxed in the state where they are physically present when they earned their income. This will stop Massachusetts from taking money out of the pockets of Granite Staters.
- **Relaunching America's Workforce Act (Rep. Scott):** The United States is in the middle of the worst economic crisis our nation has experienced since the Great Depression. The hard truth is some jobs will not come back and workers may need to re-skill to pursue new opportunities. The Relaunching America's Workforce Act invests \$15 billion in our nation's workforce development system to make sure every American that wants to learn new skills can. Granite Staters are crafty and resilient. If provided with the chance, they can develop the skills necessary to get ahead in the post-COVID economy.
- **National Apprenticeship Act (Rep. Davis):** According to the Department of Labor, 94 percent of workers who complete a registered apprenticeship are employed upon completion, earning an average of \$70,000 annually. We need to ensure these programs

are readily available to open pathways to the middle class. The National Apprenticeship Act increases funding to create more registered apprenticeship programs and help workers from traditionally underrepresented backgrounds participate in these programs. It brings together a panel of labor leaders, industry leaders, and educational providers to develop a framework for expanding registered apprenticeship programs into new industries and sectors of our economy. Finally, it enhances cooperation between the Department of Education and the Department of Labor to help create pipelines for students to get on the pathway to registered apprenticeship programs earlier in their educational careers.

- **Workforce Development Investment Act (Rep. Kuster):** We must provide more opportunities for workers to learn the skills they need to land jobs where they live. The microelectronics bootcamp in Nashua is the perfect example of this type of innovative effort to provide training to workers required to fill good-paying jobs in the community. This legislation will make these partnerships easier by providing a tax credit for companies to create qualifying partnerships with educational institutions and a separate tax credit for training associated with those partnerships or for certified apprenticeships.
- **HOPE for HOMES Act (Rep. Welch):** The United States must increase clean energy production if we want to mitigate the worst impacts of climate change. Thankfully, home energy efficiency projects, which can help us meet that goal, can continue within public health guidelines. This bipartisan legislation provides \$500 million in grants to help workers learn the skills they need to join the clean energy workforce. It also provides tax rebates for Americans who make energy efficiency improvements to their home (i.e. installing insulation, solar panels etc), thereby creating workers to use the newly-learned skills.

Supporting Main Street Small Businesses

- **Reviving the Economy Sustainably Towards a Recovery in Twenty-twenty - (RESTART) Act (Rep. Golden):** Congress created the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) to help Main Street survive COVID-19. As the pandemic continues to disrupt our daily life and business operations, the federal government must continue to provide small businesses with the support they need to get through this ongoing crisis. The RESTART Act builds off the success of the Paycheck Protection Program by creating a new loan program to help businesses deal with the ongoing impact of the COVID-19 crisis. The size of these loans will vary based on the severity of the impact COVID-19 has had on a business' bottom line and the number of people a business employ. Small businesses will have the option to have these loans forgiven and larger companies will receive favorable terms to ensure they can focus on their long-term success.
- **Real Economic Support That Acknowledges Unique Restaurant Assistance Needed to Survive (RESTAURANTS) Act (Rep. Blumenauer) ****Passed House****:** Restaurants are an important source of employment and community in the Granite State. These establishments, from diners to delis, are where families gather to share a meal at the end of a long week, entrepreneurs can meet to discuss a new idea, and friends can catch up and reminisce about old times. They provide jobs to help Americans pay the bills and serve their neighbors. While some of these establishments have been able to successfully shift to outdoor dining and carry out, many are struggling to get by. The RESTAURANTS Act creates a \$120 billion grant program to provide economic relief to restaurants to ensure they are able to re-open once we beat this pandemic.
- **The Work Opportunities and Resources to Keep Nonprofit Organizations Well (WORK NOW) Act (Rep. Sanchez):** Nonprofits are the backbone of communities across the Granite State. In a cruel twist, at the time when we need these services the most, the COVID-19 pandemic has limited the ability of nonprofits to support their communities. The WORK NOW Act creates a \$50 billion grant program to empower nonprofit to expand their services, hire new workers, and continue to provide Granite Staters with the services they need to get through the pandemic.
- **Save Our Stages Act (Rep. Welch):** Theaters and music halls are important parts of our local communities. Venues like the Concord Center for the Arts, Lebanon Opera, and Park Theater provide places where neighbors come together to enjoy music and performance. If we lose these venues, a fundamental part of our community fabric. This legislation authorizes SBA to provide grants to these establishments to help them survive the pandemic.

Expanding Access to Affordable Housing and the American Dream

- **Fulfilling the Promise of the Housing Trust Fund Act (Rep. Heck):** This legislation redirects the guarantee fee (a .1% charge on loans ensured by Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac) to the Housing Trust Fund. This would increase federal support for the Housing Trust Fund from the millions to billions annually. New Hampshire Housing has leveraged housing trust fund dollars to support the construction of new affordable housing in our state. With an increase in funding, we can build more of these housing units and make it easier for Granite Staters to find a place to call home.
- **Helping Homeless Veterans Act (Rep. Brownley):** One homeless veteran is too many. While we've made great strides in NH to reduce our homeless veteran population, nationwide there is still much work that needs to be done. This legislation helps address veteran homelessness by authorizing the Veterans Affairs' (VA) Homeless Providers Grant and Per Diem (GPD) Program to provide reimbursements to community agencies to allow them to cover the cost of sheltering veterans AND their minor children. This will help prevent veterans with families from becoming homeless. The legislation also creates a new grant program for homeless veterans with special needs. Finally, it provides financial assistance for supportive services for very low-income veteran families in permanent housing to help prevent them from becoming homeless.
- **FHA Loan Affordability Act (Rep. Phillips):** This bill requires Federal Housing Administration mortgage borrowers to pay mortgage insurance premiums only when their remaining principal balance exceeds 78% of the home value or sales price. This legislation will make it easier for borrowers to pay down their mortgages and fully realize the American Dream.
- **Promoting Access to Credit for Homebuyers Act (Rep. Vargas):** Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac provide an important source of liquidity in the housing market by purchasing mortgages from banks to ensure they have the capital necessary to make more loans. While the CARES Act provided important relief for borrowers by allowing them to enter into forbearance, Fannie and Freddie have taken regulatory steps that limit banks whose customers have chosen to use forbearance access to capital, thereby restricting banks' ability to make loans to working Americans. This legislation would promote access to mortgage credit during the COVID-19 pandemic by preventing Fannie and Freddie from taking regulatory actions that make it more difficult for low- and middle-income Americans to get a loan.

Helping Families and Providing Access to Child Care for Every Granite Stater

- **Child Care is Essential Act (Rep. Clark) **Passed House**:** According to the National Association for the Education of Young Children, nearly 2 out of every 5 child care providers in the United States will go bankrupt without additional government support. Before the pandemic, our nation faced a massive shortage of quality, affordable child care. We cannot allow this situation to get worse due to COVID-19. The *Child Care is Essential Act* would provide \$50 billion in grants to child care providers to help keep their doors open through the pandemic and continue to serve essential workers. This bill will ensure our child care system makes it through the pandemic.
- **Child Care for Economic Recovery Act (Rep. Lowey) **Passed House**:** Child care providers operate on tight margins and those that are still in operation are facing burdensome expenses to keep their facilities safe during the pandemic. This legislation provides \$10 billion in grants to child care providers to improve their physical infrastructure to protect the health and wellbeing of children in their care. This bill also will make child care more affordable by increasing, making fully refundable, and expanding eligibility for the Dependent Care Tax Credit.
- **Universal Childcare and Early Learning Act (Rep. Haaland):** Even before the pandemic, child care was far too expensive both in New Hampshire and around the country. This legislation will help develop federally supported early childhood education facilities across the country. All families living below 200% of the federal poverty line (\$51,000 for a family of four) would receive free access to these facilities, which will have to meet strict quality standards. All other families would have access on a sliding scale, and no family would pay more than 7% of their income for child care. This legislation also increases pay for child care providers so they receive the compensation they deserve. By creating this new framework to expand America's child care infrastructure, we can ensure that parents can go to work without having to worry about going bankrupt paying for child care.
- **American Family Act (Rep. DeLauro) **Passed House**:** The COVID-19 pandemic has demonstrated how putting extra money in parents' pockets empowers families to provide for their children. This legislation makes the Child Tax Credit fully refundable and increases it to \$3,000 for each child age six and older and to \$3,600 for each child younger than age six. This will help lift millions of children out of poverty and put them on a path to a more successful future.
- **Pandemic Child Hunger Prevention Act (Rep. Scott):** There is no excuse for child hunger in the United States. As the COVID-19 pandemic continues, it's clear that millions of children will not go back to school anytime soon. For those from underprivileged backgrounds, this could mean missing out on the meals they otherwise receive from school. This bill provides free school meals for all children during the 2020-2021 school year as a response to the COVID-19 pandemic will ensure that all students get two healthy meals every school day regardless of family income and what the new school day structure looks like.

Health Care for Recovery

- **Protecting Americans with Pre-Existing Conditions Act (Rep. Kuster) **Passed House**:** In October 2018, the Trump Administration issued harmful guidance that encourages states to approve health plans that do not cover preexisting conditions. In New Hampshire, over 50 percent of our non-elderly population live with pre-existing conditions, and could have been denied access to health care prior to passage of the ACA. This legislation would revoke this harmful guidance and protect health care access and coverage for those with pre-existing conditions.
- **Title VIII Nursing Workforce Reauthorization Act (Rep. Joyce) **Passed House**:** Nurses make up the largest component of our health care workforce, providing critical care to our family members when they need it most. This bipartisan legislation would reauthorize key programs designed to train, recruit, and retain nurses. These programs include scholarships, other GME, and education on the needs and importance of nurses.
- **Resident Physician Shortage Reduction Act (Rep. Sewell):** To become a practicing doctor in the U.S., medical school graduates must complete a residency program. However, for the past two decades, an artificial cap on the number of residents funded by Medicare – which is the primary source of payment for residents – has limited the expansion of training programs and the number of trainees. As the American population grows older, the demand for physicians and other medical professionals will increase. This bill would phase in 15,000 new residency slots over five years by expanding Medicare’s support for residency training.

Opioids

- **CREATE Opportunities Act (Rep. Kuster):** Data indicates recently released individuals from the criminal justice system are 129 times more likely to die from opioid overdose in the first two weeks of release. This is a critical period for folks trying to get back on their feet after incarceration. The *Community Re-Entry through Addiction Treatment to Enhance (CREATE) Opportunities Act* would help expand access to medication-assisted treatment (MAT) for justice-involved individuals. This legislation would create a new grant program within the Department of Justice for state and local governments to provide MAT in their correctional facilities, and to develop a plan for connecting individuals to continued treatment upon release into the community.
- **Humane Correctional Health Care Act (Rep. Kuster):** Medicaid Inmate Exclusion, which strips health coverage from Medicaid enrollees who are involved in the criminal justice system, decreasing access to care and shifting that cost burden to states and counties instead. This legislation would increase the justice-involved population's access to quality coverage and care needed to help them successfully return to their communities – including treatment for mental health and substance use disorders – and save state and taxpayer dollars.
- **Respond NOW Act (Rep. Kuster):** While we have taken important steps to address the opioid epidemic, Congress must continue to support states, cities, towns, and communities to turn the tide on this crisis. This bipartisan legislation creates a \$25 billion Opioid Epidemic Response Fund to provide \$5 billion annually over five years to provide tangible resources to those on the frontlines of the epidemic.

Rebuilding America's Infrastructure: .

- **Rebuild America's Schools Act (Rep. Scott) **Passed House**:** This legislation provides \$100 billion to rebuild America's K-12 schools. This will ensure children are able to learn in spaces that protect their safety and well-being, while creating new construction jobs in local communities across the country.
- **Accessible, Affordable Internet for All Act (Rep. Clyburn) **Passed House**:** According to the Federal Communications Commission, more than 18 million Americans lack access to broadband - and this numbers could very well be an undercount. The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the need for all Americans to have a reliable internet connection as students have moved from classrooms to remote learning, patients are receiving telehealth care from the safety of their own homes, and many employees are working remotely. While this public health emergency has underscored the broadband needs of many communities, having a reliable internet connection will continue to be essential as we move past this pandemic and begin our 'new normal.' This commonsense legislation will help ensure that vulnerable and underserved communities have the internet connection they need to thrive by investing \$100 billion to expand broadband infrastructure and connect Americans to the internet.
- **Clean Corridors Act (Rep. DeSaulnier):** As more Americans, particularly those in urban communities, make the switch to electric vehicles (EVs), providing charging infrastructure will help ensure our neighbors in other states, as well Granite Staters who own EVs, can confidently travel around New Hampshire. This legislation helps achieve that goal by creating a 3 billion dollar grant program to help states and local governments install charging infrastructure for EVs, ensuring the Granite State is open for business to people with EVs.
- **Water Quality Protection and Job Creation Act (Rep. DeFazio):** This legislation makes important investments to address our wastewater and drinking water challenges by providing \$23.5 billion in direct infrastructure investment over the next five years. This includes supporting construction of stormwater systems to address Clean Water Act stormwater permits. The funds will be made available through the Clean Water State Revolving Fund program—the primary source of Federal assistance for wastewater infrastructure construction.