

July 23, 2020

Dear Member of Congress,

The undersigned organizations, concerned with good government and whistleblower protection, write to express appreciation for leadership by Senator Kamala Harris (D-CA) and Congresswoman Jackie Speier (D-CA) to provide accountability in unprecedented federal spending, and to request your support for their initiative. Their COVID-19 Whistleblower Protection Act would provide best practice whistleblower protection legislation for employees of businesses or contractors who receive federal COVID relief funding under the CARES Act or other laws. The objective is to ensure that the trillions of dollars in funding have even stronger accountability mechanisms against waste, fraud, and abuse than for the 2009 stimulus spending. We ask that you support their bill's inclusion into the next relief package.

The legislation would institute whistleblower protections to --

- close coverage loopholes and inconsistencies through consistent rights for all those blowing the whistle on misspending relief funds;
- protect disclosures that evidence illegality, danger to public health or safety, abuse of authority, gross mismanagement or gross waste;
- provide administrative relief through the Department of Labor; with access to a federal court jury trial in the absence of a timely ruling;
- strengthen whistleblower confidentiality protections and negate gag orders; and
- provide comprehensive relief for those who prevail, including costs.

In scattered previous laws, Congress already has approved all the provisions of this legislation for other contexts. This bill combines the composite best practices in the U.S. Code to protect whistleblowers and help them make a difference. Inspectors General credited whistleblowers with minimizing fraud, waste and abuse in the 2009 spending surge. With over five times more spending so far, now we need them more than ever.

Respectfully submitted,

American Association for Justice
Center for Justice & Democracy
Equal Rights Advocates
Future Super
Government Accountability Project
Government Information Watch
Indivisible
International Corporate Accountability Roundtable
Jacobs Institute of Women's Health
National Council for Occupational Safety & Health
National Employment Law Project
National Security Counselors
National Network for Immigrant & Refugee Rights
National Partnership for Women & Families

National Taxpayers Union
National Whistleblower Center
New America's Open Technology Institute
New Mexico Center on Law and Poverty
North Carolina Justice Center
Northwest Workers' Justice Project
Open The Government
People's Parity Project
Project On Government Oversight
Public Citizen
Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility
Public Justice Center
Sciencecorps