



# OREGON'S SENATOR JEFF MERKLEY

## *Coronavirus Economic Rescue Priorities*

As Congress deliberates over a third coronavirus relief package, the focus must be on helping working families—not bailouts for industries with the best lobbyists.

Senator Merkley is determined to make sure that the focus of any relief package is support for the families and small businesses who are just trying to hang on as the economy dramatically slows. He is fighting to ensure that any relief funding for businesses comes with safeguards to ensure that money is spent to keep workers on the job, without cuts to their wages or benefits. And he is taking the lead to fight for tens of billions of dollars to help people pay the rent and keep a roof over their heads.

### *Senator Merkley's coronavirus economic rescue priorities:*

#### 1. **Put families first**

Support the economy from working families up, not well-connected industries down.

- Maintain household incomes: Expand paid leave provisions, supercharge UI and make sure it quickly covers construction, gig economy, and self-employed workers with robust wage replacement.
- Keep people in their homes: Moratorium on evictions and foreclosures is a first step. Millions of renters' incomes are drying up, but they'll owe their private landlords rent each month. We need a \$43 billion or more aggressive housing plan to support renters and landlords and take care of people who are homeless.
- Protect families' utilities: Prevent cut-offs of electricity, water, heat, broadband, and other utilities, and increase funding for LIHEAP.

#### 2. **Prioritize the essentials—health care, small businesses, education**

- Launch a Marshall Plan for health care: Dramatically increase manufacture and availability of masks, ventilators, bed capacity to meet the COVID-19 surge.
- Help small businesses make it to the other side: Loans don't work for businesses on tight margins whose revenue is gone. We need grants for small businesses whose revenue has dried up so they can keep paying their employees as well as their fixed costs like rent.
- Keep our education system running: Fund distance learning technology and internet access for K-12 schools; provide at least \$20 billion to partially replace public universities' lost tuition.

#### 3. **Workers before shareholders**

Some industries are really being hammered, and may need help. But corporations that have taken enormous profits for years, that have gotten huge tax cuts and done stock buybacks, can't get private gain and public pain.

- Any help for industries must come with guardrails to make sure the workers come first: Require they maintain payrolls, provide paid leave, permanently forego stock buybacks, permit union organizing, etc.