

From: Representative Terri Sewell <AL07TS.Outreach@mail.house.gov> To: Christopher.Kosteva@mail.house.gov Subject: Help is Here from the American Rescue Plan! Date: Tue, 29 Jun 2021 11:25:53 -0400 News From Congresswoman Sewell Click here to open this e-mail in its own browser window Click here to open a plain text version of this email June 29, 2021 HELP IS HERE FROM THE AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN! Dear Christopher Kosteva, The past year has been a challenging one in so many ways. I know that families across the country, and especially here in Alabama's 7th District, were hit hard by the COVID-19 pandemic and the corresponding economic crisis. Many lost their homes, jobs, and even their loved ones. I want you to know what I have been doing in Washington to help rescue our country from these compounding crises and build back better. On February 27th, I proudly cast my vote in favor of the \$1.9 trillion American Rescue Plan, a transformational piece of legislation that represents the most robust investment in the American people in generations. This legislation was designed to rescue our country from the devastation caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and the economic crisis. With the American Rescue Plan, help is finally here! Today, all over our Nation, the American Rescue Plan is getting shots in arms, money in pockets, people in jobs, and kids safely in schools. That's why I spent the spring meeting with constituents, seniors, small businesses, and local officials as a part of my American Rescue Plan District Tour to highlight the critical assistance that is now available. Click here for a recap of my American Rescue Plan District Tour. As your Congresswoman, I am committed to ensuring that you are aware of the many resources available to you. Keep reading to find out how the American Rescue Plan will help you and your community! **THE EXPANDED AND IMPROVED CHILD TAX CREDIT** I know that many parents, grandparents, and guardians in Alabama have been struggling to afford food, child care, health care, and other necessities during this pandemic. That's why I fought hard to include an expansion of the Child Tax Credit in the American Rescue Plan. Now, parents and guardians all over the country will be receiving monthly payments of up to \$300 per child beginning July 15th! This transformational policy will benefit 93.5% of children in Alabama's 7th District and is projected to cut child poverty in the United States in HALF. The Child Tax Credit is now fully refundable, which means that even if you make no income or very little, you will still receive the full benefit. Nearly all families with children qualify for the payments. Families that do not normally file taxes can sign up through the IRS' non-filer portal here. For more information about the Child Tax Credit, including answers to commonly asked questions, click here. I recently hosted a TerriTalk with Carol Gundlach from Alabama Arise about how you can take advantage of the Child Tax Credit. Watch it here! **THE EXPANDED EARNED INCOME TAX CREDIT** The American Rescue Plan provides much needed relief for low-income workers by tripling the maximum Earned Income Tax Credit benefit for workers without children from roughly \$540 to roughly \$1,500. It also raises the income cap for these adults to qualify from about \$16,000 to at least \$21,000. Just like the Child Tax Credit, workers must file federal income taxes to take advantage of the expanded Earned Income Tax Credit. Click here for more information. **EMERGENCY RENTAL ASSISTANCE** Are you having trouble paying your rent or utility bills? The American Rescue Plan provides an additional \$21.6 billion for an Emergency Rental Assistance program to help renters pay their bills during the COVID-19 pandemic. Eligible tenants must meet the following criteria: Have a valid rental agreement in their name Household's total gross income cannot exceed 80%

Area Median Income for location The household has experienced a loss of income due to COVID-19, such as unemployment, reduced working hours, inability to find childcare during the pandemic, or loss of spousal/child support. Funds are being disbursed at the local level and Alabamians can find out more about the availability and application process by visiting my website here.

ASSISTANCE FOR SMALL BUSINESSES Small businesses are the backbone of our communities, and I'm proud that the American Rescue Plan provides billions of dollars to help them weather this pandemic by: Expanding the SBA's Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) Expanding the SBA's Economic Injury Disaster Loan (EIDL) Program Creating a new SBA Restaurant Revitalization Fund Creating a new SBA Shuttered Venue Operators Grant Program

ASSISTANCE FOR SCHOOLS AND STUDENTS This pandemic has made clear what we already know: Our children learn best in the classroom. But getting our kids back in schools safely requires funding and coordination. The American Rescue Plan provides \$122 billion to K-12 public schools in the United States including roughly \$2 billion to K-12 schools in Alabama. This funding will be used to make schools safer with: Smaller class sizes More social distancing New ventilation systems More staff The American Rescue Plan also provides more than \$584 million to colleges and universities in Alabama and over \$163 million to those in our district to recover from the pandemic and help students afford higher education. Students should contact their educational institutions for information about how to obtain these funds.

ASSISTANCE FOR SENIORS Older Alabamians were hit particularly hard by the pandemic and were more likely than younger Alabamians to become severely ill from COVID-19. Check out the MILLIONS of dollars that Alabama will be receiving through the American Rescue Plan to give our seniors the care they deserve.

DEBT RELIEF FOR BLACK FARMERS The American Rescue Plan includes two provisions to provide needed relief to Black, Indigenous, and Farmers of Color. First, the bill provides \$4 billion in debt relief for certain USDA farm loans. Second, \$1 billion is allocated to allow the Secretary of Agriculture to provide training, technical assistance and other assistance to black farmers and other farmers of color, as well as community-based organizations and the 1890 and 1994 Land Grants and other minority serving institutions. Recently, a federal judge issued a preliminary injunction that halts the USDA from making debt relief payments under Section 1005 of the American Rescue Plan Act. Farmers with questions can find more information here.

DIRECT FUNDING FOR STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENTS Alabama's cities and counties have been on the front lines in the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic, and they need direct assistance to develop local vaccination plans, pay frontline employees overtime and hazard pay, offset revenue losses, bolster economic recovery, and continue to offer essential services to our families and neighbors. The American Rescue Plan provides about 2.1 billion to the state of Alabama and 1.7 billion to our counties, cities, and towns to keep our communities functioning. Click here to see the full breakdown.

CONSTITUENT CONNECTION: LENDING A HELPING HAND My office continues to be at your service should you need assistance. Take, for example, the story of Mr. James Washington of Pickens County: After filing an unemployment claim in February, Mr. Washington was informed that the Alabama Department of Labor needed additional information from his previous employer before he could begin receiving assistance. He spent weeks trying to file claims and repeatedly calling the DOL to no avail. After my office received a letter from Mr. Washington asking for assistance, my staff intervened and contacted the Department on his behalf. Within a week, Mr. Washington began

receiving his benefits. "A few days later, I looked at my phone and I couldn't believe what I saw," said Mr. Washington. "Everything that was in red that was pending was in green, and I thank you all so much. God was in the plan first of all but you all were next in line. I do not believe to this day that if I hadn't written you all a letter and you all didn't get involved I don't think it would've been solved. I think it would've still been going. You all did a wonderful job and I thank you all so much." Should you need assistance, please do not hesitate to call one of my district offices where my friendly staff will be happy to answer your questions or connect you with a caseworker. Phone numbers for each of my offices are listed on my website. It has been a difficult year, but thanks to the American Rescue Plan, there is finally light at the end of the tunnel. As your Congresswoman, I will continue to make every effort to ensure that you know about the critical resources available to you as we put this pandemic behind us. Please be sure to check in regularly with our website and social media pages (Twitter, Facebook and Instagram) for updates. As always, take good care. I look forward to hearing from you. Sincerely,
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