

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

April 2, 2020

Honorable Lolo M. Moliga
Governor of American Samoa
American Samoa Government
Pago Pago, American Samoa

Re: Governor's March 27, 2020 Letter on Coronavirus Funding Delivered by Email

Dear Governor,

I am in receipt of your letter dated March 27, 2020 that includes your inquiry about funding for American Samoa. I have also reviewed your letter to President Trump with your ASG need budget proposal and action plan recently published in the Samoa News, highlighting "American Samoa's proposed budget request totals \$16.9 million" noting the "plan's breakdown for each of the department's budget proposals, covering costs to LBJ and DOH among other important things." Congress has taken extraordinary action to help America defeat the coronavirus. In the span of one month we have passed three major bills to provide the resources to win this fight.

Congress first passed an \$8.3 billion emergency funding package focused on testing, treatment, and telehealth. Two weeks later congress passed the Families First Coronavirus Response Act, which included extended sick and family leave for individuals forced to stay home as we try to stop the spread. It also included free coronavirus testing. And of course just last week, we passed the largest relief package in American history for states and territories -- a combination of \$2.2 trillion in small business grants, direct cash payments of \$1200 to individuals and \$500 per child in families, extended unemployment benefits, and \$140 billion for hospitals and medical supply procurement.

Per your question about the direct aid funding formula, Title VI Section 601(2)(A) reserves \$3 billion in the Coronavirus Relief Fund in the CARES Act funding package to all the territories and the District of Columbia on a population-based formula. The Secretary of Treasury is required to distribute these funds to State, Tribal and Territory Governments within 30 days of the March 27 enactment date of the CARES Act. So by April 26, 2020 ASG will receive from the Treasury Secretary funds to cover Coronavirus Relief Funds of estimated \$38-40 million based on population estimates to be determined by the Treasury Secretary and to cover ASG virus related costs from March 1, 2020 thru December 31, 2020 and additional FEMA funding for emergency protection equipment as well along with other CARES act finds.

As you know by now Congress unanimously passed via 96-0 in the Senate on March 25th and by overwhelming voice vote in the House of Representatives, the CARES Act on March 27 and the

President signed into law that bill on March 27 also. I had an opportunity to speak on the House Floor in support of the bill and again thank our Bi-Partisan Leadership in Congress and President Trump for quickly passing the CARES Act with over \$2 Trillion in relief for the States and Territories. Your continued updates of information as needs develop will be helpful for future Congressional relief efforts.

Timely information from the ASG will be helpful in framing our requests going forward and will continue our partnership with the ASG team in Pago and Washington to get thru this health crisis and return to our wonderful way of life in American Samoa.

The good news is that Congress included direct aid of almost \$40 million in the bill which will arrive in April from the Treasury Secretary to cover the \$16.9 million in your request and more with these initial funds as those costs are sure to grow. This does not include part of the \$55 million in additional insular area grants for DOI/OIA. Also, \$1200 stimulus checks per adult and \$500 per child will be sent in the coming weeks as you know from the U.S. Treasury which will coordinate with your Administration.

Substantial Low interest, no interest, and forgivable small business loans are available as part of a \$350 billion program for individuals and small businesses and applications can be made at SBA.gov. Current grant funding sources are already being implemented--some of which have already been announced such as funds for coronavirus testing kits and equipment by DOI/OIA. Finally, the new Pandemic Unemployment Assistance program will provide at least \$600 per week for workers unemployed due to the health crisis for several months. The Department of Labor is in process of setting the PUA up for States and Territories through their Regional offices. And Medicaid cost share has also increased over 6% to nearly 90% coverage.

Other needs will certainly arise and I will continue to work with your Administration and our FONO Members to identify in the coming weeks all other local needs for potential future relief legislation to address this pandemic health emergency and its economic consequences to help our people as best we can during this critical time in our Nation's crisis.

May God bless us all!

Sincerely,



Aumua Amata
Member of Congress