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Tester Statement on Passage of More Than \$480 Billion Interim Coronavirus Relief Package for Montana Small Businesses and Hospitals

Bipartisan deal includes \$370 billion for small businesses, \$100 billion for health care;

(Big Sandy, Mont.) – U.S. Senator Jon Tester today released the following statement on Senate passage of the more than \$480 billion interim package to shore up critical pandemic relief programs for Montana small businesses and health care workers:

“I’m supporting this bipartisan bill to get more resources to our small businesses and our brave nurses and doctors on the frontlines protecting our communities. We need to slow the spread of the virus while assisting the main street businesses that are the backbone of our economy. I’ll be holding the federal government accountable to ensure the resources we’ve provided today get swiftly to the folks that need them, and working to fix eligibility issues so more Montana small businesses can actually use the programs we’ve created for them.”

Senator Mitch McConnell’s initial legislation proposed only \$250 billion for the Paycheck Protection Program, with no money for health care providers and workers. After bipartisan negotiations, today’s package includes:

- \$370 billion for small-business relief, including \$310 billion for the Paycheck Protection Program, \$50 billion for the [Economic Injury Disaster Loan program](#) through the Small Business Administration (SBA), and \$10 billion for the SBA’s Emergency Economic Injury Grant Program.
 - Creates a \$60 billion set-aside for Credit Unions and Community Financial Institutions for the Paycheck Protection Program, including \$30 billion for entities focused or rural areas like Community Development Financial Institutions and the smallest community banks and credit unions.
- \$75 billion for hospitals and other providers.
- \$25 billion to establish a COVID-19 testing and contact tracing program.

- Including \$825 million for Community Health Centers and rural health clinics.
- Including \$750 million for tribes, tribal organizations, and urban Indian health organizations in coordination with IHS.

Tester fought to improve the [Paycheck Protection Program](#) included in the CARES Act—a critical lifeline intended to help small businesses keep the lights on, and he [recently secured](#) an expansion of the program to ensure that Montana’s main street taverns will be eligible for relief through the program.

He has also been [personally urging](#) Vice President Mike Pence to ensure the federal government fulfills its obligation to address the shortages of badly-needed medical supplies, test kits, and protective equipment for Montana’s frontline health workers and urging the Administration to [prioritize rural providers](#) in allocating resources for health providers. He has led the charge in pushing the federal government to make full use of its powers under the *Defense Production Act* to centralize supply chains of critical resources.

Tester has been working tirelessly to ensure that Montana is prepared to deal with the COVID-19 pandemic. After 72 hours negotiating substantial, bipartisan improvements to COVID-19 stimulus legislation that had previously fallen far short, Tester [voted to deliver critical, urgent relief](#) to Montana workers, families, small businesses, hospitals and others hardest hit by the outbreak. This funding includes [\\$1.25 billion for the state of Montana](#).