



Memorandum

TO: CITY COUNCIL

FROM: Councilmember Matt Mahan

SUBJECT: Support Federal Legislation
authored by our Local
Congressional
Representatives Relating to
Pandemic Response and
Mitigation

DATE: March 23, 2021

APPROVED:

RECOMMENDATION:

In alignment with staff's focus on advocacy in support of legislation related to pandemic response and mitigation, support the following bills sponsored and co-sponsored by our local members of Congress:

1. Support H.R. 1985 (Pascrell) the Nursing Home Reform Modernization Act, co-authored by Congresswoman Anna Eshoo
2. Support H.R. 831 (Peters) the Health STATISTICS Act of 2021, co-authored by Congresswoman Anna Eshoo
3. Support H.R. 870 (Eshoo), the National Broadband Plan for the Future Act of 2021
4. Support H.R. 1603 (Lofgren), the Farm Workforce Modernization Act of 2021

BACKGROUND:

I appreciate City staff's focus on Federal and State legislative advocacy related to pandemic response and mitigation. Our small but mighty legislative advocacy function delivers real value to San José residents by ensuring their voices are incorporated into legislative processes at other levels of government. In keeping with this focus, I encourage the City to support a few key economic recovery and public health-related legislative actions currently being advanced by our local members of Congress, including access to equitable broadband connectivity and immigration reform.

[H.R. 1985 \(Pascrell\)](#), co-authored by Congresswoman Anna Eshoo, would reform nursing home care to better respond to the ongoing public health risks posed by COVID-19. If passed, the bill would allow states to invest in health care provider “strike teams” to quickly tackle new COVID-19 outbreaks, as well as funding for staffing, testing, and personal protective equipment. Providing this flexibility to and increasing resources for our frontline worker is crucial for effectively addressing the ongoing COVID outbreaks we are likely to see at least through summer, especially given that more than 174,000 residents and staff at nursing homes have lost their lives to COVID since the start of the pandemic.

[H.R. 831 \(Peters\)](#), co-authored by Congresswoman Anna Eshoo, would immediately enhance data collection and accessibility to better inform our nation’s real-time response to public health crises. The act would streamline data sharing agreements, removing existing data siloes, and fix the patchwork of data systems responsible for recording and reporting vital data used in our complex healthcare systems. The bill also creates a grant program for state, local, tribal and territorial public health departments for the expansion and modernization of public health systems, which, if passed, could contribute to funding for a San José public health information system, should Council embrace this idea in the future.

[H.R. 870 \(Eshoo\)](#) would modernize our national vision for the future of broadband access in America, including detailed strategies for leveraging connectivity to promote justice, equity, and economic growth. The bill, if passed, would assess progress in our national broadband plan, examine COVID-19's impact on how people learn, work, receive medical information and treatment, and participate in civic communications, which is deeply aligned with the City’s vision for digital inclusion.

Finally, [H.R. 1603 \(Lofgren\)](#) has passed the House and is now headed to the U.S. Senate. If passed by the Senate, the bill would provide a compromise solution for an important area of immigration policy by permitting farmworkers and their spouses and children to earn legal status through continued employment in the agricultural sector, and would make changes to the H-2A agricultural guest worker program. This bill would stabilize our agricultural workforce and in turn help ensure our nation’s food security.

We should support our local federal legislators in their efforts to address issues relevant to the pandemic in addition to the various funding sources described in the Intergovernmental Relations (IGR) Priority Legislation Log. I ask my colleagues to support adding support positions on these bills in addition to accepting the staff report and reaffirming all city positions summarized in the IGR Priority Legislation Log.