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## House Dems Propose Broadband Funds for COVID-19 Phase 4 Package

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D., Calif.), Majority Whip Jim Clyburn (D., S.C.), Energy and Commerce Committee Chairman Frank Pallone Jr. (D., N.J.), and Transportation and Infrastructure Committee Chairman Peter DeFazio (D., Ore.) today unveiled their infrastructure priorities for an anticipated Phase 4 coronavirus response legislative package, including \$86 billion for broadband infrastructure and \$12 billion for next-generation 911 (NG-911).

The infrastructure priorities outlined by the House Democratic leaders mirrors the \$760 billion proposal for infrastructure investment that the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, Energy and Commerce Committee, and Ways and Means Committee unveiled in January (TR Daily, Jan. 29), with the addition of \$10 billion “for the community health centers that are on the front lines of the fight against coronavirus,” according to a House Democratic fact sheet released today.

The fact sheet positions broadband support within the current public health crisis: “Telemedicine, teleworking, tele-schooling and the increased use of social media and video conferencing by Americans connecting with loved ones during the epidemic have made access to high-speed broadband more critical than ever.”

The broadband support is intended for investment in “expanding broadband access to unserved and underserved rural, suburban, and urban communities across the country — connecting Americans, creating strong small businesses, more jobs and strengthening economies in communities that have been left behind.”

The NG-911 infrastructure funding is intended to protect “American lives by funding implementation of a Next Generation 9-1-1 system that will allow people to call or send texts, images or videos to 9-1-1 to help first responders and emergency personnel better assess the nature of an emergency and reach people in need.”

A Phase 3 proposal by House Democrats included nearly \$4 billion in broadband and hot spot funding provisions, but the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act that President Trump signed into law last Friday only contained \$325 million in combined Rural Development and Connected Care pilot program funding for the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the FCC to distribute (TR Daily, March 27).

Yesterday on the “Guy Benson Show,” Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R., Ky.) opposed moving toward a fourth coronavirus legislative practice so soon. “What I disagree with the speaker on is she’s already saying we need to work on phase four. Well look, the current law has not been in effect for

even a week yet. ... I mean the implementation of this —- the Treasury Department’s got a massive, complicated problem here in getting all of this money out rapidly. And the speaker is already talking about phase four. Well, we may need a phase four, but we’re not even fully into phase three yet. This was the third coronavirus bill that we’ve passed, and the biggest one by far. And it was crafted by a Republican majority in the Senate, approved without a single dissenting vote,” he said, according to a press release from his office. —Lynn Stanton, [lynn.stanton@wolterskluwer.com](mailto:lynn.stanton@wolterskluwer.com)

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