

## **The COVID-19 Whistleblower Protection Act**

**Reps. Jackie Speier & Jamie Raskin  
Senator Kamala D. Harris**

The American people must have confidence that the massive federal investment in combatting the spread of COVID-19 fulfills its objective of mitigating the harm to our nation's economy and helping the communities hardest hit by the pandemic. We cannot allow these funds to fall prey to profiteers and graft. Corruption in our nation's COVID-19 relief effort is nothing less than a threat to public health.

The multi-trillion dollar COVID-19 relief effort is unprecedented in our nation's history and Congress must ensure that robust accountability measures are put in place in order to guard against waste, fraud, and abuse. No one is better positioned to observe and report the misuse of these critical dollars than the women and men who work for entities that receive COVID-19 relief funds—from government contractors to frontline workers. Unfortunately, all too often employees who come forward to report wrongdoing experience retaliation.

Ensuring adequate whistleblower protections for private workers managing pandemic relief funds will ensure that the federal investment serves its intended purpose rather than line the pockets of profiteers or fuel dangerous workplace practices. It's our best option for viable, desperately needed oversight. That's why Representative Jackie Speier (CA-14), Representative Jamie Raskin (MD-08), and Senator Kamala D. Harris (CA) have introduced legislation to establish strong whistleblower protections for the employees of entities that receive federal COVID-19 relief funds.

### **The legislation would:**

- Institute strong whistleblower protections for employees or former employees of recipients of funds under the CARES Act or other similar legislation meant to address COVID-19.
- Protect disclosures related to relief funds that evidence of gross mismanagement or waste, danger to public health or safety, abuse of authority, or violation of law, rule or regulation.
- Create a legal framework that provides administrative relief in which the Department of Labor can investigate whistleblower retaliation claims from non-federal employees or contractors under a strengthened legal framework.
- Ensure whistleblowers have access to jury trials in federal court if administrative relief is not timely provided, a best practice standard for modern whistleblower protection laws.
- Protect whistleblower confidentiality and protect against gag orders.