



March 27, 2020

CARES Act Becomes Law

Today, the House of Representatives voted on and passed the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act, or CARES Act, and the president just signed the bill, making it law. The CARES Act is "phase three" of bipartisan legislation to address the COVID-19 pandemic.

The relief package includes expansion of unemployment insurance, aid to hospitals, billions in business loans and direct payments to individuals.

[Read more about what is included in the CARES Act here.](#)

Below are some additional sources on today's bill signing:

- USA Today: [Trump Signs \\$2 Trillion Coronavirus Stimulus Intended to Halt Economic Meltdown](#)
- NPR: [President Trump Signs \\$2 Trillion Coronavirus Rescue Package into Law](#)
- Wall Street Journal: [Trump Signs \\$2 Trillion Coronavirus Stimulus Bill After Swift Passage by House](#)

TODAY'S UPDATES

Governor Kemp Extends Unemployment Benefits



On Thursday, Governor Brian Kemp signed an executive order which authorizes Commissioner of Labor Mark Butler to issue two emergency rules which will extend the length of time an individual can collect unemployment benefits from 14 weeks to 26 weeks. The order also provides that the first \$300 of wages earned in one week will not count against eligible unemployment benefits paid.

[Governor Kemp's Executive Order](#)

United Way COVID-19 Rapid Response Fund



In our four-county region, many of our friends and neighbors are living paycheck to paycheck – with 23.7% of total population in Bryan County, 25% in Chatham, 24.6% in Effingham, and almost 36% in Liberty County are considered asset limited or income constrained while employed. As governments, schools, and businesses respond to public health recommendations to close or limit operation, many people have already or will lose their jobs and will experience extreme financial challenges. This is the workforce that lifts our economy. These are our neighbors.

United Way United Way has created the COVID-19 Rapid Response Fund with an initial goal of \$200,000. This fund will be used to help families retain stable housing by assisting with rent, mortgage, and utility payments when grace periods are not offered and to provide financial assistance for additional critical needs such as medical expenses and child care. We are releasing \$80,000 to get started and asking the community to help by making donations.

Thank you to the companies and individuals who have already generously given to the United Way COVID-19 Rapid Response Fund. #WholsNext?

[Click here to read more about the fund and make your donation.](#)

[U.S. Census to Hire for 20+ Hours per Week](#)



The U. S. Census is hiring employees to work between 20 and 40 hours per week for about eight weeks or potentially longer. The job will pay \$17.50 - \$18.50 per hour and \$.58 per mile every Wednesday. Census workers do not have to work nine to five, but are required to work at least 20 hours per week and may work up to 40 hours.

Those interested or in need of additional income can apply at [2020Census.gov/jobs](https://2020census.gov/jobs). The application is in two parts: after the applicant completes their profile and receives an email confirmation of registration, they go back to the application and are now a "returning applicant." After they answer the questions they will be congratulated and will wait for a phone call.

We know the census is taken every ten years and any person not counted will cause federal funds to be lost to the state and their community until the next census. Therefore, counting each individual is vitally important.

Please direct questions to Dorothy Lawless at dorothy.a.lawless@2020census.gov or 912-312-1087.

[Conference Call with SBA on Economic Injury Disaster Loan Information](#)



The Georgia Chamber invites you to join them on Tuesday, March 31, 2020 at 1 p.m EST for an overview of the expanded strategy for economic injury disaster relief presented by SBA Regional Administrator Ashley Daniel Bell.

Due to the high-demand teleworking has placed on the conferencing industry, we have been asked to encourage as many of you as possible to join our call through your computer systems at the following link:

Join Zoom Meeting:

<https://zoom.us/j/8818044738>

Meeting ID: 881 804 4738

Dial-in options from your mobile phone include the following

lines. Should a line be busy, please try another number from this list until you are connected into the conference:

One tap mobile

+13126266799,,8818044738# US (Chicago)

+16465588656,,8818044738# US (New York)

Dial by your location

+1 312 626 6799 US (Chicago)

+1 646 558 8656 US (New York)

+1 346 248 7799 US (Houston)

+1 669 900 9128 US (San Jose)

+1 253 215 8782 US

+1 301 715 8592 US

Meeting ID: 881 804 4738

Find your local number: <https://zoom.us/j/8818044738>

All questions should be submitted IN ADVANCE through www.sli.do using code #2957 to enter the forum. Please submit your questions by 5:00 PM on Monday March 30, 2020. We will work through as many as we can over the call and do appreciate your commitment to leadership as we all work toward economic recovery following this pandemic.

National Restaurant Association Talks CARES Act



The \$2 trillion coronavirus relief bill passed in the Senate on Wednesday and is expected to pass in the House soon. This bill contains a number of provisions specific to restaurants, foodservice establishments, and our employees.

Some of the key provisions include:

SBA Loans

- The measure creates a \$349 billion program for the SBA to offer unique loans to small businesses (500 or fewer

to offer unique loans to small businesses (500 or fewer employees). The loan amount is based on 250% of the borrower's average monthly payroll cost for the preceding year (provisions for seasonal employers are included), up to \$10 million. Collateral requirements are waived, and the "credit elsewhere" requirements (which have slowed down the process) have been waived as well. The loan is forgiven if used for payroll costs, mortgage interest, or rent/utilities.

- An exception was made to the small business requirement for restaurants and hotels. The 500-employee number is based on the number of employees at each physical location. So a restaurant with 600 employees over five restaurant properties would qualify for these loans. This ensures that a number of larger independent restaurants and franchise owners can participate.

Tax Benefits

- The agreement offers restaurant owners relief in the form of Net Operating Loss (NOL) carrybacks, delay of payment of employer payroll taxes, and an Employee Retention Tax Credit.

Qualified Improvement Property

Restaurants can now immediately write off costs associated with improving facilities. The QIP fix is complete.

National Restaurant Association On-Demand Webinars:

- [Coronavirus Resources: Labor and Employment Law Challenges and Obligations Facing Employers](#) - Hosted by the National Restaurant Association Restaurant Law Center
- [Curbside for Full Service Restaurants](#) - Hosted by the Texas Restaurant Association
- [Preparing for the Coronavirus: Steps for Restaurant Readiness](#) - Hosted by ServSafe
- [Coronavirus: Industry Readiness and Response](#) - Hosted by the National Restaurant Association and ServSafe

CAT Modifies Bus Routes, Suspends Ferry Service



Chatham Area Transit will suspend Savannah Belles Ferry services indefinitely starting Saturday, March 28, as part of ongoing service adjustments being made in response to the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

The suspension of ferry operations comes after CAT implemented a reduced service schedule for the ferry and fixed-route buses on Thursday. In addition, CAT is temporarily waiving fare collection to minimize operator and public contact and provide some relief to families who may be losing wages as a result of the health crisis.

The modified schedule for each of the bus routes can be viewed online at catchacat.org/modified-bus-schedules/.

While the buses remain operating on a reduced schedule, CAT is encouraging customers to continue to practice social distancing and refrain from nonessential trips to help prevent the spread of the virus.

CAT has posted information on its buses and facilities, distributed internal communications and created a web page, catchacat.org/media/coronavirus-covid-19-information/, regarding coronavirus-related service updates, preventative measures and FAQs.

Member-to-Member Resources for Businesses and Individuals



The Chamber has an ongoing list of local businesses offering services helpful to other businesses and individuals during this time. Check out the Member-to-Member Resources page and see if any of the solutions there are just what you've been looking for, like low-cost healthcare options, specialized legal advice and more.

[Member-to-Member Resources](#)

Does your business offer a service that can help other members keep their heads above water? Is your business offering a special discount or promotion to affected area businesses? Email BPhillips@SavannahChamber.com to add your solution to the page.

Good News



Overwhelmed with bad news? Here are some more positive news items, courtesy of USA Today:

- More than 127,000 people worldwide have recovered from the virus.
- For first responders, Airbnb is planning [free housing](#), Uber is offering [free meals and discounted rides](#), Starbucks is [giving out coffee](#), and Krispy Kreme is handing out doughnuts.
- And speaking of sweets, these [Dr. Fauci doughnuts](#) are selling like hotcakes.
- [A Pennsylvania diner owner](#) is gathering food donations from his community and using them to cook for anyone who needs a hot meal.
- Celebrities are pitching in, too. Taylor Swift is one of the latest stars [to lend a hand by donating](#) to fans who need help with their bills.

Do you have any positive local stories to share? Send them to Info@SavannahChamber.com with the subject "Positive Stories" and we may choose yours to share with the community!

Guidance and Resources



We will update and add to the links below as new guidance and resources become available. [Click here to visit the Chamber's resource page.](#)

- [Coronavirus Digital Toolkit](#)
- [Coronavirus Guidance for Employers](#)
- [Coronavirus Workplace Tips for Employees](#)
- [Coronavirus Resource Hub for Small Businesses](#)
- [Coronavirus Local/State Policy Tracker](#)
- [Coronavirus Workplace Flyer](#)

For more info, please visit [the CDC's Guidance for Businesses page.](#)



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