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Low: 31 High: 53
Weather, Page B3

LET THE GAMES BEGIN



World photo/Don Seabrook

With the sun going down in front of them, Hallie Huffaker, left, and Jamie Withrow, both of Wenatchee, hit softballs at Walla Walla Point Park's fields on Tuesday. They said they are excited to begin league play again this spring, having been out of games for 1 1/2 years because of COVID-19 restrictions on playing fields. They both play for teams in the Apple Valley Softball league.

COVID-19 relief bill

House sends \$1.9T bill to President Biden's desk

By **SARAH D. WIRE**
Los Angeles Times

WASHINGTON, D.C. — The House passed a \$1.9 trillion COVID-19 economic aid package Wednesday, sending to President Joe Biden a sweeping measure that includes not only pandemic-related \$1,400 checks and expanded unemployment benefits, but also the biggest-ever expansion of Obamacare and hefty new tax credits to combat child poverty.

The White House announced this morning that later today Biden will sign what is likely to become a signature achievement of his presidency, days before unemployment insurance expires for more than 10 million Americans on March 14.

In the end, not a single Republican in the House or Senate voted for the package, guaranteeing it will become a political football in the midterm election and perhaps for years to come. Biden and Democrats are embracing what they say is delivering on their 2020 campaign promise to help struggling Americans. Republicans are betting that current soaring popularity of the bill will wane and that they'll be able to hang its costs on Democrats.

The Senate passed it Saturday 50-49, but only after stripping an increase in the federal minimum wage to \$15 an hour, narrowing the weekly federal unemployment supplement from \$400 to \$300 and reducing the number of Americans who will qualify for the direct payments.

The package, which passed the House 220-211, could be Congress' last major response to the pandemic. It includes mortgage and rental assistance, targeted aid to the restaurant, child care and airline industries, funding for vaccines and testing, aid to small businesses, schools and tribal governments and billions of dollars to help state and local governments deal with the economic fallout of COVID-19-related closures.

It was by far the most partisan of the total \$5.5 trillion in COVID-19 bills passed by Congress to fight the disease and prop up the economy. It is the only one of the five bills passed to have no Republican support. Only one Democrat — Rep. Jared Golden of Maine — voted against the plan.

Democrats used the budget reconciliation process to speed it through without the ability for Senate Republi-

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Pocketbook impact of aid package

The \$1.9 trillion COVID-19 economic aid package will have a wide range of impacts. Here's how it will affect individual pocketbooks:

- ◆ The bill includes \$300-a-week in supplemental federal unemployment through Sept. 6, a lifeline for the millions of Americans currently claiming unemployment due to the pandemic. And it provides tax relief for people who received unemployment in 2020. Workers with annual incomes under \$150,000 will not be required to pay taxes on up to \$10,200 of 2020 unemployment benefits they received.
- ◆ It also includes a \$1,400 payment that the IRS could issue in the next two weeks to Americans whose annual income is less than \$75,000; to those who file jointly with a spouse and make less than \$150,000; and to those who file as a head of household and earn less than \$112,500. Those filing jointly would receive \$2,800. Dependents, including adult child dependents, are eligible for \$1,400 as well.
- ◆ The checks are phased out quickly compared to the two previous checks Congress approved last year. Individuals with annual incomes of \$80,000 or more, joint filers with annual incomes of \$160,000 or more and heads of households earning \$120,000 or more would not receive anything.
- ◆ The bill also temporarily expands the child tax credit to \$3,000 from \$2,000 — and to \$3,600 for children under age 6 — and expands the Child and Dependent Care Tax Credit up to \$4,000 for the child care expenses of one child, and up to \$8,000 for two or more. Though the change is temporary, Democrats herald raising the child tax credit as an avenue to lift millions of children above the poverty line, and are already indicating they hope it will be difficult to undo.

— *Los Angeles Times*

State to get billions of dollars for schools, transit and cities

By **JOSEPH O'SULLIVAN**
AND **JIM BRUNNER**
The Seattle Times

SEATTLE — Dollars for COVID-19 vaccinations and contact-tracing. Relief for K-12 schools. Child-care funding. Rental and mortgage assistance. Aid to state and local governments. Help for transit.

Wednesday's approval in the U.S. House of the \$1.9 trillion coronavirus relief package will channel billions of dollars to Washington state as schools, businesses, governments and people begin to chart a course toward recovery from a year living with a global pandemic. President Joe Biden is expected to sign the relief bill today.

Dubbed the American Rescue Plan, the legislation directs a fire hose of money to Washington, including its cities and counties.

The state is set to receive \$1.9 billion for K-12 schools; \$655 million for higher-education institutions; and \$635 million for child care, according to numbers shared by the office of Rep. Suzan DelBene, D-Medina.

to the state level just as legislators in Olympia prepare new, two-year budget proposals that fund everything from schools and parks, to prisons, environmental programs and social services.

Wenatchee and \$3.6 million for East Wenatchee.

The legislation contains \$3 billion to help aerospace manufacturers meet payroll, Sen. Maria Cantwell's office said. The package will also deliver a new infusion of rental assistance to Washington, where the state's eviction moratorium is expected to expire this month.

The state expects to get about \$404 million in emergency rental assistance, according to the offices of Sen. Patty Murray and Gov. Jay Inslee. The governor's office is "still learning more, including how it would be distributed," Inslee spokesperson Mike Faulk said.

Those dollars come atop funding in the package to combat COVID-19 and accelerate vaccinations, the much touted \$1,400 stimulus checks

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"That is a massive package of relief for people who are hurting. Money in people's pockets."

REP. PRAMILA JAYAPAL
D-Seattle

Washington also will receive \$7.1 billion in aid for local, county and state governments that saw tax collections drop last year amid the economic downturn caused by the virus and restrictions to stem outbreaks.

Of that, \$4.25 billion will go

Local government aid includes money for each county, including \$15 million for Chelan County. Money to cities includes \$239 million for Seattle, \$84.3 million for Spokane, \$25.5 million for Yakima, \$5.9 million for

COVID-19 vaccine

Foundation puts \$200,000 to equity initiative

By **OSCAR RODRIGUEZ**
World staff writer

WENATCHEE — Up to \$200,000 has been allocated by the Confluence Health Foundation for a new initiative to improve access

to COVID-19 vaccines among Latinos.

"It's the right thing to do," JoEllen Colson, Confluence senior vice president, said. "We know that our Latinx population was adversely impacted during COVID. We want to ensure that allocation and support are addressing disproportionately-impacted communities. Our support needs to be culturally appropriate and accessible."

The funds will be used to support efforts led by community activist Teresa Bendito, co-founder of Parque Padriños and owner of

Teresita's Consulting, to increase the amount of in-person outreach into the Latino community, according to a Confluence Health press release.

Funds came from small donations from the community to the Confluence Health COVID-19 Fund, according to Sue Ozburn, Confluence Health Foundation Board president. No single, large donation from a business or individual makes up these funds, just a

supportive community, Ozburn said. "The support for the foundation is incredible in our community, and with COVID-19, people felt they needed to help," Ozburn said.

Confluence Health has already been collaborating with Parque Padriños with weekend clinics at Central Washington Hospital. Last week, around 20% of COVID-19 vaccinations went to Latinos,

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Money to Washington cities

Under the American Rescue Plan, Washington's local governments are set to get millions to help them through the COVID-19 pandemic. Here's what select cities will receive.

City	Population	Allocation (in millions)
Seattle	761,000	\$ 239.0
Spokane	223,600	\$ 84.4
Tacoma	213,300	\$ 63.0
Yakima	95,490	\$ 25.5
Pasco	77,100	\$ 18.4
Kennewick	84,960	\$ 17.0
Walla Walla	34,400	\$ 10.0
Richland	58,550	\$ 7.6
Wenatchee	35,140	\$ 5.9
E. Wenatchee	13,740	\$ 3.6

Sources: Office of U.S. Rep. Suzan DelBene, D-Medina, Washington Office of Financial Management (2020 population estimates)

World graphic/Stephanie Daugherty