

Matthew Deffebach in HR Magazine: House Passes \$3 Trillion HEROES Act to Provide More Coronavirus Relief

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Haynes Boone Partner [Matthew Deffebach](#) talked with *HR Magazine* about labor and employment implications of the latest government relief package for COVID-19. If approved, it would provide funds for state and local governments, hazard pay for frontline workers, expanded paid-leave benefits, and student-loan debt forgiveness.

Here is an excerpt:

The U.S. Senate will now consider the bill, though it is not expected to pass in its current form.

The Democrat-backed HEROES Act, H.R. 6800, includes a number of provisions that would impact the workplace. For instance, more nonprofits would be eligible for Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) loans, which offer relief to struggling small businesses that keep workers on payroll during the pandemic. Employers would be allowed to use PPP loans for longer than the currently approved eight-week period and would have until Dec. 31 — rather than June 30 — under loan forgiveness rules to rehire laid-off workers. More funds would also be available to small businesses through the Economic Injury Disaster Loan program.

Matthew Deffebach, an attorney with Haynes Boone in Houston and Orange County, Calif., noted that employers should track the HEROES Act's proposed expansion of emergency paid-leave benefits.

The act would extend eligibility for paid sick leave and paid family and medical leave under the Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA) to workers at companies with 500 or more employees. More workers would be eligible to take Emergency Family and Medical Leave Act (EFMLA) leave, and the leave would be available for more reasons than just coronavirus-related childcare needs.

Under the HEROES Act, employers could be reimbursed by the federal government for offering hazard and incentive pay to certain essential workers, and the federal government's \$600 weekly supplement to state unemployment benefits would continue until Jan. 31, 2021. The extra unemployment payments are currently set to expire on July 31.

To read the full article, click [here](#).