

# FRNT LINE ACT

Financial Relief Noting The Large Impact Of Our Nation's Essential Employees Act  
Senator Joni K. Ernst (R-IA)

## Issue Background –

***Throughout the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, essential workers across the United States have continued in their daily jobs – to care for and protect Americans, to produce and deliver food and essential goods, and to uphold the critical infrastructure of our nation during this time of crisis.***

Despite federal and state recommendations that Americans stay home to protect themselves and their loved ones, essential workers are still reporting to work each day. Many of them face added challenges and personal risks in their work, such as health concerns, reduced access to childcare, transportation interruptions, as well as the emotional toll on themselves and their families.

Our nation cannot weather this pandemic without our essential workforce, who are upholding our most critical infrastructure and industries throughout this pandemic. In appreciation for their tremendous service during this pandemic – ensuring Americans are fed and cared for during this challenging time. In response to their service, the federal government should provide a ***suspension of federal income or payroll taxes for wages earned by essential workers during the COVID-19 federal emergency declaration up to an annual income cap.***

## Legislative Proposal –

***Income Tax Relief*** – Provide suspension of federal income taxes for essential workers up to an annual income cap, which will be set at the level of pay for the highest paid enlisted person in the U.S. Armed Forces. This income cap is derived from the existing federal policy to provide income tax relief for enlisted members who served in a designated combat zone.

***Payroll Tax Relief*** – Provide suspension of federal payroll taxes to essential workers who earn up to \$50,000 annually.

***Period of Relief*** – Tax suspensions under this proposal will begin on April 1, 2020 and will end on the date the federal emergency declaration is lifted (as by the President of the United States under the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act in response to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic), with an automatic sunset on December 31, 2020.

***Defining Essential Workers*** – Essential workers eligible for tax relief under this proposal will be identified by the [federal guidance](#) issued by the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) on March 19, 2020, and as updated by that agency subsequently.