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LEGISLATIVE ACTION ALERT

\$25K bonuses, other resources for Pa. essential workers could be on the way

MEGAN TOMASIC | Tuesday, April 7, 2020 2:19 p.m. Tribune Review©

According to an article from the Tribune Review© posted online states, additional resources could soon be headed to workers on the front lines of the coronavirus pandemic if proposed legislation is passed.

The resources would become available through a Heroes Fund introduced by U.S. Sen. Bob Casey, a Democrat from Scranton, and through legislation proposed by state Rep. Austin Davis, D-Allegheny. They could offer front-line workers a larger paycheck along with personal protective equipment, mental health programs and child care services. The Heroes Fund is aimed at rewarding, retaining and recruiting essential workers through two major components.

The first would bring \$25,000 premium pay increases to essential workers earning less than \$200,000 per year. That is the equivalent of a \$13 per hour raise. Those who make more than \$200,000 would receive \$5,000. The pay increase would run through Dec. 31. The second would provide a one-time \$15,000 premium for signing on to do essential work. The incentive would be available to essential health and home care workers and to first responders who are experiencing severe staffing shortages.

“We are in a war against covid-19, and we owe our gratitude to all of the workers who are putting their own health and safety at risk by fighting on the front lines of this pandemic,” Casey said. He added: “And just like wartime, we must recognize and reward those who are on the front lines — health care professionals, first responders, personal care and home health workers, truck drivers, grocery store workers and other unsung heroes.”

Legislation proposed by Davis works to provide equipment to protect health care workers and their patients from infection, establish mental health programs for those working long hours under extreme stress and personal hardship, and create a child care grant program to ensure high-quality child care services.

The virus has created a significant burden for health care workers,” Davis said. “Health care workers across this commonwealth are on the front lines battling this virus every day. They selflessly continue to fight to save the lives of our families, friends and neighbors. As government leaders we need to ensure they have the support they need during this difficult time – it’s the least we can do.” The legislation could go before the House in the near future, he said.

View entire article at: <https://triblive.com/news/pennsylvania/resources-for-pa-essential-workers-could-be-on-the-way-if-legislation-is-passed/>

