

California's Newsom announces \$125M fund to give coronavirus stimulus checks to immigrants in state illegally

Andrew O'Reilly

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California Gov. [Gavin Newsom](#) announced on Wednesday plans to give cash payments to adult immigrants living illegally in the state to help them weather the coronavirus crisis.

The plan, which would use a mix of taxpayer money and charitable donations from corporations and philanthropists, will give 150,000 adults \$500 each during the [coronavirus outbreak](#), the governor said.

California has had an estimated 2 million immigrants living in the country illegally. They have not been eligible for the \$2.2 trillion stimulus package approved by Congress last month, which pledged cash payments to most Americans while boosting unemployment benefits by \$600 per week.

“We feel a deep sense of gratitude for people that are in fear of deportations that are still addressing essential needs of tens of millions of Californians,” said Newsom, a Democrat, who noted 10 percent of the state's workforce consisted of immigrants living in the country illegally who paid over \$2.5 billion in state and local taxes last year.

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Taxpayers would be kicking in \$75 million for the money, while a group of charities has committed to raise another \$50 million for a total of \$125 million. A group of charities already has donated \$5.5 million for the fund, including the Emerson Collective, Blue Shield of California Foundation, the California Endowment, the James Irvine Foundation, the Chan Zuckerberg Initiative and an anonymous donor.

Newsom said the money will not be distributed based on income. “Their personal information will not be required to get those support,” he added.

California has been seen as the most aggressive state in the nation when it came to giving benefits to immigrants living in the country illegally. Last year, California became the first state to give taxpayer-funded health benefits to low-income adults 25 and younger living in the country illegally. This year, Newsom had proposed expanding those benefits to seniors 65 and older.

The move by California came as some Democrats in Washington, D.C., have been

lobbying to include payments to illegal immigrants in stimulus packages.

The \$2 trillion stimulus package recently passed by Congress, which President Trump signed into law, is giving small-business loans and assistance in the form of direct payments of \$1,200 per adult and \$500 per child. The latter has been distributed to people with Social Security numbers.

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While that included working legal immigrants -- like those in the U.S. on nonimmigrant (temporary) work visas -- with Social Security numbers in order to be able to work legally in the U.S., it did not include people in the country illegally.

Meanwhile, Washington's tourism arm announced that it will include \$5 million specifically for illegal immigrants who had been left out of employment benefits and other forms of assistance, The Washington Post reported.

Fox News' Adam Shaw and The Associated Press contributed to this report.