

# INCOME MOVEMENT

## **West Virginia Billboard Calls on Manchin to Support \$2,000 Stimulus Checks**

*January 20, 2021, Beckley, WV* – In an effort to encourage Senator Joe Manchin to address the needs of his constituents struggling under the economic weight of the ongoing pandemic, Income Movement has put up a billboard in Manchin’s homestate to draw attention to the public energy around \$2,000 stimulus checks. The billboard will run through mid-February and is located in Beckley on Robert C Byrd Drive, across from Raleigh Mall. A digital representation of the billboard is attached.

[New polling](#) shows 81% of voters want \$2,000 direct payments. Support transcends party lines, with 74% of Republicans in favor of the payment. 60% of voters want recurring monthly payments of \$2,000 until the pandemic is over, while 62% support \$2,000 payments for past months in which Americans did not receive any form of relief.

“With the Senate’s new shift in power, Senator Manchin’s vote is critical to passing meaningful relief that would benefit not just West Virginians, but all Americans who are being crushed under the financial weight of this crisis,” said Income Movement Founder, Stacey Rutland.

The billboard went up Monday, Martin Luther King Jr. Day. Recurring cash payments are a step toward a guaranteed income, which is rooted in a history of racial justice – in 1967, against a similar backdrop of civil unrest and racial reckoning, Dr. King called for guaranteed income as the simplest and most effective solution to poverty.

Direct cash payments are efficient and allow recipients the flexibility of determining how to spend their resources as the economic toll of the pandemic wears on. Low-wage workers have lost far more jobs and wages than top earners. While employment for people earning more than \$60,000 has recovered to pre-recession levels, the median income in [West Virginia](#) is just under \$47,000 and national employment is still down 20% for those making less than \$27,000. Low and middle-income households are [less than half as likely](#) to have had their incomes recover compared to wealthier households. Even workers who kept their jobs lost income: while 21% of households report income disruptions from job loss, 19% lost income from hours cuts and 16% because they were unable to do business as usual.

“Many families were already struggling and the pandemic is now more than they can manage – economically and emotionally. History has shown the connection between economic challenges, high stress and increased risk of child maltreatment,” said Jim McKay, state coordinator for Prevent Child Abuse West Virginia, a program of TEAM for West Virginia Children. “TEAM for West Virginia Children strongly encourages lawmakers to act quickly and provide families with cash payments that they need to meet the needs of their children and families.”

President Biden's [American Rescue Plan](#) includes a single \$1,400 check, but pressure is mounting both publicly and [in Congress](#) to raise the amount to \$2,000.

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*[Income Movement](#) is a people-powered, grassroots movement working to pass a permanent, federal Basic Income.*