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Virgin Islanders Closer to Receiving \$1,400 Stimulus, \$3,000 Child Tax Credit, Rent Assistance and More as Democrats Ram Through \$1.9 Trillion Aid Package

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Just as Virgin Islanders start receiving [\\$600 in additional direct stimulus payments](#) from the coronavirus relief package passed in December, along with other forms of help [including funding for rent assistance](#), the territory's residents are closer to receiving even more stimulus dollars to the tune of \$1,400 per individual along with a \$3,000 child tax credit, as the Biden administration and Democrats in both the House and Senate ram through Mr. Biden's aid bill with zero Republican support.

There's no Republican support because Democrats have moved away from negotiations with their counterparts and have pushed through the \$1.9 trillion budget resolution through the reconciliation process, a loophole that allows the majority caucus to move forward with their agenda without

meeting the 60-vote threshold before legislation can be brought to the Senate floor. And in the wee hours of Friday morning, Democrats muscled the budget through, with Vice President Kamala Harris being the 50-50 tiebreaker in her party's favor — her first vote since taking office.

Republicans had started the negotiation process by counter-proposing a \$618 billion aid bill. But Democrats quickly fell back to the reconciliation skirting, leading to votes along strict party lines in both chambers. In the House, the votes were split 219 to 209 with not a single Republican support.

Details of the \$1.9 trillion measure will now be taken up by committees, but with Democrats controlling the presidency, Senate and House, little is expected to change.

Under the president's plan, the child tax credit would grow from \$2,000 to \$3,000, and would include an additional \$600 for children under 6 years old. A new rule introduced in Mr. Biden's plan would allow the poorest families to get the full benefit. For families struggling with rent — many as a result of work stoppage ordered by governments to combat the Covid-19 pandemic — the Biden plan includes such funding. "I believe we have a moral obligation. In this pandemic in America, we cannot let people go hungry. We cannot let people get evicted," said Mr. Biden when he was still president-elect.

State and local governments are set to finally get what they've been calling for: substantial funding to help bolster their local treasuries stretched as a result of the pandemic, with the Biden plan providing \$350 billion to that end.

Mr. Biden has stated on the record his support for loan forgiveness, at least the plan that sees \$10,000 being forgiven. However, his current proposal does not include this item, with Mr. Biden embracing a plan that extends student loan forbearance, allowing students to temporarily pause loan payments.

Mr. Biden's big focus is vaccine distribution, and his plan includes the administration of 100 million vaccine doses in his first 100 days as president. The plan, though bold, is needed: According to Johns Hopkins University, the U.S. recorded more than 460,000 Covid-19 related fatalities as of Monday.

Mr. Biden's plan seeks \$160 billion in funding as part of a national vaccination program that would extend testing and create a public health jobs program to recruit the workforce needed to power the president's vision. This plan would also see vaccination sites being erected across the nation and U.S. territories. Mr. Biden's team has said the plan would solve the supply shortage issue faced in some U.S. jurisdictions, and work to diminish the disparities such as equitable distribution of the vaccines.