



Sen. Charles Schumer Says Co-ops Are in New Aid Bill

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On a Friday morning video conference, U.S. Senator Charles Schumer, a New York Democrat, discussed the federal government's erratic response to the coronavirus pandemic. He proudly noted that a new bill called "COVID- 4," currently pending in the Senate, would make cooperative housing corporations eligible for the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP), which gives forgivable loans to small businesses that keep employees on the payroll during the pandemic.

Speaking from his home office in his Park Slope co-op, Schumer indicated that, if passed, the bill would clarify any prior confusion regarding whether the PPP was applicable to cooperative housing corporations. Among the many changes Schumer discussed, the PPP coverage period would be extended from eight to 24 weeks, the maturity date of the loan would increase from two to five years, caps would be raised as relates to what the loan may be used for and what may be forgiven. It would also include additional protections for employers who are unable to rehire qualified employees.

The PPP is run by the Small Business Administration (SBA), which Schumer characterized as "incompetent and stingy." The SBA has been maligned for allowing the funds, which are intended for businesses with fewer than 500 employees, to get funneled to large corporations – but not to housing cooperatives.

Although condominium associations are not currently included in proposed legislation, Schumer indicated that there is additional legislation being proposed that would provide relief funds for qualifying homeowners suffering economic hardship, including owners of condominium units.

Senate majority leader Mitch McConnell, a Kentucky Republican, has indicated his party has strong reservations about the bill as currently written. President Donald Trump has hinted he will veto it if the Senate approves it in its current form.