

## *The Socialist, Ecologist, and Republican Group in the Senate in the face of the crisis :*

### **Putting the social issue at the heart of crisis management**

The health crisis, containment and their economic and social consequences have affected all French people in a spectacular way. But the effects of these crises hit the most vulnerable even harder. If we do not want the consequences to be deeper and more lasting, it is urgent to take adequate measures now.

The crisis requires emergency measures to anticipate and mitigate the social shock and protect the most modest. In the short term, it was necessary to help the most precarious to overcome the difficulties of daily life aggravated by the crisis.

In the medium term, we must prevent them from sinking further into poverty.

With each text, we have constantly alerted the government to the social and economic consequences of this crisis. Unfortunately, the government has never really become aware of the seriousness of the situation for many French people.

### **Social emergency measures to protect the most fragile**

We have proposed several measures from the very beginning of the health crisis, particularly during the debates on the various bills. In the same way, we have repeatedly questioned the ministers on the daily and material difficulties of many French people during the confinement.

#### **Supporting the purchasing power of the most humble**

Faced with the loss of income caused by the crisis, we have defended very concrete measures to support the purchasing power of the French:

- Increase in the amount of the Energy Vouchers created by the Energy Transition Act of 2015, the Energy Vouchers, allows people in energy precarious situations to contribute to paying the household energy bill. In the face of the crisis, the amount of this check must be revalued.

-Moratorium on the payment of water, energy, telephone or internet bills for the most modest households.

- Exceptional social emergency measures in favour of students, especially the most modest ones, including to cover the loss of a supplementary activity to finance their studies.

#### **To shelter the most fragile people**

From the very beginning of the health crisis, the question of people in great precariousness has been particularly acute. We asked the government to act immediately to :

- Suspend rental evictions for the entire year 2020.
- Prohibit the closure of emergency shelters.
- Ensure food security for people in socially fragile situations.
- Guarantee free protective masks.
- Exceptionally and temporarily authorize mayors to make requisitions.

We have also offered exceptional assistance to associations fighting poverty and exclusion. These associations play a crucial role in the period and may themselves be in great difficulty.

We have also passed an amendment so that people without a fixed abode cannot be fined for not having a certificate of movement during confinement.

#### **In the medium term, measures to deal with the economic and social consequences of the crisis**

We have proposed far-reaching measures to cushion the social shock that is already very violent for a great many French people.

- The repeal of the unemployment insurance reform. This government reform is unfair and ineffective. It came into effect in 2019 for its first part, and has already weakened the most vulnerable. A second phase was to be implemented in April 2020. The Socialist Group has called on the government to abandon the second part of the reform for good, but also to repeal the first part. In addition, the group called on the government to ensure that the benefits received for short-time work would give rise to pension rights;
- A massive experimentation of the Basic Income with all the departments that wish to do so. For almost two years now, 19 left-wing departments have said that they are available to experiment with a Basic Income. The Basic Income is a basic income for people who have no resources and is transformed into a means-tested income supplement for people who work ;
- The implementation of a plan to create 20,000 to 30,000 assisted jobs by targeting students and youth in the neighbourhoods. The associative world and local authorities must be helped. This imperative is all the more necessary at a time of crisis linked to the epidemic, when the need for help in organizing extracurricular activities, for the most destitute, isolated and elderly people, for the distribution of masks, etc. is urgent;
- That the current short-time working scheme be modified so that it is taken into account in pension rights and that it can give rise to quarters of contributions for all employees.

**Reinforcement of the control of bank charges: a great step forward for the most modest on the initiative of the Socialist and Republican Group in the Senate.**

The bill proposed by the socialist, environmentalist and republican senators to strengthen the control of bank charges was adopted by the Senate on May 28, 2020.

For several years, consumer associations have been denouncing abusive practices in the banking sector. For the most precarious, it is sometimes more than 500 € per year that can be spent in bank charges for payment incidents. The health crisis is also a social crisis. The banks continue to take their various commissions every month from those who sink into extreme poverty. The voted text proposes to include in the law a cap on these fees.

Our proposals and the framework provisions in our text were reduced by the right in the Senate, with the complicity of a government that did not want to hear about such a cap. However, in early May 2020, a breakthrough had been achieved: the Senate had voted a provision allowing to exempt from bank charges, during the time of the crisis, financially fragile people. But apart from this progress, which was achieved through a lot of fighting, the government systematically opposed our proposals.

## Faced with the health crisis

We called for health measures as early as March 12. In particular, the group proposed the implementation of the emergency plan for the hospital, which with the release of a billion euro envelope to allow the reopening of beds in all territories, with priority for areas with a shortage of beds. Indeed, this health crisis has once again highlighted regional inequalities in terms of access to healthcare. This plan must be extended to include urban medicine.

We supported the government's initiative to pay a bonus to hospital caregivers who worked during the crisis. But it also asked that this premium be extended to other categories of personnel and in particular to home support workers who played an essential role with our seniors during the period.

## A Socialist Bill for a Compensation Fund for Covid Patients-19

This bill, which is the result of in-depth work carried out with victims, trade unions and health professionals, was examined by the Senate on Thursday, June 25.

In the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic, not only health care and maintenance personnel, but also firefighters, law enforcement and security forces or store employees have had an essential activity for the entire country. Not to mention the volunteers who continued to care for the most vulnerable.

The bill would create a specific compensation fund for patients who are ill, deceased or who have serious after-effects of Covid-19, whether they are private employees, public servants or volunteers (which is not possible with the recognition of an occupational disease alone) and who contracted the disease in the course of their work.

We deeply regret that the senatorial right and the government opposed a text that translated, into concrete action, the solidarity and recognition expressed by the French people towards all those who risked their lives in the fight against the epidemic.