

It is abundantly clear that our Nation cannot afford partisan politics as usual. This is a moment for bold and bipartisan action. That is what the Senate did earlier this month when we passed billions of dollars in targeted funding to assist medical professionals and responders in every State and to ease the initial shock to small businesses. And that is what the Senate needs to expand on this week—bold and bipartisan action.

Yesterday evening, the House finally completed its work on their coronavirus relief proposal, made a number of changes, and sent the paperwork over here to the Senate.

I know Senators on both sides are eager to assist workers, families, and small businesses with the financial fallout of this extraordinary period. So, as I said yesterday afternoon, Senate Republicans are convinced that the House's noncomprehensive bill can only be the beginning—the beginning—of our efforts to support our health system, assist individual Americans and families, as well as stabilize the U.S. economy.

So, last night, a group of Republican Senators conferred with Secretary Mnuchin. He is returning to the Capitol to meet with our entire conference today. We are continuing urgent talks on further legislation that will address head-on the three major priorities we have spent the last several days discussing in depth.

No. 1, we need to provide more direct assistance for American workers and families.

No. 2, we need further strong steps to secure our economic foundation, most especially our small businesses. In particular, it seems increasingly clear that the House's effort to mandate that small businesses provide new worker benefits, just as many small businesses themselves are in significant jeopardy, might even be actually harmful unless we urgently address a broader package that includes more and broader small business relief.

And, No. 3, of course, the foundational priority is to continue providing all the support that our medical professionals need as they fight this new virus on the frontlines.

These conversations are ongoing. We are making progress. The House of Representatives may have left town, but the Senate is right here at work. We are crafting the major legislation that the American people deserve in the face of this major challenge. It is my intention that the Senate will not adjourn until we have passed significant and bold new steps—above and beyond what the House has passed—to help our strong Nation and our strong underlying economy weather this storm.

Now, before I conclude this morning, I wanted to take a moment to echo and amplify the updated guidance that our public health experts and the White House rolled out yesterday. As President Trump said yesterday, the next 2

weeks are an important opportunity. Our Nation will have a major say in how long the virus will spread within the United States before it is contained.

Following the commonsense steps laid out by the White House Coronavirus Task Force can significantly reduce each American's risk of being exposed or spreading the virus within communities.

First, obviously, those who feel sick, stay home. Those who feel sick, stay home. Unwell children should be kept at home. And anyone with questions about their symptoms should contact their medical provider.

Wherever possible, Americans should engage in work or school from home. Those who cannot, including those whose in-person job functions are central to our government or our Nation, must take especially seriously the CDC's guidelines for health and hygiene, especially washing hands and social distancing.

All Americans have been strongly urged to avoid eating or drinking out, to avoid discretionary travel, and to avoid visiting nursing homes or retirement facilities unless—unless—it is to provide critical assistance.

Some of these recommendations sound like basic common sense. Others of them would have sounded almost unthinkable just a few weeks ago.

It is almost impossible to exaggerate the pace of change over the past weeks and days, but Americans are strong. We are resilient. This is a proud Nation with a world-changing history, and we have come through far greater challenges than this. This is not a time for fear or panic. It is a time to follow the facts, listen carefully to the experts, and take precautions to protect not only ourselves but the most vulnerable in our society. Every single one of us can do our part.

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#### RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

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#### MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will be in a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

The Senator from Illinois.

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#### CORONAVIRUS

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, yesterday, the President of the United States and the Centers for Disease Control contacted us individually and at least through the media to advise us to avoid gatherings of more than 10 people. It is a reflection of the national emergency we face and the public health crisis that America is facing head-on, as it should.

This morning, as we opened the Senate, there were 18 people gathered on the floor of the Senate—3 Senators and 15 staff people. As those who follow all the Senate can tell, our staffers come to work, as they are expected to, but come under circumstances that are more challenging than they were just a few weeks ago.

I want to thank each and every one of them here on the floor, as well as the many who you don't see, behind the scenes, who are necessary for the opening of this Capitol and for the protection of everyone who works here. There are policemen and there are people engaged in basic activities here who keep this magnificent structure functioning, and they come here now in the midst of a public health challenge, where most every American has been told to stay home: If you can possibly stay home, do it; for social distancing, make certain that you stay a certain distance between yourself and some other person. Yet they come here, and we thank them for it.

The obvious question is, Why are we here under these circumstances? We were called back into a week of legislative activity, which had been scheduled to be a week where we were back home in our individual States. There is a lot for me to do back home, and I am sure that is true for every Senator, from the crises which we had at O'Hare Airport—I was working on that on Saturday and Sunday night—to the issue of closing schools and feeding children, and all of the other issues that are part of this coronavirus challenge.

But we were told to come back here this week, to make a trip back, to fly back from wherever, to come to the U.S. Capitol for two reasons. We were told we had to pass the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act reauthorization because it expired as of last weekend. It turns out that we have found a way to avoid a necessary vote at the last minute. The Senate Republican leader agreed last night, just a few minutes before the scheduled vote, to accept a proposal that had been made to him by Republican Senator MIKE LEE of Utah last Thursday. The Senate Republican leader did not accept it then. He accepted it last night. The net result was we didn't have to be present. We didn't have to make the journey for that purpose.

The second part of our return is equally important and maybe more so in light of this public health crisis, and that was to consider the measure that was taken up by the House of Representatives and passed in the early-morning hours of Saturday. This measure, known as the Families First Coronavirus Response Act, is the second piece of legislation we have considered and, I am sure, not the last. We are already talking about the coronavirus 3 act, which is likely to be debated and voted on soon.

The point I am making is this measure, which was physically sent to us last night with technical corrections,

could have been considered as early as last Saturday. By unanimous consent, the Senate can take up a measure before it physically arrives from the House. It has happened many times before. It is not extraordinary. The physical presence of the document is not necessary for this debate or for a vote to consider it.

We acknowledge the fact that sometimes the movement of paperwork from the House may take a little longer than the actual time when we physically can take possession of it through other means.

So the argument that was made this morning that it wasn't until we received the document last night that we could consider it is not accurate. Under the Senate rules, by unanimous consent, we could have considered it as soon as it was enacted by the House.

The question before us now is, What are we waiting for? There was a technical correction bill that was added to it yesterday, after the House overcame the objections of a Republican Congressman. After his objections were set aside or satisfied, they moved forward with the technical corrections.

We have the package. It is before us now. The obvious question is, Why aren't we passing this measure immediately? We should because contained in this measure are important changes in the law that will help American families respond to this coronavirus crisis—fundamental questions: Will we provide, for many American workers, medical leave if they decide that they don't feel well and want to keep themselves, their family, their coworkers, and the public safe by staying home?

They are afraid that if they don't get a paycheck, they won't be able to meet the needs of their families. So this bill extends the medical leave coverage to more workers across America. I am unhappy that it doesn't go further, and perhaps we can extend it further with the third iteration of our coronavirus legislative package. But there is no reason not to pass this and to pass it now and not to wait a day or two or three before we get around to it. Let's do it. Let's get it done.

In addition, we have changes in unemployment compensation. If someone literally loses their job because of this public health crisis, we want to make sure they have something coming in to help their families as quickly as possible. That is a measure I am sure all of us agree on—to change the unemployment compensation laws to help these families through very difficult times. Why would we wait to pass that?

We should pass this by unanimous consent today and do it quickly. That is something I hope the Senate Republican leader will consider. There is just no reason for the delay.

There are so many other things involved in this. The basic issue of feeding America is now in question. Who is going to feed these students whose schools have been closed across Illinois and across the United States? It is a

practical challenge in Springfield, IL, as well as in Chicago. Well, we have issues that are raised by this coronavirus legislation that is before us that will change and strengthen food assistance at this time of public health crisis. Why wait? Let's get this done by unanimous consent. We should be doing it and doing it right now.

In addition to that, we provide additional Medicaid benefits to the States to deal with the obvious health challenges. We want to make sure that the healthcare workers—and God bless them for risking their lives for us—are paid. We want to make sure the equipment that is needed by hospitals and clinics comes on board as quickly as possible.

In my State of Illinois, we have challenges, from the city of Chicago to rural and small towns. They need help. The Medicaid assistance in this bill will provide help for them immediately. Why wait? Let's pass this and do it this morning.

We also have free testing for coronavirus that is set out in the law. Whether you have insurance, whether you are covered by Medicare or Medicaid, you are going to be able to be tested—when the tests are available, I might quickly add—without cost to you. And that is the way it should be.

These are things that are basic. They were agreed to not just by NANCY PELOSI, the Speaker of the House, but by the Trump White House, Mr. Mnuchin. The Secretary came forward and negotiated all the changes I have just described. So they are bipartisan in nature.

There is no reason for us to delay this in any way. We should move on it quickly. Putting this off for a day or two or whatever the plan is with the Republican leadership is totally unnecessary and unfortunately requires staff to wait around here when they have been advised they should be home, there should be social distance, and they should be in a circumstance where they are not endangering themselves in terms of their health or anyone else's. Let's get this done.

The third issue I want to raise is one which is critically important but I believe is timely. We have to think anew about the way the Senate does business. If we are telling people to do their work from home when possible, teleconferencing as opposed to being physically present at work, what are we doing to achieve the same thing?

There has been speculation, conjecture about a coronavirus aid package—the third one in the series. I totally support it. On the Democratic side, we have a long list of particulars of things that we think will be helpful to get this economy back on its feet by starting with families and workers and expanding it to small businesses. It is a long list, it is a comprehensive list, and I am sure there are even more suggestions that could come before us. How are we going to consider those? Are we going to meet as committees as we or-

dinarily do, in the same room, when we have been advised that is not a good idea from a public health viewpoint, or are we going to do it by teleconferencing and Skyping and using modern technology?

It is time for the Senate to wake up to the 21st century and to make sure we are using technology that allows us to communicate with one another without any danger or risk to public health.

In addition to that, there is a more difficult question about how we can vote in the U.S. Senate if we are not physically present. I know that is being considered. Senator KLOBUCHAR and I have discussed it. I know she is thinking about it from a Senate rules perspective. Senator SCHATZ of Hawaii has raised the same question. Others have too.

Let's get into this. Let's find a way to do this that protects the integrity of our voting procedure but acknowledges the reality that our physical presence on the floor may not be required to be actually present under the rules of the Senate—at least for the sake of counting our votes. We ought to be discussing that this week and make sure we have a task force that is working on coming up with answers to that as quickly as possible.

Finally, I think it is time for us to start meeting as committees by this teleconferencing and Skyping and talking about this coronavirus 3 package—the one that really stretches us beyond where we are.

Let's take a look at the first two measures. With coronavirus 1, which was a supplemental appropriation, the President asked for about \$2 billion. We came up, on a bipartisan basis in just 2 short weeks, with \$8 billion, primarily focusing on healthcare resources, on research, and on developing vaccines. That was a must, and we did it on a bipartisan basis.

The second package talks about families and workers and small businesses and how they should respond and how we can help them.

The third package I think will take a look at the original two to see if they need to be changed in any way but to expand our reach even more.

Let's do it in the context that we are preaching to America. As we hold the press conferences in Washington and tell Americans "Avoid going to work physically if you can," let's try to find ways to make the Senate work without putting anyone's health at risk. We can do that, but we need to do that together.

Let me also say that the Senator from Kentucky said that the Senate will not recess until significant new measures beyond what the House has passed are considered. If there is a plan for that, please let us know. Those of us who are here and worried about whether there will be transportation back home to our families at some point would like to know what the schedule is going to be. If the Senate

leader, the Republican leader, has a plan, please share it with us too. All of us are waiting and anxious to know what our circumstances will be for the days ahead.

I want to stay here and get the work done, but let's do it in an orderly, safe, and nonrisky way. Let's try to abide by the same guidelines we are preaching to the rest of America. Let's use new technology. Let's use our best thinking and come up with bipartisan answers. That, to me, is the way to manage the Senate in the midst of this national emergency.

We shouldn't be returning, as we have this week, and facing situations like last night where our vote was not even necessary. Many of us came here ready to vote and found that there had been an agreement that made such a vote unnecessary.

It is time for a greater spirit of cooperation and communication. Just to have the Republican side come up with their list and we come up with ours, without dialogue, doesn't lead us to where we need to be. Let's have that dialogue and do it in a safe and thoughtful way.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

#### RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic leader is recognized.

#### CORONAVIRUS

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, our country is facing an unprecedented public health emergency with severe and potentially long-lasting economic consequences. As COVID-19 spreads, our local health officials and health experts tell us we are woefully unprepared for what is about to hit us. Public health infrastructure, like hospital beds and masks and ventilators, must be produced and procured. Testing is still not at its proper capacity. The resulting economic downturn from this virus is already impacting millions of American families, workers, and businesses—small, medium, large, alike.

First, on a personal note, please, Americans, take care of yourselves. Avoid unnecessary contact, even though I know so many of the meetings and gatherings and celebrations that we have planned must be postponed. It is painful but not as painful as the continuing spread of this awful virus.

And a little advice—this is not universal, but I have heard this from a number of medical people whom I trust: Take your temperature in the

morning and in the evening. It is a good way to check whether you have this illness and it is progressing within you. Not all experts agree with that, but many do. In my view, it can't hurt. It is something I am doing. I am urging my family to do it, and I am urging my staff to do it.

Our response in the Senate and in Congress—the response to the coronavirus—will require a massive mobilization of public resources—Federal, State, and local—as we have marshaled before only in wartime. It is going to require Congress to work in a bipartisan way and with uncommon speed. And the American people, too, must pull together and sacrifice in ways small and large their normal way of life in an effort to combat this disease and limit its spread. All hands must be on deck because the task before us is daunting and may yet eclipse the pain felt by workers and families during the great recession—at least for many things.

The first order of business here in the Senate is to take up and pass the recent House bill and do it today. It will provide free coronavirus testing. That is essential. It would extend paid sick leave. It would give food assistance, Medicaid reimbursement, and expanded unemployment insurance.

I understand that some of my colleagues on the other side of the aisle might want to amend the legislation or have it written differently if they were the ones putting it together. But I remind them that Leader MCCONNELL said that he would defer the agreement between the Speaker of the House and Secretary Mnuchin. The President has said he will sign this bill if the Senate passes it. If we change the bill, it will go back to the House and be delayed and delay the aid it contains for American families coping with the impact of the virus.

Please, my colleagues, we will have other opportunities to legislate, and there will be a great need for them, but let's move this now. Let's move this now. I believe our side of the aisle will clear this. I hope the other side will, and it will be on the President's desk today. Let's hope, and let's not delay any longer.

But there is much more to be done. Once this legislation is sent to the President's desk—COVID 2—our work will not be over, not even close. We must soon move to other very necessary measures to address the coronavirus and its widening impact on the health and well-being of the American people.

Today, I am presenting a series of proposals to congressional appropriators that would provide initial infusion of at least \$750 billion. Our proposal is big, it is bold, but it is also targeted. It focuses on those Americans in the parts of the health sector and the economy most in need now: hospitals and treatment, unemployment insurance and Medicaid, loan forbearance and aid for small business, childcare,

and senior citizens. It focuses on those who need help—those who don't have an income because they have lost their job temporarily; those who need help with senior citizens, with children who are not in school; hospitals that are short of equipment and maybe personnel. That is the immediate focus. That is what we must do right now. We must focus on those who need help immediately and do it in a way that deals with the structural problems in the country that have made the attack of this virus more virulent, more harmful, and worse.

By contrast, it is reported that the administration is proposing a massive Federal bailout of industry and a payroll tax cut. If we are going to follow up the House bill with another major economic stimulus package, which we must, our major focus cannot be based on bailing out airlines, cruises, and other industries. We must first prioritize economic solutions that are focused on workers and their families, solutions that would allow us to fix our broken unemployment system; rebuild our public health system, which is overburdened; save small and medium-sized American businesses that have a cash crunch and will go out of business, even though they were healthy a month ago, because no one is buying their products or using their services.

Let's remember—corporations are not people. People are people. And when it comes to this cascading crisis, we should help our fellow Americans first, even as we plan and execute policies that protect our economy. The administration's proposal, if that is the sum of it—a massive bailout of industry and a payroll tax cut—doesn't do that. It doesn't target the people who most need the help. Any package we are going to do here, which must be passed in a bipartisan way, must contain large elements of what I am talking about and maybe other things as well that help the people who are in need.

I will be sending my proposal and a PowerPoint slide to every one of my colleagues shortly, and I hope they will understand the need for it. I have consulted with large numbers in our caucus, and we have broad support for these proposals and some others.

Again, when it comes to this cascading crisis, we should help fellow Americans first, even as we plan and execute policies that protect our economy.

First, we take actions to fight this virus. First, we get lifelines to our workers, our parents, our students, our seniors, our small businesses. If your house is on fire, the first thing you worry about is not smoke damage to the roof; you try to put out the fire. That is what our proposal does. It means, first and foremost, we work to address the virus itself and the people most impacted.

In the midst of a sprawling health and economic catastrophe, industry bailouts should not be at the top of our