

they were going to use up the protective equipment and masks and gloves, for example, that they had available. They didn't know where to turn for more.

Let's get this together. I believe there is a national stockpile, and I believe it should be open for the States that need it immediately. Our State is one of those.

Referring to these ventilators and breathing devices, in a press conference a couple of days ago, the President said the Governors should do their best. We can do better than that. The largest stockpile of this equipment is in possession of the Federal Government, and we should turn to it quickly to help those in need.

I am very concerned as well—I will close. I see other colleagues on the floor, and I know they would like to make comments as well. I will close by also saying that as we undertake the next piece of legislation—the \$800, \$900, \$1 trillion bill—I hope the first priority is to make sure we help our hospitals.

I have a measure with Senator LANKFORD, Republican of Oklahoma, that will compensate hospitals in rural areas and downstate areas in Illinois. I am fearful they will be the first to be overwhelmed. I hope those representing rural States will come together and join, as Senator LANKFORD and I have, to try to find a way to make sure they are adequately funded to get through this crisis.

I might add that we also need medical professionals in the long term. I hope we will dedicate ourselves to improving the National Health Service Corps as one way of doing that and focusing that in rural areas.

Finally, I have a bill with Senator ALEXANDER, Senator MURRAY, and Senator BLUNT to take a survey through the National Academy of Sciences of our dependence on foreign-made medicines and medical supplies and medical equipment so that we can establish, not only during this challenge and crisis but for future challenges and crises—whether we have adequate domestic production capacity or a necessary stockpiles to protect us. We found, for example, that some 20 major drugs were manufactured exclusively in China. As China went through the early stages of this coronavirus crisis, there was a fear that we would be cut off from sources. We have asked the National Academy of Science to give us a survey as quickly as possible.

I will close by saying that it is interesting, as I follow the emails of my friends and family and hear from my colleagues, that as we are separated with this social distance which we are trying to respect across the United States—as we are separated, it is interesting how much we are drawn together. Our family's emails and phone calls have been more numerous than ever as we think about one another more and reach out as we hear that there is a need within our family. There is more conversation and candor

than I can ever recall in our family conversations.

Perhaps adversity has created community. Perhaps this situation, this concern that we have, is leading to more empathy.

We are going to get through this. America always does. There will be some painful moments and very difficult ones. I think those who sent us to do this job in Washington expect us to put our party labels at the door, find solutions to the challenges we face, help our Nation through this crisis, and come out strong on the other side.

I yield the floor.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic leader is recognized.

CORONAVIRUS

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, I thank my good friend, the Senator from South Dakota, for his usual display of patience.

The coronavirus pandemic continues to test our Nation in new and difficult ways. There is now a confirmed case of coronavirus in all 50 States and the District of Columbia. Our public health system was understaffed and underresourced, and without intervention, it could soon become overwhelmed.

Even as the market shifts from day to day, the coronavirus is slowing our economy to a near-standstill, and we are almost certainly anticipating a recession. You go to the streets of many cities, towns, and villages, and they are empty. Schools are closed in large portions of the country. Businesses are struggling not to lay off workers because they don't have customers, they don't have clients, and they don't have income. There is great urgency here.

There are really two separate and simultaneous emergencies—one in our healthcare system and another in the economy. We have to deal with both. If we don't solve the one in our healthcare, the economy will continue to get bad no matter what we do for it.

Less tangible than those two emergencies but still very real is the impact the virus is having on American society. My home city of New York is effectively on lockdown. You can go to a place like the Times Square subway station and see actually nobody there. Americans are being asked—rightly—not to gather in groups of 10 or more, not to go to dinner or to a bar or to their church or place of worship.

I lived through 9/11. It occurred in my city. I knew people who were lost. I lived through the days of the financial crisis in 2008 and other moments of national urgency. But there is something much worse about this crisis we face. I have never sensed a greater sense of uncertainty, a greater fear of the future, of the unknown. We don't know how long this crisis will last.

You don't even know if you contracted the virus right away, or maybe your spouse, maybe your child, maybe your parent, maybe your friend.

Then there is a much greater sense of isolation, a problem for which there is no cure. I miss not meeting and talking to my constituents. They are our lifeblood. That is not happening just to us here in the Senate; it is happening across America—friends who used to get together and families who had gatherings. Different social activities are gone—book clubs, card games. The fabric and sinew of our lives as human beings have been put on hold, and nobody knows for how long.

By necessity, Americans are now sacrificing their normal lives and daily routines and, maybe worst of all, sacrificing the sense of community because we all, each individually and together as a country, must fight this awful virus.

Unfortunately, we are only just beginning to see the necessary seriousness and mobilization of resources from the Federal Government. Sadly, unfortunately, and with awful consequences, this administration took far too long to wake up to this global crisis. It has wasted precious weeks in downplaying the severity of the coronavirus—weeks that could have been spent in earnest in the preparation of building our testing capacity. As a result, the United States continues to lag behind other countries in the number and the percentage of the population we are testing.

Stories of Americans who feel sick and show symptoms but who are unable to access coronavirus tests appear every day in every single newspaper. Warnings of the potential shortages of masks, hospital beds, and ventilators appear in the paper every day. In 2 weeks, the issue of ventilators and ICU beds will be like the issue of tests today. In other words, 2 or 3 weeks ago, many of us were saying to get those tests out. A month ago, people were saying it, and now we are seeing the consequences—lockdowns because we can't test people. We don't know who has the virus and who doesn't. The same crisis will be occurring in a few weeks. Mark our words. Unfortunately, it is true about ventilators and ICU beds. We are behind the eight ball on tests, and we are soon going to be behind the eight ball on ICU beds and ventilators as more and more people get sick.

The administration didn't pay attention to tests, and now we are paying the price even though many of us were hollering for weeks about the emerging issues with testing. The same problem is about to happen with ventilators. We know, in 2 weeks, the number of ventilators might become a massive problem. We must get ahead of it and get ahead of it now. I call on President Trump to use his existing authority to help address the widespread shortages of medical equipment, particularly ventilators, as a result of the COVID-19 outbreak.

I joined 27 of my colleagues in a letter to President Trump to urge him to invoke the Defense Production Act of 1950, which authorizes the President to strengthen domestic manufacturing capacity and supply in extraordinary circumstances. It is used in times of war, and we must mobilize as if it were a time of war when it comes to hospitals—beds, supplies, equipment. The DPA, the Defense Production Act, allows for the President to direct the production of private sector firms of critical manufactured goods to meet urgent and national security needs. The President should do so immediately.

A report came out today that the Army Corps of Engineers and FEMA are ready and willing to participate in the response process. The Army Corps could build temporary hospitals with beds, but it still hasn't received instruction from the White House, from the administration. I thank the men and women who are willing to be on the frontlines, combating the pandemic, but this kind of inexcusable action is maddening, infuriating, and must be rectified. Lives are at stake.

Public health infrastructure is the top priority because, if we can curb this virus, the economy will get better. We need to do things to help it, obviously, but if you ignore the public health crisis with regard to the equipment and infrastructure and personnel which is needed in many more numbers than we have ever seen, the economy will not get better.

The legislation passed by the House on Saturday—phase 2 of the coronavirus response—has a little bit of this, and it must pass the Senate today. Unfortunately, first, we must dispose of a Republican amendment that would make a condition of the bill a requirement for the President to terminate military operations in Afghanistan. Yes, you heard me right. Our Republican leadership has put on the floor an amendment that would make a condition of the bill a requirement that the President terminate military operations in Afghanistan.

In a time of national emergency, this Republican amendment is ridiculous—a colossal waste of time. We probably could have voted on this bill a day or two ago if it had not been for the need to have scheduled this amendment. I am eager—we are all eager—to dispatch this absurd Republican amendment and send this bill to the President. For instance, it allows for the free testing and treatment of the coronavirus, which is very much needed. We can send this bill to the President and begin work on the next phase, phase 3.

As my colleagues know, Senate Democrats have already outlined several proposals for the next phase of legislation, and the specifics have been made public. The proposal has four main priorities: public health capacity, unemployment insurance, paid sick leave, and priority treatment for labor

in any bailout to industry. There are many things in this bill that are important: no payment on student loans or mortgages and help with our mass transit systems. There are many things, and the Democrats are going to fight for them in the next phase of the response, but the priorities I mentioned are key: public health capacity, unemployment insurance, paid sick leave, and priority treatment for labor in any bailout to industry.

On the public health capacity, as I mentioned, we need masks; we need hospital beds; we need ventilators; and we still need testing kits. So the Democrats are proposing a Marshall Plan for our public health infrastructure. The sooner we act on it, the better. We also need to help in terms of public transportation for our healthcare system. Tens of thousands of healthcare workers in New York City and in many other cities cannot get to their jobs—their very needed jobs—if there is no public and mass transit. So a Marshall Plan for our public health infrastructure is what is needed now. It will prevent the situation from getting even worse, and it will allow our ailing economy to begin to heal once we contain this virus.

Workers who get laid off or have their hours cut to almost nothing need expanded unemployment insurance—period. The Secretary of the Treasury reportedly told Republican Senators yesterday that unemployment could hit 20 percent. Unemployment insurance is a nonnegotiable part of our response to the coronavirus.

With regard to paid sick leave, Senators MURRAY and GILLBRAND have a paid sick leave policy to meet this crisis. It should be added to this part of the legislation. I think they will ask for it in a unanimous consent request or will offer an amendment to do so. If it is not included in this part, it should, certainly, be included in the next phase of legislation.

There will be other items that we will have to address down the road. Certain industries are struggling—airlines, hotels—but we must make sure that we prioritize public health and workers over corporate bailouts. If there is going to be a discussion about a bailout, it must include workers' priorities and protections. The airlines are very important, for sure, as they employ a lot of people. Many of us who fly back and forth to our States know of the good people who work as the pilots and the flight attendants and the mechanics and the clerks and the ticket takers. They are good, fine people. We want to make sure they are protected. One of the reasons—let's not forget—that many airlines are so short of cash right now is that they have spent billions on stock buybacks, which is money they had to send out when they should have been saving it for a rainy day for their workers and customers. That issue should be addressed.

A few of my Republican colleagues have proposed a onetime cash payment

of \$1,000. My fellow Americans, this is not a time for small thinking, and this is not a time for small measures. This is a time to be bold, to be aggressive. A single \$1,000 check would help people pay their landlords in March, but what happens after that? How do they pay their rent in April when their offices or restaurants or stores are still closed for business? How about May? How about June? The President has suggested that this recession could last through the summer. One thousand dollars gets used pretty quickly if you are unemployed. In contrast, expanded unemployment insurance, beefed-up unemployment insurance, covers you for a much longer time and would provide a much bigger safety net.

This is the time to put tribalism aside and acknowledge that this recession, if we allow it, will do real harm to Americans up and down the income scale, and it will hurt Americans of all ages. So, if we are going to provide direct payments, they need to be bigger, more frequent, and more targeted. Millionaires shouldn't get them.

These are the kinds of issues that all parties are going to have to discuss—Democrats and Republicans in the House and Senate with the White House. The sooner we discuss them together, the quicker we will be able to move forward. Yet Leader MCCONNELL announced yesterday that, in his plan to develop the next phase of legislation, Senate Republicans would sit among themselves and then sit down with the administration and come up with their own proposal before presenting it to Senate Democrats, let alone to House Democrats. The process that Leader MCCONNELL has outlined for phase 3 legislation is too cumbersome, too partisan, and will take far too long given the urgency and need for cooperation.

Secretary Mnuchin says he wants legislation passed by the end of the week. The McConnell process will not get us there. The phase 3 legislation should be the product of a five-corners negotiation, that being with House and Senate leaders—majority and minority—plus the White House. That is the way it has worked the best, the quickest, and the fairest in the past. If all parties are in the room from the get-go, the final product will be guaranteed swift passage. The process Leader MCCONNELL outlines is far too reminiscent of the typical legislative process in the Congress—a process that far too often results in delay and gridlock. We can't afford that right now.

Leader MCCONNELL was right when he said that, in times of national emergency, we must shed our partisanship and rise to the occasion. So let's begin that way—Republicans and Democrats, the House and Senate, Congress and the White House. The best way to advance phase 3 legislation is to have a five-corners negotiation from the outset.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SASSE). The Republican whip.

CORONAVIRUS

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, here in the Senate, we are continuing to move forward with the next installment of coronavirus relief legislation. I expect, later today, we will pass the bill that was passed by the House earlier, and we are looking beyond it to a third bill that will provide additional relief to the American people.

As the leader has said, we have three priorities: providing direct assistance to American workers and families, many whose lives have been disrupted and dislocated in jobs, who are feeling a lot of economic harm, economic pain; giving our economy, especially our small businesses, the necessary support with which to weather the storm; and most importantly, providing medical professionals with the resources they need in order to fight this virus. The House bill addresses these priorities to some degree, but it is not a comprehensive bill, and additional legislation is going to be needed.

We especially need to ensure that the worker benefit requirements the House bill places on small businesses are accompanied by sufficient support. Small businesses are at the most risk economically during this time, and we need to ensure they have the resources they need to get through this. I am looking forward to continuing to work with my colleagues of both parties on the House bill and on additional legislation.

This is a time for all of us to come together to ensure that medical professionals, American businesses, and American families have what they need to combat the coronavirus and to deal with its effects. I can't think of a time at which we have seen schools and businesses close on such a mass scale. It is a challenging time for our country, but if we pull together, we can get through this and come out even stronger.

All of us have roles to play in combating this virus—washing our hands regularly and thoroughly, practicing social distancing, staying at home as much as possible, listening to advice from healthcare officials. All of these things are essential to our flattening the curve and limiting the number of infected Americans.

It is vital that we keep as many people as possible from getting infected so that our hospitals and medical professionals are not overwhelmed with cases. Our medical professionals are putting their lives on the line every day to care for coronavirus patients. Let's make sure we do everything we can to keep the number of cases they are dealing with as low as possible.

In difficult times, Americans rise to the occasion, and I am confident that is what we will do again.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oregon.

Mr. MERKLEY. Mr. President, I walked outside across the Capitol grounds, and it is such a beautiful day.

The cherry blossom trees are blooming. There were mothers with young children, 3- and 4-year-old children, playing on the grass, and it seemed like just so idyllic, so perfect. It seemed like nothing could be wrong in America.

But, in fact, so much is wrong in America. Our everyday rhythm of life has been shattered. We are facing a medical pandemic and an economic collapse: K-12 schools, closed; universities, shut down; grocery stores, empty; restaurants, locked; gyms, movie theaters, music venues, closed for business.

The reverberations of so many core businesses and core retail being shut are affecting virtually every family and every small business across this country. So many forms of commerce are grinding to a halt. The economy is imploding, and it is touching the workers and it is touching those small businesses. Workers are experiencing the reality of reduced hours, lost shifts, layoffs; and they don't know when they are going to be able to pick up that work again.

Then, they are not sure how they are going to pay their utilities. How are they going to pay their rent? How are they going to pay their mortgage? And when will America and the economy start to heal, and when will they be able to go back to work?

So the American people are anxious and worried, rightly, about the threat of the disease and worried, rightly, about the collapse of the economy.

Coronavirus is marching on America. As of yesterday—or, actually, as of this morning—we have almost 6,000 cases here in our United States of America—5,881 cases as of this moment. Compare that to a week ago. We are talking about 1,200 cases a week ago. That is a five-fold increase in a week.

We now have more than 50 States affected—all the States, Puerto Rico, Guam, and the U.S. Virgin Islands. Then, we can ponder the fact that the number of deaths has gone up—51 deaths compared to in the thirties a week ago.

So the coronavirus is marching on America and marching on the economy. It is a double hammer affecting families and small business, and it is particularly appropriate at this moment to share with all of you the stories of small businesses in my home State that are being impacted.

More than 40 businesses sent in their stories, and I am going to share 6 or 7 of those stories. But as we think about how we proceed, we need to recognize that this recovery needs to be one where we invest in the foundation of our economy, we invest in the families, we invest with sick leave, we invest with unemployment insurance, we invest by covering the health costs of getting tests and the cost of getting treatment, and we invest in our small businesses.

Not so long ago we had a bailout that favored big business, and big business

went on to make billions of dollars and then get a massive tax break in 2017.

Right now, the airlines are asking for a \$50 billion bailout, but they have spent almost \$50 billion in stock buyouts over the last few years because they were so profitable. And why did they do stock buyouts? Because it increased the value of the stock options of the corporate executives in that industry.

This is a version of private gain and public pain. When a business says, "During the good times I will keep all that money; thank you very much for not charging me any taxes to maintain our infrastructure or our military or our medical care system, and then, when we hit a hard time, we will ask to be bailed out"—so we will have conversations about that strategy for big business.

How about, instead, we focus on the families and the pain they are feeling, and focus on the small businesses and the challenges they are facing?

We need a Main Street recovery, not a Wall Street bailout. We need an economy rebuilt from the bottom up, not from Wall Street down—small businesses, like Bargaritas, a small Mexican restaurant in Ontario, OR. It is a great place for people to gather for a meal, and unlike nearby fast food restaurants, they aren't known for their takeout.

But to combat the virus, the State of Oregon has shut down sit-down restaurants and asked them to go to takeout only. Well, that is taking a toll on Bargaritas. When a couple came recently in the door and sat down for a meal, the restaurant staff had to explain that they could make their meal for them, but they would have to make it to go. The couple got up, and they didn't order to go. They walked out the door.

The owner of Bargaritas notes that they are just struggling to keep their restaurant open, that business is not coming in enough to pay the workers. So if things don't pick up quickly, he is going to have to close and ask his employees to file for unemployment.

Or how about the Paddington family of stores in Ashland, OR, in business since 1973? In recent years they have endured all kinds of challenges, including a couple of summers in which wildfire smoke created major challenges for the businesses in Ashland, OR. But things were looking pretty good this year. Business was going OK.

Now, however, the owner says they "felt [their] world crumble in March with the threat of the coronavirus changing our world." They have laid off eight staff members just this week. That is 30 percent of their staff. In a single day, their sales dropped 50 percent. As things are going now, they will need to lay off more staff within the next few weeks if the business climate does not change.

And the story is much the same for the retailers throughout the town of Ashland, OR.