

That is why I am so glad President Trump has today invoked the power of the Defense Production Act to respond to the coronavirus crisis. I am glad he is exercising it. I am glad that after my conversation yesterday with Vice President PENCE, they decided to put this on the agenda for our country.

We need to massively increase private production of the lifesaving personal protective equipment, medical supplies and devices, and diagnostic testing supplies we need to combat this viral enemy. We need to activate our capable and talented domestic industry and bring the full weight of the Federal Government behind this effort.

We are talking about gowns, gloves, face shields, surgical masks, N95 respirators, ventilators, disinfectant wipes, and hand sanitizers. We do not have nearly enough of this lifesaving equipment.

For instance, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services estimates that the United States could need up to 3.5 billion respirator masks. Let me say that again. Our own Department of Health and Human Services says that we could need upwards of 3.5 billion respirator masks. But our strategic national stockpile, the country's emergency medical supply bank, holds only a tiny fraction of that, just 12 million respirator masks—not 3.5 billion but 12 million.

The medical community calls this personal protective equipment "PPE," but "PPE" also stands for a "promise to protect everyone," and this is a promise we should make and keep for our hospital personnel, first responders, and patients. Invoking the powers of the Defense Production Act will help ensure that we can keep this promise to our American heroes who are on the frontlines of battling this epidemic.

I have been in regular contact with the Massachusetts Health and Hospital Association and the Massachusetts Nurses Association, and both have issued a terrible alarm: There are insufficient medical equipment and supplies to test and treat affected individuals and protect healthcare workers and first responders. For example, the Berkshire hospital told me that they required 3,500 respirator masks a day. That is 35,000 in just 10 days for the Berkshire hospital, which is in the least populated part of our State—for just that one smaller hospital. Yet the entire State of Massachusetts recently received only 70,000 of these respirator masks. That is not nearly enough. We do not want our nurses and our doctors reusing or rationing masks.

Additionally, hospitals and labs across the Nation are trying to ramp up testing capacity but face shortages in test kits and supplies. But we need to dramatically scale up testing and ensure our continued ability to test. Our Nation must be able to conduct tens or hundreds of thousands of tests daily, ultimately testing millions of people over the course of our response. That means producing swabs, which we

are now running short of, and other testing materials.

We have used the Defense Production Act before—during the Korean war—to mobilize defense infrastructure and during the Cold War. Make no mistake, we are facing an equally deadly enemy in this virus, and we need to bring all of our authority and resources to bear to defeat it.

All of us owe a debt of gratitude to our frontline health and medical care workforce. They don't have a roadmap for what is happening right now. It is unprecedented. They just have skills, a commitment, and the hearts of heroes. We owe them the resources they need to be protected in order to do their jobs.

Sadly, this pandemic is going to get worse before it gets better. I had been calling for the President to declare a national emergency, which he finally did last week. Now that he has done so, we need Massachusetts to get all of the funding that is due. I have been in regular contact with Governor Baker and Mayor Walsh, and I will support their requests for Federal resources.

As the Senate works on an economic relief package that matches the scale of this crisis, we need to ensure that we put people and family first—no half measures, no hidden bailouts and giveaways just to big corporations: paid sick time for all workers; unemployment insurance for all workers, including for tipped workers, gig workers, contractors, home workers; expansion of SNAP, WIC, and other food security programs; no evictions, no cutting off of utilities, no cutting off of Wi-Fi; halting all deportations and releasing of detained immigrants who pose no threat to public safety; provide free Wi-Fi to low-income households with students who cannot afford it but are going to be at home because of school closures so that we don't have a huge homework gap that now explodes in our country, as poorer children don't have access to the Wi-Fi technology at home, so they can learn at the same pace that kids who just happen to live in wealthier families will have. We cannot allow that to happen. These kids should be able to learn at home, regardless of their income. We need free Wi-Fi for those kids. We have to reimburse our States and cities and Tribes. They are bearing the brunt of this crisis, and they need resources immediately.

My commitment to protecting the health professionals, ensuring the consumers, workers, and families of Massachusetts get relief from the impacts of the coronavirus is my No. 1 priority. We have to protect the small businesses in our country. We have to make sure they receive the resources they need. Millions and millions of small businesses right now are feeling enormous stress. We have to make it possible for them to receive the relief they need, the help they need in order to survive, and we have to put upfront whatever the capacity is to make sure

they get the resources they need. If that system in our country, where 48 percent of all workers are employed—small businesses in our country—and they are living on the margin, then we are going to have an economic catastrophe by August or September where millions of these small businesses will just declare bankruptcy. That is the bottom-line economic fact of the matter. We have to give them help, and we have to make sure we have the resources inside the Federal Government—the personnel—that will ensure we can deliver that relief too.

To the people of Massachusetts, I want you to know I am here for you, and I will help any of you individually who need any assistance during this emergency. This current moment may call for distancing and isolation, but we cannot and should not sever our basic human connections to one another because we are all in this together.

I want to end with the most important remark. We must continue to listen to the guidance of scientists and medical professionals. This pandemic is unprecedented and will require an unprecedented mobilization and response at every level of society. We can get through this, but it will require a commitment from every single one of us. We are one big family in the United States. Many families are going to be suffering. It is going to be our job to make sure that we protect those families, and it is the job of this institution to do so. We are the legislative first responders. We are the ones who have to provide the resources that then allow the first responders, the families in every community across our country to have the resources to help everyone in our society. That is our goal.

A pandemic should know no partisanship. Let us come together and produce the big package our country right now so desperately needs.

With that, I yield back.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Kansas.

#### CORONAVIRUS

Mr. MORAN. Madam President, thank you very much. This has been a trying and difficult and challenging time in our country and in my home State of Kansas. There are lots of conversations, care, and compassion going on. We can't give anybody a hug these days. We can't extend a hand—at least literally—but we are extending a hand to all of our friends and our neighbors—those across our community, those across our State, and across the country.

I am troubled, of course, by what circumstances Americans find themselves in. There are those who are in a poor circumstance in which they can recover from the circumstances that we face. I want to make sure that Kansans know that we hear their cries, that we know of their problems, and that work is afoot to try to make a difference.

Just a couple of examples of things that perhaps, in the overall scale of where we are, don't seem significant enough but can make a difference in individual lives and families' well-being: We have been successful to this point in getting the school lunch program available for students whose schools are no longer in session, who don't go to the classroom, and therefore aren't in the school lunchroom. The USDA and the school food program are now available for those who are at home because their school classes have been canceled as a result of the virus.

We are paying a lot of attention, as I hope Kansans know and Americans know, to the veteran and the veteran community. We have had success in passing legislation on the Senate floor—waiting for House consideration—that will allow those veterans who are no longer in the classroom, in a university, or in a technical college and are now learning by distance education, by technology, to be able to continue to receive their G.I. educational benefits. That required a change in the law, and it is in the works so that those benefits continue, even though the student is not, as now required, in a classroom itself.

We are trying to make sure the Department of Veterans Affairs has the resources necessary to meet the needs of our veterans. It is a vulnerable population because of the age and existing condition of many of our veterans. We are in constant contact not only with the Department of Veterans Affairs but with veterans themselves and with our veteran hospitals and clinics and other healthcare providers in Kansas.

Today, we are dealing with economic relief for those who are losing their job, fearful of losing their job, or have already lost their job. Much of life's meaning comes from our employment, from what we do. A job is certainly something that helps put food on a family's table and provides some security for an individual, but it also provides meaning. No one can understand, unless they are without a job, how devastating that can be.

I am pleased by the number of business men and women who have called me to tell me the last thing they want to do is lay off anyone who works in their business. We have been through economic difficulties before. We have seen the cycle of the economy, the ups and downs, the normal flows, but this is something totally different from that.

Oil and gas—the price of oil is such that keeping our oil and gas producers in Kansas in business is a real challenge. Aviation manufacturing is an important component of the Kansas economy, and today Textron industries, which manufactures Cessna aircraft and Beechcraft, announced they are furloughing 7,000 of their 9,000 workers. That is on top of other challenges in the aviation industry in which Spirit AeroSystems, headquartered in Kansas, has already laid off 2,800 employees.

From the oil and gas industry of Western and South Central and Eastern Kansas to the manufacturing hub of Wichita and South Central Kansas, the consequences of the coronavirus are real and felt in the pocketbook, felt in the brain, and felt in the heart. Our restaurants, hotels, our car rental agencies, and those who serve others—I have been in circumstances this week in visiting with the people who work at a restaurant, the people who work at a cafe, the people who work here in Washington, DC, at the cafeteria where I had breakfast this morning. Those who have jobs wonder if they are going to have jobs tomorrow, and those who have already lost jobs wonder how they are going to pay the bills.

This morning I had a conversation with an optometrist telling me the circumstances of no longer being able to care for patients except in the emergency setting, which means that the business in the optometrist office—an important healthcare provider—and the business in the dental office has been curtailed, and the necessity of considering laying off the clinical workers there is front and center in that conversation.

It is a troublesome situation across Kansas. It does not matter what city or town you live in. If you are a farmer, the cattle prices today are significantly depressed, despite the fact that it is still pretty expensive at the grocery store.

I think about my hometown and the loss of a business. There aren't many businesses in many rural communities in Kansas, and many businesses don't really earn much of a living or a profit. It could be a family circumstance; it could be this is what they did; this is what their parents did; this could be a service to the community; and they live on a lot less because that business is important to a small community. But this kind of challenge is such that if that business closes, the chances are that it will not reopen. The financial circumstances of smalltown America are such that there is little likelihood of recovery and reopening.

The legislation we passed today is now on its way to the President. It included a few things that I was troubled by and think will create significant difficulties for some. We need to continue to work to change those provisions that are troublesome and cause problems. But it was important in my view to make certain the things that were wrong in that bill didn't prevent us from passing something to help those with the things that are right. None of our economic efforts that we have to make certain people feel more secure economically will work until they feel more secure in the health and well-being of themselves and their families.

Even though you may get some assistance—a person may get some assistance, a family may be relieved of some of the financial burdens they now face, a laid-off worker may get unemployment benefits—your mind is al-

ways going to be on the issue of your health and the well-being of your children and your parents and your grandparents, those we know in the nursing home and those we know in the nursery. And as long as we are troubled by what may happen to us and our health, no amount of economic stimulus can overcome the fear of one's well-being and particularly the well-being of their spouse, their children, and their parents.

So clearly economic relief in and of itself, in my view, is insufficient. We need to make certain that our healthcare providers have the necessary tools to meet the healthcare needs of American citizens. Front and center in that regard is testing, and we are woefully inadequate and undersupplied in what we need to test the necessary number of Kansans and Americans to know what they face and to know what their circumstances are and to respond in the medically required way.

We are working to make sure there are more tests across the country and working to make certain those tests are distributed in a way that Kansans and their healthcare providers can access them. Most recently, we were successful in getting CDC to undo a problem that kept tests from being transferred to the Kansas Department of Health and Environment in my home State. We are pleased to see that the FDA, for example, has modified the necessary steps it takes for a manufacturer of these test kits to be certified to be qualified to manufacture them. And the amount of test kits that are being produced, the amount of manufacturing has increased, and we are expecting significant improvements in the next couple of weeks. Yes, I wish they were here earlier, but can we fix the problem we face now and get them here soon, immediately?

I sit in the desk of Senator Bob Dole, a predecessor of mine in Kansas—his name is etched in this desk drawer—now known for his bipartisanship and held in great respect not only at home in Kansas but across the country. I stand at the desk that is here in the place of Senator John McCain. These are two people who demonstrated the desire to work together.

While I have outlined a few things that I think are important, and I wanted Kansans to know, the mission in my remarks today—maybe the most important—is to ask my Republican colleagues and my Democratic colleagues to set aside the usual bickering and political posturing that takes place in the U.S. Congress. No American can feel well, no American can feel that things are going to be OK if they don't see leadership and cooperation among us.

So while we today are preparing for the presentation of new legislation dealing with the challenges that businesses, employers, and employees face, trying to relieve the economic and financial burden that many Americans

are experiencing and more will experience in the future, could Americans please see that I and my colleagues are taking every step not to make this a political exercise but to demonstrate our care and concern for those we represent.

I mentioned a moment ago about veterans. This is the point in time in which, if you take a walk on the National Mall, as I have often done, to walk to the Lincoln Memorial, I will walk by now the World War II Memorial; I will walk by the Vietnam Wall; and on my return, I will walk by the Korean War Memorial. We should hold those veterans—those military men and women who are honored in those settings—as our role models. We should do that every day, but could we please do it over the next few weeks, the next few months, and into the next year as we try to address the challenges that America faces today. No person memorialized in those settings fought and sacrificed their life for a Republican or for a Democrat. They sacrificed because they believed they could make life better for the folks back home—their own family members, their neighbors, and people they didn't know. They sacrificed because they believed they could make the world a more safe and secure place. I pledge myself in every way possible to see that I do the things today, tomorrow, and into the future that mean that this Congress has come together on behalf of the American people, just like those who served our country did and now rest in peace.

To the Democratic colleagues here in the Senate, please consider me open to their suggestions. And to my Republican colleagues, please know that I am an ally in the things that we believe in. But we may all need to give a little so America can return, Americans can be safe, Americans can be secure, our health is protected, and our economy flourishing.

I would ask God in these circumstances to bless this country, to bring us together, hold us in his arms in a way that we can't do today, and to make certain that this Congress represents the will of the people, not the will of any political party.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Tennessee.

Mr. ALEXANDER. I ask unanimous consent to speak for as much time as I may require.

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

#### CORONAVIRUS

Mr. ALEXANDER. Madam President, I congratulate the Senator from Kansas on his eloquent remarks, expressing the feelings—certainly mine and those, I believe, of virtually every Member of this body—that we are here not as Democrats or Republicans but to work together to do whatever we can to address the concerns that are literally unprecedented.

This is an unprecedented time in our country. I cannot remember a time in my life or in our history when the government has literally closed down the country in order to contain a disease. That is literally what we are doing. Whether it is the Federal Government by its travel restrictions, or whether it is the State governments suggesting that schools be closed, or whether it is mayors saying that restaurants must be closed, we are closing down the country to contain a disease. Because the government is doing that on behalf of all the people, we are going to have to pay the costs of closing down the country to contain this disease.

Today, the news is that the auto industry across the country is closing down, at least temporarily. There are layoffs.

I have watched over the last 40 years as Tennessee has gone from almost no auto jobs to proudly calling itself, in many ways, the No. 1 auto State. One hundred forty thousand Tennesseans work in auto jobs in Tennessee; that is one-third of all of our manufacturing jobs. They are spread through 88 counties. And over these 40 years as textiles and other industries moved away from the United States and out of our State, the auto companies moved in—virtually into every county—and our family incomes went up. So if we are, in many ways, the No. 1 auto State, then we are the No. 1 State to be hurt when the auto plants begin to close.

We are also hurt, as are citizens in every State, when the restaurants shut down. Fifteen million Americans work in restaurants. It is one of our largest industries, if not our largest industry. Almost all of those workers are being laid off in Tennessee and in many other places in the country and even more will be.

Not all of those affected are working for big auto companies or medium-sized restaurants. I received an email yesterday from friends in Tennessee who run a kennel. Well, you may say that is not so important. Well, it is important to a lot of us. They say:

We are . . . suffering a massive drop off in our business as a result of the Coronavirus. I fear we may have to close our doors for a month or two (hopefully not that long), as our wonderful customers are forced to curtail travel. I am currently trying to secure around \$50,000 in loans to supplement our dwindling reserves to see us through until May [or] June. I am currently applying . . . for SBA disaster relief. This precipitous drop in business comes on the heels of major flood damages to our fencing [caused] by the [recent] floods . . . our flood insurance refuses to cover [that]. We are not seeking charity, just a business loan from \$30,000 [to] \$50,000 to secure our business until it passes. We always pay our way.

This couple has two young children and maybe a couple of employees in their kennel. They are awfully good people. They are salt-of-the-earth Tennesseans. They are like many Americans who are suddenly confronted with this disease that just came out of the blue and has caused our government to shut our country down.

Now, what shall we do about it?

Well, a couple of weeks ago, Congress and the President reacted with \$8.3 billion to help beef up our public health system. We have the best public health system in the world, and we wanted to help it get started.

Today, we passed a bill that some people have estimated at \$100 billion, which includes a whole variety of other steps from Democrats and Republicans that includes encouraging more testing, that creates a new system of paid leave for businesses of less than 500 employees, and family leave.

As Senator MCCONNELL said, we are going to stay here this week until we take step 3. And step 3, according to the President's proposal, would include direct financial payments to Americans; it would include support for essential businesses that need stabilization like the airlines; and it would include loans to small businesses so they can keep their employees working. Perhaps that proposal would be good for that small kennel I talked about.

That is said to cost perhaps another trillion dollars. A trillion dollars is a lot of money, even in the United States. Our gross domestic product is about \$22.3 trillion. We have 25 percent of all the money in the world in this country just for 5 percent of the people. But the idea that we would have to spend a trillion dollars or more to contain a disease would be unthinkable a few weeks ago, but what we have learned very quickly is we are going to have to pay the cost of containing the disease because the way we are containing it is that the government is shutting down major parts of our economy. I don't believe that what we do today or what we propose to do later in the week will be enough because, as I look at the number of people being laid off in this country, our State unemployment agencies are not going to be able to deal with that.

In Tennessee, for example, where unemployment has been very low and where people have found it easy to find a job, there were only 2,000 applications for unemployment insurance last week, but already this week by 2 p.m. on Wednesday, in the middle of the week, there were four times that many applications, 9,177. If you are successful in unemployment compensation in our State, you get \$257 per week for 26 weeks.

So we are going to have to do even more than the Congress has done, even more than the President has done, and I think we have to recognize that the President was wise on January 31, when we only had six cases of coronavirus detected in the United States, to impose the strictest travel bans on people coming into our country in 50 years. Dr. Fauci, whom all of us respect, said if he hadn't done that, we would have many more cases today.

Still, we have a disease that is causing the governments—this one, the State government, the local government—to shut major parts of our economy down. That is why I voted today