

our States that are high and dry because of the cost of dealing with this public health crisis and the additional claims on their unemployment benefits.

We need the National Guard and the Defense Department pushing assistance to every level of government during the pandemic. That means supplying masks and ventilators and beds to communities that need them.

I am also, with Senator DUCKWORTH—my colleague of Illinois—reaching out directly to the Department of Defense. I want to find out if we can start building field hospitals in the parking lots of major hospitals across our State. We have done it before when we had to—particularly when dealing with the Ebola crisis overseas—and we need to do that right here at home and take the expertise of the Army Corps of Engineers and other professionals at the Pentagon. They are ready to move at a moment's notice to build a field hospital, if needed, for our men and women in uniform. Let's take that same willingness and expertise and translate it into more bed capacity and room capacity at the hospitals most in need.

The protective equipment across this country still is not at the level it should be for the men and women in the military as well as those in civilian life.

The proposal before us ignores the desperation we are hearing from cities and town and States. Without tax revenues coming in, they are running out of cash to keep operating services and meeting payroll. We need a surge of Federal funding through current programs with flexibility for States and localities to allow them to keep paying their workers and ensuring things like transit, airports, schools, and housing.

The McConnell plan also does not provide much needed education assistance to deal with the increased expenses related to closing schools and moving to online learning. We have to make sure that this new technology keeps our kids learning, even though they may be home in the process. It provides nothing for these emergency needs. That bill, I hope, will be improved today as the Democrats get a chance to sit down with Republicans for the first time and talk about compromises.

The Republican majority leader himself said this is a public health crisis with an economic crisis strapped to its back. I couldn't agree more. Where are the test kits? Where is the protective equipment? Where is the assistance for working families? Let's get it done.

The Senator from Kentucky is giving us a deadline to do it by tomorrow. I think that is ambitious, but let's try to meet it and do it on a bipartisan basis.

I couldn't agree more that some affected industries—like the airlines and hospitality, along with small and mid-sized businesses—need to be assisted. We can also take care of American workers and families at the same time. I think it is incumbent on us to do both.

In short, the Senate needs to act now to fix the major flaws pointed out by both Republicans and Democrats in this third package. I stand ready to work on these fixes.

Just a few minutes ago, I left one of the working groups, and it was a very positive atmosphere and attitude in which the two sides were sitting down and trying to work out their differences.

For the dark time ahead, we need to continue reminding American people that we can rise to the challenge—both political parties—not to politically fight but to find political answers and compromises that solve these problems I have outlined here today.

The bottom line is, people are sitting at home. Some are even following C-SPAN in their absolute boredom, trying to figure out what to do with their lives, and they are listening to our speeches.

My report is this: We passed two major pieces of legislation involving billions of dollars. We have done it in record time. We have done it on a bipartisan basis. Both have been signed by the President. This third measure that may reach a trillion dollars in cost is a challenge, for sure, but one we can meet again on a bipartisan basis. We owe America, at this moment in our history, nothing less.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

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#### RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Democratic leader is recognized.

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#### CORONAVIRUS

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, the coronavirus continues to challenge our Nation in extraordinary ways that were unimaginable a few weeks ago. Our public health systems are coming under enormous strain. Our hospitals and other medical facilities lack the necessary supplies and resources. As measures to isolate the public broaden, workers are filing for unemployment at unprecedented rates. Small businesses are on the brink of collapse. American families are desperately in need of support until they can resume their normal lives.

I have heard from these people and the people who are isolated. I have heard from people who have sick loved ones in nursing homes and can't enter to see them. I have heard from small business people who struggled their

whole lives to build a small business, and it finally looks like it is beginning to succeed, and they may be wiped out.

The urgency of doing something now is so important. Both parties in Congress must work together as swiftly as possible to get something done that is as big and bold as possible. This is one of the worst crises America has faced. The American people need help fast.

Senator MCCONNELL has proposed what is now the third phase of legislation to confront the coronavirus. We are all eager to work in a bipartisan way to quickly get another bill to the President's desk. But at the moment, the McConnell bill is inadequate. Leader MCCONNELL's proposal does not do nearly enough to address the public health crisis in terms of hospitals, medical supplies, beds, doctors, nurses, and measures to ensure that Americans can access and afford coronavirus treatment.

The bottom line is very simple: If we don't deal with the health crisis, nothing we do will make the economy any better. So that is No. 1.

If we don't have help for our hospitals, many small ones are going to close. Rural ones will close. Big ones will have real trouble. We must do something. Yet there is nothing in Leader MCCONNELL's bill to help hospitals. Now we are told we may do it later in a supplemental. Later is no good. We need a Marshall Plan for hospitals right now.

Local governments that are also on the frontlines need to get dollars in their pockets. Many of them will go broke.

Leader MCCONNELL's proposal is also skewed in favor of corporations rather than the workers and families who urgently and much more acutely feel the pain of reduced hours and unemployment. Leader MCCONNELL's proposal includes a few ideas that shouldn't be included at all, such as tax cuts for multinational corporations and restrictions on paid sick leave that Congress just expanded.

This morning, Democratic ranking members of six committees met with the Republican chairs of corresponding committees to hear the rationale behind the McConnell bill and to begin a bipartisan dialogue. Democrats will soon respond with policies we believe must be included in the legislation and things that we don't think belong in this legislation.

Our goal is twofold: Address the public health crisis now, and put workers first as we do it.

Democrats want to do as much as possible to prepare our healthcare system for the growing storm it faces, and we want to help the working Americans who are most immediately affected by the economic slowdown and help them in real and significant ways. In that respect, Democrats have five important priorities that I will speak about now, among others. We have many other priorities as well. We are sending all of our priorities over to the Republicans soon enough.