

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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 President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, I come to the floor today to provide an update on the bold, bipartisan action Congress is taking to respond to the pandemic we have with the coronavirus.

First, we are all deeply saddened by the loss of life due to the outbreak in this country and globally. I know, Mr. President, it has affected your State in terms of disease as well as death; in my State, disease, not yet death, and we are hoping to prevent that. All of us remain very concerned about the great loss of life and the suffering that is happening as a result of this.

These are extraordinary times. We are fighting a world war to defeat a virus. We want to do it to save lives but also to keep people safe.

This war has two fronts. Mr. President, I know you discussed these on television the other evening. I listened carefully about the impact on your State. As you said, we are fighting on the front of public health as well as the health of our economy.

The coronavirus right now is controlling our economy. It has taken a dominant role. To stop this disease, the Nation has largely shut down.

These temporary restrictions on our daily activities are necessary in an effort to limit new cases and the spread of the disease. Yet the economic fallout is devastating millions of hard-working American families. Once we defeat the virus, we will rebuild. Our economy will bounce back. We are a strong and resilient Nation, and we always bounce back, and we will again.

First, we need to make it through this medical crisis. This is going to require big and bold and bipartisan action. The American people need help. I would reassure the American people that Congress is responding. This is a national rescue operation, as I see it, and help is on the way.

President Trump and Congress are coming together in a bipartisan way to ease the pain of the American people. It is going to take time. It is going to happen. We are sending immediate relief, and we have done that. We are sending financial support—plus medical support—to people all across America.

The bill being considered on the floor right now is called the CARES Act. It stands for Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act. It will bolster our economy, and it will help working families. This bill allows us to deliver direct cash payments to most Americans to see people through this economic downturn. People who work in small businesses and people who own small businesses will receive federally guaranteed loans to help them stay viable and keep their businesses viable

so that they can keep their employees on the payroll until we get to a point where they are—from a disease standpoint—able to reopen the businesses. We want them to be viable when the day comes that businesses can reopen all across America.

The CARES Act is major legislation that will stabilize our economy and protect American jobs. It also includes critical new support for our healthcare workers and for patients.

I have introduced bipartisan CARES Act language, along with Senator MICHAEL BENNET of Colorado, with regard to healthcare. The goal is to provide immediate relief for rural hospitals, for small community hospitals, and for small physician practices. During this crisis, rural hospitals and small healthcare providers are on the frontlines, providing urgent care. They continue to work around-the-clock, keeping communities in Wyoming and across the country safe.

These providers are stretched like never before. I have talked with several of them in Wyoming over the past 24 hours. I talked to one this morning whose coronavirus test has come back. It is negative, and he is back in the fight today in the hospital.

Our bill provides rural hospitals with aid in the form of Federal grants based on insurance payments. This will help make up for lost revenue due to the forced cancellation of elective surgeries. Of course, these are surgeries that have already been scheduled and planned for patients needing surgeries. Yet, in terms of providing and making sure we have the resources needed at those hospitals—the beds available and personal protective equipment—elective surgeries have been canceled. Small physician practices, hospitals, and rural communities aren't able to tolerate that sort of loss of flow, just as any business is not able to tolerate that sort of cashflow loss.

Small physician practices will receive low-interest loans based on the payroll of that practice in terms of what we are doing with this bill that MICHAEL BENNET and I—in a bipartisan way—have introduced. Rural healthcare workers need immediate, short-term financial relief to help them through this crisis time.

The CARES Act also includes a number of important public health provisions. Our bill eases the shortage of drugs and critical equipment, including ventilators and medical masks. It expands testing and ensures testing is free for patients, and it speeds the development of new coronavirus vaccines and treatments since none have existed before the disease was made known worldwide as a new virus, which it is.

The CARES Act that we are at looking today on the floor of the Senate also protects patients through the expanded use of health savings accounts for telehealth. It expands telehealth access for Medicare patients. It increases Medicare payments to hospitals treating coronavirus patients.

The CARES Act will help employers and workers weather the storm that we are facing because of coronavirus. Once the storm passes, you know, as do I, that the American economy will continue to recover.

The CARES Act is the third coronavirus emergency bill considered in the Senate. The first two have already been passed into law, signed by the President. Earlier this month, Congress passed two major relief packages: the first, an \$8 billion emergency funding bill for our healthcare system; the second, a \$100 billion bill to provide additional relief to affected families, to small businesses, and to workers.

These three relief measures are only the beginning. More legislation will be coming to address this unprecedented economic and public healthcare crisis. Once we defeat the virus, the economy will recover; America will be back. The American people are strong. We are resilient. We are determined to get through this, and we will. We are all Americans. We are all in it together.

Be assured that Congress will stop at nothing to ensure that America and Americans survive and revive and thrive. This storm will pass. The people of this great Nation will emerge stronger than ever. Americans will defeat the coronavirus together.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. TILLIS). Without objection, it is so ordered.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to executive session for the en bloc consideration of Executive Calendar Nos. 596 through 599; that the nominations be confirmed en bloc; that the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate; and that the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action, all en bloc.

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

The nominations considered and confirmed en bloc are as follows:

IN THE COAST GUARD

The following named officer for appointment in the United States Coast Guard Reserve to the grade indicated under title 10, U.S.C., section 12203(a):

To be rear admiral (lower half)

Capt. Miriam L. Lafferty

The following named officer for appointment in the United States Coast Guard Reserve to the grade indicated under title 10, U.S.C., section 12203(a):

To be rear admiral

James M. Kelly

The following named officer for appointment to a position of importance and responsibility in the United States Coast Guard, and to the grade indicated under title 14, U.S.C., section 305:

To be vice admiral

Vice Adm. Scott A. Buschman

The following named officer for appointment to a position of importance and responsibility in the United States Coast Guard, and to the grade indicated under title 14, U.S.C., section 305:

To be vice admiral

Rear Adm. Steven D. Poulin

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of the following nomination: Executive Calendar No. 595.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The legislative clerk read the nomination of Sarah C. Arbes, of Virginia, to be an Assistant Secretary of Health and Human Services.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the nomination.

Mr. McCONNELL. I ask unanimous consent that the Senate vote on the nomination with no intervening action or debate; that if confirmed, the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table and the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

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

The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Arbes nomination?

The nomination was confirmed.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to legislative session for a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

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

EXECUTIVE AND OTHER COMMUNICATIONS

The following communications were laid before the Senate, together with accompanying papers, reports, and documents, and were referred as indicated:

EC-4347. A communication from the Secretary of the Commodity Futures Trading Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Foreign Futures Options Transactions" (RIN3038-AE86) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on March 18, 2020; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC-4348. A communication from the Director, Office of Government Ethics, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule en-

titled "Supplemental Standards of Ethical Conduct for Employees of the Department of Agriculture" (RIN3209-AA48) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on March 18, 2020; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC-4349. A communication from the Alternate Federal Register Liaison Officer, Office of the Secretary, Department of Defense, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "National Guard Bureau Privacy Program" (RIN0790-AK73) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on March 18, 2020; to the Committee on Armed Services.

EC-4350. A communication from the Assistant General Counsel for Legislation, Office of Electricity, Department of Energy, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Critical Electric Infrastructure Information; New Administrative Procedures" ((RIN1901-AB4) (10 CFR Part 1004)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on March 19, 2020; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

EC-4351. A communication from the Director of Congressional Affairs, Office of Nuclear Material Safety and Safeguards, Nuclear Regulatory Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Final Rule: Approval of American Society of Mechanical Engineers' Code Cases" (RIN3150-AJ93) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on March 20, 2020; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-4352. A communication from the Chairman, Medicare Payment Advisory Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report entitled "March 2020 Report to the Congress: Medicare Payment Policy"; to the Committee on Finance.

EC-4353. A communication from the Administrator, Federal Emergency Management Agency, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to the cost of response and recovery efforts for FEMA-3392-EM in the State of Louisiana having exceeded the \$5,000,000 limit for a single emergency declaration; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-4354. A communication from the Deputy Assistant Administrator, National Marine Fisheries Service, Department of Commerce, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "New England Industry-Funded Monitoring Omnibus Amendment" (RIN0648-BG91) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on March 18, 2020; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-4355. A communication from the Deputy Assistant Administrator, National Marine Fisheries Service, Department of Commerce, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Pacific Island Fisheries; 2017 Hawaii Kona Crab Annual Catch Limit and Accountability Measure" (RIN0648-XF706) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on March 18, 2020; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-4356. A communication from the Assistant Administrator, National Marine Fisheries Service, Department of Commerce, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Interim Final Rule to Reduce the 2018 Sub-Annual Catch Limit for the Atlantic Herring Management Areas" (RIN0648-XG340) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on March 18, 2020; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-4357. A communication from the Acting Deputy Assistant Administrator, National Marine Fisheries Service, Department of Commerce, transmitting, pursuant to law,

the report of a rule entitled "Interim Final Rule Extension to Address Overfishing of Atlantic Shortfin Mako Shark" (RIN0648-BH49) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on March 18, 2020; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-4358. A communication from the Acting Deputy Assistant Administrator, National Marine Fisheries Service, Department of Commerce, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Final Rule to Revise Atlantic Highly Migratory Species Shark Fishery Closure Regulations" (RIN0648-BG97) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on March 18, 2020; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-4359. A communication from the Deputy Assistant Administrator, National Marine Fisheries Service, Department of Commerce, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Final Rule for Amendment 43 to the Fishery Management Plan for the Snapper-Grouper Fishery of the South Atlantic Region" (RIN0648-BH39) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on March 18, 2020; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-4360. A communication from the Deputy Assistant Administrator, National Marine Fisheries Service, Department of Commerce, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Atlantic Highly Migratory Species; 2018 Atlantic Shark Commercial Fishing Season" (RIN0648-XF486) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on March 18, 2020; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

The following bills and joint resolutions were introduced, read the first and second times by unanimous consent, and referred as indicated:

By Mr. PAUL:

S. 3557. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to terminate required minimum distributions under tax-favored retirement plans; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. PAUL:

S. 3558. A bill to require the Securities and Exchange Commission to prevent the Financial Industry Regulatory Authority from enforcing a certain rule of that Authority; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

By Mr. BENNET (for himself, Mr. BARASSO, Ms. SMITH, Mr. GARDNER, Mr. JONES, and Mrs. HYDE-SMITH):

S. 3559. A bill to provide emergency financial assistance to rural health care facilities and providers impacted by the COVID-19 emergency; to the Committee on Finance.

ADDITIONAL COSPONSORS

S. 3535

At the request of Mr. THUNE, the names of the Senator from Oklahoma (Mr. INHOFE), the Senator from Oklahoma (Mr. LANKFORD), the Senator from Rhode Island (Mr. REED), and the Senator from Tennessee (Mrs. BLACKBURN) were added as cosponsors of S. 3535, a bill to extend the due date for the return and payment of Federal income taxes to July 15, 2020, for taxable year 2019.

AMENDMENTS SUBMITTED AND PROPOSED

SA 1562. Mr. HAWLEY submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him