

The risks to our country grow every single day that we do not act. The needs of hospitals and healthcare providers grow every day that we do not act.

That is why we have worked around the clock to craft a major bipartisan relief package. That is why we are going to hold our first procedural vote in just a few minutes. It is so that we can keep moving forward, because this virus is not going to wait for politics as usual.

These past few days have brought unity and bipartisan energy here to the Senate. I think Members on both sides agree that it has been very encouraging.

Since Senate Republicans released our initial framework to give some structure to these discussions, both sides have worked hard to create something that can pass the Senate, pass the House, and be signed into law by the President.

The bipartisan product delivers strongly on each of the core priorities we identified at the outset. It puts urgently needed cash in the hands of American workers and families. It delivers historic and rapid relief to small businesses so they can make payroll and keep people employed. It helps stabilize key industries to avoid layoffs wherever possible and preserve the greatest economy in the world for when we come out on the other side of this. And, of course, it sends a massive—massive—new infusion of resources to the frontlines of the medical response.

That is what we have to do: inject a significant amount of money as quickly as possible into households, small businesses, key sectors, and our Nation's hospitals and health centers.

This bill would do that, and it would do it fast. The comprise product also contains many ideas that our Democratic colleagues brought to the table. It balances the administration's focus on sending direct cash to Americans as quickly as possible with our Democratic colleagues' focus on bolstering State unemployment insurance programs. It places conditions which our Democratic colleagues have sought on the loans that would flow to major businesses, conditions which the President has also endorsed. And both parties have made sure to keep strengthening the resources that will be pushed out to the frontlines.

The bill includes \$75 billion in a new fund for hospitals and health providers, and more than three-quarters of the funds in the appropriations section—nearly \$200 billion—will not stay in Washington but will go straight to State and local priorities.

So what we have is a comprise product which contains ideas, contributions, and priorities from both sides and which can become law as soon as tomorrow—as soon as tomorrow. In other words, it is just about time to take yes for an answer.

We are now at a point which every American who has ever negotiated any-

thing would recognize, whether they have purchased a home, bought a car, or negotiated for their small business. We are at the point where both sides have come a long way toward each other, and each side has to decide whether to continue elbowing and arguing over the last several inches and risk the whole thing or whether to shake hands and get it done.

Thus far, throughout this crisis, the Senate has risen to the occasion. It was just a few days ago when the Senate Republican majority moved expeditiously to pass the House Democrats' phase 2 legislation, even though many of my colleagues on this side of the aisle and I had serious reservations and would have written it very differently. We passed it anyway. It was basically written on the House side. Nevertheless, as I just said, I pushed the Speaker's legislation through the Senate because urgency and results matter during a national crisis; because, imperfections notwithstanding, it was the right thing to do for our country.

So, look—look—I hope and anticipate that a similar degree of bipartisanship and urgency will be reciprocated now. I understand the Speaker said following our meeting this morning that she may simply give up on these bipartisan talks and begin writing her own separate bill. Perhaps that is related to the remarks of one of her senior House Democratic leaders who reportedly told colleagues a few days ago: "This is a tremendous opportunity to restructure things to fit our vision."

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Well, I sincerely hope that nobody actually views this crisis in such a cynical manner. This is not a political opportunity. It is a national emergency. That is why we have engaged in days of bipartisan talks to get to this point. It is why it is time to move forward.

Americans don't need to see us haggling endlessly. They don't need us to jeopardize all the progress we have made over the past several days for the sake of some eleventh-hour brinkmanship. The American people need an outcome, and they need it tomorrow. They need us to vote to advance this legislation today and pass it tomorrow.

As I said yesterday, Congress should take inspiration from our own constituents. We should be inspired by our own constituents. Look at what they are doing. Even during this pandemic, the American people are showing the world the soul of our country.

In my home State of Kentucky, the official motto is "United we stand, divided we fall." And every day I hear about new ways Kentuckians are standing united, even if they have to stand 6 feet apart.

I recently heard about a resident of Campbell County in Northern Kentucky named Debbie Buckley. In her day job, Debbie works for the local government, but recently she heard about some students at a nearby university who were still living in the dorms even

though in-person classes have been canceled. Some had to remain in the area for work. Others were international students who couldn't get home. Their situations were completely uncertain.

The local shelves were not fully stocked, so Debbie decided to do something. She put out a call for help, and Kentuckians answered the call. Churches, restaurants, and neighbors all pitched in with food and supplies. Debbie drove all over Northern Kentucky collecting those donations and then delivering them to these young people.

She has found everything a college student could need: canned goods, microwaveable meals, and even Airheads candy, which I am proud to say are made right there in Kentucky.

There are so many stories like this pouring in from all over our country. Americans are stepping up to the plate. Americans realize this is no time for selfishness and no time for division but a time for solidarity, generosity, and, yes, courage.

Americans are rising to the occasion. The Senate must do the same. Let's move this legislation forward this afternoon, as the last few discussions begin to wind down, and then let's get this done tomorrow.

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

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

CORONAVIRUS

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, before I begin, we just learned that our colleague Senator RAND PAUL has tested positive for the coronavirus. Our thoughts and prayers are with him for a speedy recovery. We will consult with the attending physician at the Capitol about appropriate measures for those of us who have been in contact with the Senator.

This is the kind of situation that Americans across the country are dealing with right now, and it underscores the importance of acting immediately to deliver more relief for the American people.

The Senate has been working around the clock over the past few days to put together a third round of coronavirus legislation. We are very close to moving forward with a major bill that will deliver much needed relief to American families, workers, and businesses and put more resources into the hands of medical professionals.

This is a big bill, but this situation requires a big and bold response. Across our country, American workers and American businesses are struggling. Families are scared. Businesses have been forced to drastically curtail

or close their operations, and social distancing has become a public health priority.

Workers are wondering how long they will be getting a paycheck. Small businesses are worrying about whether they will be able to reopen their doors when all of this is over. Key industries have taken a massive economic hit. A major response is required.

The package we put together addresses a number of priorities: putting emergency cash into the hands of American families and American workers quickly, in a way that ensures those most in need get the maximum level of support; delivering relief to small businesses to help them keep their workers employed; injecting stability into the economy to help bridge this crisis and to limit layoffs; providing new resources for State unemployment programs to help workers displaced by this emergency; and most importantly—most importantly—continuing to deliver resources to the healthcare workers fighting to stop this pandemic.

This package is the product of bipartisan input, and I hope it will receive overwhelming bipartisan support in the Senate. Republicans and Democrats have already come together to deliver two coronavirus relief bills. It is time for us to come together again to deliver this legislation.

As the leader said yesterday, the American people need help, and they need it now. This bill will provide them with relief.

These are challenging times. There is a lot of stress and uncertainty, and Americans are understandably worried. We are going to get through this. There may be difficult days ahead, but we are going to come out the other side.

All around this country, Americans are standing up to meet this challenge. We have our heroic healthcare workers who are putting their lives on the line to care for the seriously ill, our first responders who got their name because they are always the first on the scene in any crisis, and new heroes: grocery store employees, truck drivers, delivery people, pharmacy employees—people we may have taken for granted before but won't again.

Everywhere I look in my State, I see South Dakotans helping other South Dakotans. It is the same all across this country: people looking out for their neighbors, providing meals for those in need, offering childcare help to those who can't telework, running errands for elderly, or those with compromised immune systems who can't leave their house.

I was touched to read a story from the Rapid City Journal yesterday about a group of young people from Eagle Butte, SD, who showed up outside the Medicine Wheel Village Nursing Home to hold up signs to encourage the residents who can't receive visitors right now because of the risk of virus transmission.

We are going to get through this together. My colleagues and I in the Sen-

ate are going to keep working to deliver the resources that Americans need to confront and defeat this disease.

I yield the floor.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

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

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is closed.

MIDDLE CLASS HEALTH BENEFITS TAX REPEAL ACT OF 2019—Motion to Proceed—Resumed

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of the motion to proceed to H.R. 748, which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the following:

A bill (H.R. 748) to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to repeal the excise tax on high cost employer-sponsored health coverage.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Tennessee.

CORONAVIRUS

Mr. ALEXANDER. Mr. President, in a few minutes, the majority leader will begin a process that will permit the Senate to act for the third time to deal with this unprecedented healthcare crisis that we are facing. Our message to the American people is this: This is about your paycheck. This is a collection of the best ideas that Democratic Senators and Republican Senators have that we believe will generate trillions in economic support that will, No. 1, keep payroll checks coming; No. 2, relieve the financial burdens on Americans; and No. 3, begin to contain this COVID-19 virus.

The legislation we will be voting on will contain about \$1.7 trillion in Federal spending, and it will authorize the Federal Reserve Board and the Treasury Department to generate trillions more in liquidity and credit support for companies of all kinds to try to keep payrolls checks coming to workers.

In the end, the only way to end this crisis—and the only way to get the American economy moving again—is to contain the disease. This will require, as soon as possible, adopting a new goal. That goal should be to test every American who needs it for COVID-19 as soon as possible, and then isolate and care for the few who are sick and fast-track treatments and vaccines so that Americans can go back to work and go out to eat and resume a normal life again. This legislation will make all COVID-19 tests free.

The government has shut down the economy to fight this disease, and the government has to help pay the cost of

the suffering that this disease has caused, but the sooner we make more tests available and stop telling Americans not to get a test, the better.

Just yesterday, a California company announced a 45-minute test that could be taken in a doctor's office while also getting a flu test. Expanding tests like this will do more to get the economy moving again than spending trillions stabilizing businesses and supporting employees.

Yesterday, I spoke with the chief executive officer of the company that makes that test. This is a well-established company that makes millions of flu tests. He said they could make 45,000 tests available by the end of the month and 2 million tests by the end of June. More instances of expansion of tests that you can get at the same time you visit a doctor's office is what we need.

The legislation the Senate will be considering has three goals: one, keep the payroll checks coming as much as possible; two, relieve financial burdens on Americans; and, three, contain the disease.

Keeping the payroll checks coming means \$300 billion for loans to small businesses. If they use the loans to pay the wages, the loans will be forgiven.

It authorizes the Federal Reserve Board and the Treasury Department to create trillions more in financial credit support for States, cities, and large businesses so they will be able to stay in business and pay their employees.

It expands the emergency paid sick and family leave passed by the House and then the Senate last week—to workers who were laid off and later rehired by their employers.

The second goal is to relieve the financial burden on Americans. That section of the bill includes checks to individuals and families: \$1,200 for individuals, \$2,400 for a couple, and \$500 for each eligible child.

Federal income taxes don't have to be filed until July 15. Estimated taxes can be delayed until October 15. It will make it easier to use retirement savings without penalty.

All student loan payments will be deferred for 6 months. There are 43 million Americans with student loans. There is priority on both sides of the aisle for more Federal funding for State unemployment insurance programs, so States can increase benefits, waive the waiting week, and expand eligibility to self-employed and independent contractors.

There is money for block grants for States for K-12 education, for higher education, and for children and families, including the child care and development block grants, which will provide immediate assistance to childcare centers.

Finally, containing the disease is the third goal. It makes all COVID-19 tests free. There is nearly \$100 billion for the public health and social services emergency fund. That is at least \$75 billion for hospitals and \$10.5 billion for accelerating diagnostics, treatments, and vaccines.