

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.