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Senate

The Senate met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the President pro tempore (Mr. GRASSLEY).

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

Almighty and everlasting God, mercifully look upon our infirmities and, in all our dangers, defend us.

Lord, sometimes You seem so far away. We cry out to You and seem to only hear the echoes of our laments. As our lawmakers reach out to You night and day, enable them to connect to Your matchless power. May they find in You a sure refuge, a shelter from the storms.

Lord, strengthen the weakness of our faith, and give us trust for our trembling and hope for our fears. Give us patience, cheerful endurance, and serenity of mind.

Lord, place your healing hands upon John Bessler, Senator RAND PAUL, and others who need to feel Your touch.

We pray in Your great Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The President pro tempore led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. HYDE-SMITH). The Senator from Iowa.

Mr. GRASSLEY. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent to speak in morning business for 1 minute.

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

NATIONAL AG DAY

Mr. GRASSLEY. Madam President, every American is facing a very uncertain future that the new virus has brought to our country and to the

world. Our daily lives have become transformed for right now and maybe, to some extent, for a longer period of time.

Grocery stores have been open—in fact, one of the few businesses that need to stay open. While it may shock some living in large cities, food does not come from grocery stores; food comes from farms.

Today, we celebrate National Ag Day. Let me assure you, American farmers and ranchers are up to the challenge of producing food to fill the shelves of every grocery store and the fridges and cupboards of our households. Farmers are only 2 percent of the population, but they will provide for the other 98 percent. When you eat today, thank a farmer, as I will thank the 88,000 family farmers in Iowa.

I yield the floor.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader is recognized.

CORONAVIRUS

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, for weeks now, the American people have been contending with the coronavirus pandemic that is spreading across our country and the massive, massive disruptions to daily life it is creating for all of us. They are grappling with small business closures, mass layoffs, and uncertainty for their families. But that isn't all. For the last several days now, in the midst of all that—in the midst of all that—they have also had to watch the Senate spin its wheels.

As we convene this morning, roughly 40 percent of our population is under stay-at-home orders from State leaders. Employers across America are wondering how they will keep the lights on. Doctors, nurses, and healthcare professionals are literally

crying out for support. We literally have Army field hospitals on the way to being set up in our major American cities.

In the space of just a few weeks, this has become, unfortunately, our new normal. This is a national crisis. It is the most serious threat to Americans' health in over a century and quite likely the greatest risk to Americans' jobs and prosperity that we have seen since the Great Depression.

Hundreds of thousands of Americans have already lost their jobs because so much of our commerce has been put on pause. Families are wondering how they are going to pay their rent or mortgage in 8 days. Rent is due on April 1. People don't know how they are going to pay bills or make their car payment.

Many other hard-working Americans are still employed for now but fall asleep every night wondering if it will be there when they wake up to that email or phone call tomorrow.

American seniors have seen decades of savings cut down in the space of days as the markets literally tumble.

Our national life has literally been transformed in less than a month. The urgency and the gravity of this moment cannot be lost on anyone. Every day, every hour the Congress delays in passing a significant relief package, we risk more American livelihoods and the safety of more healthcare professionals. That is why, right after I fast-tracked the Democratic House relief bill through the Senate, I immediately turned the Senate toward developing an even bigger and bolder relief package for the American people.

Nine days ago, I laid out the key objectives of our work. We had to send direct financial assistance to Americans—direct assistance to Americans. We had to help Main Street small businesses. We had to act to stabilize the foundations of our economy for workers. And, of course, we had to send more resources to medical professionals and our healthcare system.

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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