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 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 greatest risk 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.
Five days ago, Senate Republicans released our initial framework for the CARES Act. We put forward bold policies like sending cash directly to Americans, pouring money into small businesses, lending to national industries to prevent mass layoffs, and surge resources for our health care system. We knew we needed a proposal to address our Nation’s pain at literally every level.

Now, in the past few days, some voices to pit some Americans against other Americans and argue that directly helping workers and strengthening businesses are somehow conflicting priorities. That is utter nonsense. American workers need paychecks. They need jobs. The working men and women of this country do need direct relief from government in this crisis, but for goodness’ sake, they also need their paychecks. They need to be able to resume their lives and their jobs once this is over. The two things can’t be separated. There is a term for when you separate employees from employers. There is a term for that. It is called unemployment. Let me say that again. There is a term for when you separate employees from employers. It is called unemployment. That is what we are trying to avoid.

This is no time to point fingers or stoke these culture wars. This is the time to unify. Perhaps now more than at any other time in the history of our country, we Americans are in this together. This pandemic is not the fault of the American workers who make this country run. It is not the fault of small business owners. It is not the fault of major national employers. Everyone needs help. We are all in this together. We need an “all of the above” approach, and that is what our framework put forward: help for workers and families and employers and healthcare providers.

As soon as Republicans put out a draft proposal to treat every aspect of this crisis, I immediately called for bipartisan talks. That is not something you see often in Washington. As soon as I released our first draft, I immediately invited the other side, these folks over here, to make their suggestions. That is what you call urgency.

We set up bipartisan working groups. I asked negotiators to work together to turn our rough draft into something that could pass the Senate with overwhelming bipartisan support. Republicans and Democrats traded ideas. Democrats asked for many changes to the initial draft and received many. The updated text, released a few days ago, included proposals from the other side. And, of course, as our colleagues have dragged out the last several days, even further changes have been made at their request.

The media has gone out of its way to make this process as bipartisan and as open as possible. The administration has bent over backward to work with Democrats and address their concerns. Now, at last, I believe we are on the 5-yard line. It has taken a lot of noise and a lot of rhetoric to get us here. That, of course, sometimes happens in this town.

At different times, we received Democratic counteroffers that demanded maintaining emission standards or tax credits for solar panels. We saw the Speaker of the House release an encyclopedia of unrelated demands as though it were a coronavirus proposal somehow. In spite of all that, we are very close to a bill that takes our bold Republican framework, integrates further ideas from both parties, and delivers huge progress on each of the four core priorities I laid out a week ago.

Today the Senate has a chance to get back on track. Today we can make all of the Washington drama fade away. If we act today, what Americans will remember and what history will record is that the Senate did the right thing, that we came together, that we took a lesson from the way Americans are uniting across the country and working together, that we combined ideas from both sides and took a bold step to protect Americans and help our Nation through this crisis.

I am not sure how many ways to say it, but the clock has run out. The buzz is sounding. The hour for bargaining as though this were business as usual has expired.

The American people need our Democratic friends to take yes for an answer. I hope that will happen today. Doctors and nurses need masks. Families need help. Small businesses need cash. Hospitals need funding. Their Senate majority is ready to deliver those things. We have been ready to deliver those things for a while. I hope today is the day this body will get it done.

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.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

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 read.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

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 majority whip.

CORONAVIRUS

Mr. THUNE. Madam President, at this very minute, across the country, families are making agonizing decisions about whether they will have to lay off employees or close their businesses altogether.

And Democrats? Well, Democrats have been focused on fuel emissions standards and early voting. That is right. In the midst of an unprecedented health and financial crisis, Democrats have been delaying a major relief bill in hopes that they can include a laundry list of their pet projects—projects that I really, sincerely had hoped to do with providing financial relief to Americans or ensuring the medical professionals have the resources they need to fight this virus.

Republicans developed this legislation in conjunction with Democrats. It was teed up, being written up Saturday, Saturday evening, ready to vote Sunday morning, when Democrats voted to block even getting on the bill—even getting on the bill. They said: Well, we need to block it now because we may not be able to block it later—not, of course, acknowledging that there is yet another 60-vote hurdle that we would have to get over before we get to final consideration of the bill. But it has been teed up and ready to go now since Saturday night. We made a lot of changes since then to the legislation to address the Democrats’ priorities.

I thought we were very close to agreement on a final bill. Of course, then the Democratic leadership of the House and Senate stepped in. They apparently decided this was a perfect opportunity to implement a bunch of Democratic pet projects that have nothing to do—nothing to do with fighting the coronavirus or helping the American families who are suffering financially at this very minute.

I know my Democrat colleagues have come to regard “bipartisanship” as a bad word in the past 3 years, but I had hoped—I really, sincerely had hoped—that in this hour of serious need, the Democrats would be able to put aside their prejudices and work with Republicans to pass this critical legislation. Apparently, that was too much to hope for from the Democrat leadership.

Neither my colleagues nor I have given up on reaching an agreement. We are still working, and I am still hoping we will arrive at a final bill sometime later today.

We should already have passed this legislation 3 days ago. The blame for not passing it lies squarely on the Democrats’ shoulders. I really hope...
they will rethink their decision to hijack this relief bill for their political purposes, because the American people deserve better.

The bill before us is filled with resources to help struggling families, provide workers, and get businesses to retain their employees during this crisis. Americans need this bill today, not tomorrow, not next week, not when Democrats are finally satisfied that they have scored enough political points—today.

I hope my Democrat colleagues will urge their leadership to come to the table and pass this legislation. American workers and families need relief, and they need it now. We can’t afford to let them down. All we need is a few Democrat Members who are willing to go against their leadership and vote with us to pass legislation that addresses all the fundamental issues that I just, hopefully, will be very familiar to displaced, people who need cash, people who need to pay bills; assistance to those who are unemployed in the form of unemployment insurance, increasing the States’ unemployment insurance that can be paid out by the federal government by $600 per person per week for 3 months; checks of $2,400 for married couples and $500 per child on top of that, to go out immediately upon passage of this bill. For small businesses, there is $350 billion set aside with their payroll to keep employees working, hopefully, to keep those jobs there so that they don’t go away, and, when this thing is over, to ensure that those jobs are still there for people.

Those are all provisions in this bill that are designed to help working Americans, families, and employees to keep their jobs and keep their livelihood until we get to a better place, which, hopefully, will be very familiar to all of us.

In the meantime, we need to deal with the healthcare crisis, which this also addresses.

Look at this. There is over $240 billion in relief in this bill dealing principally with the challenges that our healthcare community has: $75 billion directly for hospitals and another $25 billion would come in reimbursements under Medicare to hospitals, so $100 billion for hospitals; $20 billion for veterans’ healthcare; $11 billion for vaccines, therapeutics, diagnostics, and other preparedness needs; $4.5 billion for the Centers for Disease Control; $1.7 billion for the Strategic National Stockpile; $12 billion for America’s military, need in now what’s an important component in this fight; $10 billion for block grants to States; $12 billion for K–12 education; $6 billion for higher education; $5 billion for FEMA disaster relief; $10 billion for airports; and $20 billion for public transportation emergency relief.

In all, just in this particular provision of the bill, there is $242 billion in assistance—$186 billion, I might add, which would run through and be administered by the States.

All told, between the amount that is going to families, workers, employees, and small businesses, there is about $1.1 to $1.2 trillion that could be on the street today helping address the healthcare and economic crisis that is being felt and experienced by the American people. But no, we are still here debating ancillary, unrelated issues. I hope and pray for the Democrats to conclude, at some point, we hope, all these political games that they are playing.

It does seem like a big transaction for this political and technical losers. The only loser we know is the American people in all of this because the longer this goes on, the harder it becomes for them to get back to where they were, and the harder it becomes for that small business to stay open or keep those employees employed. Every single day is costing the American economy and American workers, jobs, resources, and wages they could be putting forward to take care of them and their families.

The Democrats have said they want more money for hospitals. That is negotiable. They want more conditions on the loan fund that larger businesses would be able to access in order to keep the businesses afloat. That is a negotiable thing. There are many of our Members here who support those very things. They say they want more money for State and local governments, which is probably something that could be negotiated.

I keep having rank-and-file Democrat Members come up to me and say: This is the list of things we want to negotiate on and get in this bill.

Those are provisions that are willing to negotiate on and, frankly, many of our Members would support some of the things some Democrats want to do there, too.

What is the holdup? I don’t think rank-and-file Democrats even realize what their leadership is demanding just past those doors and trying to get done in this bill: getting the Green New Deal into effect; requiring, basically, federalization, nationalization of our election items in this country; and all kinds of new requirements that benefit their special interest groups. That is what this is about. This is the hijacking of a crisis to try and get permanent changes on a political agenda they haven’t been able to get and normally wouldn’t be able to get under those circumstances.

We are happy to debate all of those issues. We are happy to have the debate about all the other things they want to talk about. That is what we do here. That is what we do in the Senate. If you have a good idea and you think something needs to be changed in this country, let’s come here and let’s debate it. That is a piece of legislation to talk about and see if we can come up with a solution.

Right now is not the time to be debating ancillary, unrelated issues. Now is the time to put out the fire, and there are fires burning in this country right now. It is affecting every American. Every single American is being affected.

Today is the day. I hope and pray that when the Democrat leadership comes out here on the floor, they will announce that today is the day they are going to work with us on a bill which they had input in.

Two of the great fallacies about this legislation is, one, that this is a partisan bill. They know that isn’t true. Their rank-and-file Members who have participated in the working groups all know that isn’t true. Yet their leadership keeps coming out here announcing this is a partisan bill.

This is not a partisan bill. This was constructed in a way that gave both sides input, which includes many of the priorities both sides brought to the table. That is what this bill represents. It represents the very things they said they want: an emphasis on workers, an emphasis on unemployed people, and an emphasis on businesses.

And the other great fallacy that they raised is somehow that this is a bailout for big businesses—that big businesses that have been forced to shut down. Look at the airlines. They have 10 percent to 20 percent capacity. Why do you think that is? That is not their fault. That is not their choosing. They have been forced to shut down.

There are industries in industry sectors all across this country that are being affected in the same way. All this bill includes is a provision that allows them to access credit so that they can keep their operations going, so that they can continue to pay the millions of employees who are employed by big businesses across this country. The Democrats continually come to the floor and say: This is a bailout for big corporations; we need more emphasis on workers.

Who do you think employs the workers?

As I mentioned, all the provisions in this bill—this is a pro-worker bill. This is about getting paychecks in the hands of American workers. That is what this bill does. That is what this bill represents. It is a sad and regrettable chapter in this time of enormous crisis—something we haven’t seen, certainly, in my lifetime. You have to look back in the annals of history a really long time to find a time where we are facing the kind of circumstances, the kind of crises, and the kind of hardships we see, both in terms of people’s health and livelihood, as well as their economic livelihood in our history.

Today is the day to get this done. We can’t wait any longer. The time for political games is over. It is time to act. I hope and pray that, by the end of the day, we will see the kind of cooperation, the kind of bipartisanship that will let us address the needs of hardworking Americans who are fearful for themselves and their families.

I yield the floor.

Mr. BARRASSO. Madam President, I would like to associate myself with the
She talked about calling the House back in session as one of her options and then having a House-passed bill and then going to a conference. We need action in this body today, and we need this bill on the President’s desk tonight.

Today, in this country, we have over 46,000 people who have had the test for coronavirus and have tested positive. There is a lack of testing. So even though 46,000 people tested positive, the total numbers may be beyond that. We have nearly 1,000 deaths in the United States from this virus that is raging around the world.

In New York, where the minority leader is from, they are turning the Javits Center into a field hospital. Men and women in the military know what a field hospital is all about. Physicians, who have gone through medical school, understand the history of field hospitals. According to some estimates, the New York healthcare system could be overrun in a week.

This bill needs to pass today. When you will look back on this in a day, in a week, a month, you will just ask: How many deaths could have been prevented if this bill had been passed yesterday? If one thinks that delaying this even beyond today is an option, it is not. The bipartisan bill that the Senators have worked on needs to pass today, be accepted, and moved from the House to the White House.

It is hard to defend the indefensible, but that is where we find ourselves with so many Democrats coming to vote against even the motion to proceed to debate on the bill—an unnecessary delay that blocks the surge in supplies that our hospitals need; that blocks the access to healthcare; that blocks the medical innovation; that blocks the support for our healthcare workers. Every one of those "no" votes was aoll about resources for communities all around the country. The votes to block the move to the motion to proceed delayed over $240 billion in emergency funding. That vote to block the motion to proceed blocked $100 billion for hospitals, $30 billion for veterans’ healthcare, $11 billion for vaccines and therapeutics. The list goes on and on.

Why? It seems to me the Speaker of the House was looking at her own bill that we had on the floor yesterday, having just been made aware of what was in it. We looked at this wish list while the American people waited and watched and worried. It was a liberal wish list of things that had nothing to do with the disease or the treatment or the recovery of the economy. In their liberal wish list, they block the list of things that would help to save people’s lives—resources that, as a doctor, I know are needed in a healthcare crisis.

Why are they holding this up? We had a productive, bipartisan process in putting a bill together that seemed, on Saturday night, to be right on its way to being a successful, bipartisan effort. Yes, at the direction of the Speaker of the House, they all voted no. She said she wanted more in it and came out with her own bill. I will get to that wish list in a moment.

The demands we are looking at really have nothing to do with saving lives and nothing to do with combating the coronavirus. The list that I have seen in the House bill has everything to do with capitulating to the extremes of NANCY PELOSI’s far-left flank of her party—and in making good on the deal that she cut so that she could remain as the Speaker of the House.

Yesterday, she seemed to be more interested—and more interested in terms of the press reports—in reliving the passage of ObamaCare 10 years ago than in the crisis that we are facing today. She seemed to be more interested in reliving a law of 10 years ago instead of in what law needs to be passed today and should have been passed yesterday.

It is ironic that one of the architects of ObamaCare, Ezekiel Emanuel—one who celebrated it—wrote a book when ObamaCare was passed. He wrote in the book that we have too many hospitals in the United States. He actually wrote that we have 1,000 too many hospitals in the United States.

Since ObamaCare has passed, 120 hospitals have closed, and many of those that have been rural hospitals. ObamaCare has also blocked the expansion of physician-owned hospitals. Yet I hear from the same folks that, today, we need to expand our healthcare capacity—that we don’t have the hospital beds and the facilities to provide for the care that may be necessary in what the Surgeon General has said will be a week during which things are going to likely get much worse.

I don’t understand why the Senate Democrats want to choose to align themselves with Speaker PELOSI on this leftist list of all of their wants that would override the needs of the American people. The House bill that NANCY PELOSI just put out—1,100 pages—is one special interest giveaway after another.

This came up last night during the telephone townhall meeting that Senator ENZI and I had with the folks in Wyoming. I said: Really? There are tax breaks for solar panels? for wind turbines? They are holding up voting for this emergency bill that will help the American people in terms of the economy and in terms of our healthcare
over solar panels, wind turbines, and a Green New Deal about airline emissions?

In this bill, this emergency rescue package for the American people, there is a student loan giveaway, a bailout for the Service, new Monday voter registration, and early voting requirements. Those have no place in an emergency rescue package for the American people. That is why we were astonished on this side of the aisle when the Democrats—one after another, after another—came to the floor and voted no for even a motion to proceed to this rescue legislation.

The American public needs relief—healthcare relief. The American public needs to know that there is treatment on the way; that there is research being done for vaccines; and that the things they need for testing are on the way. That is what the American people need to know. If they can’t get paychecks at work because their workplace shut down, or they can’t go to their jobs—whether they are at restaurants or stores or whatever has been shut down—they need to know they can pay for food to put food on the tables for their families.

Inside Speaker Pelosi is asking for in her bill is to increase collective bargaining for Big Labor; requirements for racial and gender diversity for corporate boards; an automatic extension of nonimmigrant visas; money for Planned Parenthood; and money to maintain the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts—the Kennedy Center? These are all worthy topics for discussion but not on this bill, which is a rescue bill for the American public.

Let me be clear. This list that came to us from the House is a special interest wish list. It is not a list for people who are suffering from the coronavirus. This is why we have 150 million American workers who are watching and waiting and worrying. If those on the other side of the aisle thought they could just slip some of these items that the Speaker of the House wants into this Senate bill in an emergency, they are wrong. The President said last night that he will not approve such a bill today. There is no reason to delay, no reason to wait another day. The bill provides them with what they need, and it provides the economy the sort of certainty and security that the entire country needs.

I appreciate the opportunity to share these thoughts. My final message is, this bill needs to be passed today.

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.

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. LOEFPFLER). Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Madam President, as we are all facing this, we are hearing from families and working men and women who are being affected by the coronavirus.

What is happening is that the men and women who are working in those hospitals are ready. They are in the fight of their lives. They are the heroes in hometowns all across America because the coronavirus is in every State and in many, many communities. So those men and women are there, and they need to hear that the Senate and the House and the President and this Nation—the government—are standing behind them and not standing at a distance. They need to know the government is right there in the fight with them by providing what they need—the testing, supplies, the equipment—one thing after another—so they can do what they are trained to do, which is to save lives, to heal the sick, and to prevent disease. That is what this coronavirus has put them all in a position to do—to do their best work. We have to make sure they have everything they need.

For that reason, I need to pass this bill today. There is no reason to delay, no reason to wait another day. The bill provides them with what they need, and it provides the economy the sort of certainty and security that the entire country needs.

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For that reason, I need to pass this bill today. There is no reason to delay, no reason to wait another day. The bill provides them with what they need, and it provides the economy the sort of certainty and security that the entire country needs.

I appreciate the opportunity to share these thoughts. My final message is, this bill needs to be passed today.

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.

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. LOEFPFLER). Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Madam President, as we are all facing this, we are hearing from families and working men and women who are being affected by the coronavirus.

What is happening is that the men and women who are working in those hospitals are ready. They are in the fight of their lives. They are the heroes in hometowns all across America because the coronavirus is in every State and in many, many communities. So those men and women are there, and they need to hear that the Senate and the House and the President and this Nation—the government—are standing behind them and not standing at a distance. They need to know the government is right there in the fight with them by providing what they need—the testing, supplies, the equipment—one thing after another—so they can do what they are trained to do, which is to save lives, to heal the sick, and to prevent disease. That is what this coronavirus has put them all in a position to do—to do their best work. We have to make sure they have everything they need.

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I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.
trying to keep this a secret, which is exactly what they tried to do—we would be further along in this process, but we are so grateful—so, so grateful—for these brilliant minds that are researching this and are building off past research. We are able to pick up in a lot of information and distill down to 77 drugs that could be effective in this fight against COVID–19.

You may remember that just as we identified our first case of COVID–19 in Tennessee that was the week that West and Middle Tennessee were struck by a devastating series of tornadoes. TEMA, our emergency management agency, and all of the volunteers who have worked on this have done an unbelievable job in the midst of dealing with unprecedented devastation.

Again, we thank President Trump for his attention to this, and the people of Tennessee are so grateful for his attention to the concerns of those hit with the tornado and his visit to the State and FEMA and TEMA working together to address that.

So our State has had a full plate, and I say thank you to everyone in Tennessee who has looked at the situation that we are in and decided that they are going to do whatever they can to help.

We have a lot of distillers in our State, and, God bless them, they are stepping up and doing great work. Tennesseans in Pigeon Forge and Gatlinburg, up in Pigeon Forge and Gatlinburg, one of those distillers has five stores. They are headquartered in Franklin, TN, right outside of Nashville. One of those employers has five stores. They are headquartered in Franklin, TN, right outside of Nashville. He is keeping people working even though they are barely bringing in revenue. He needs us to pass this bill, this rescue bill, so he can keep those employees on the payroll.

We are hearing from all of these about the importance of having this bill that will be a bipartisan bill to address the concerns of businesses, large and small, and to address the concerns of workers who are working for those businesses, large and small.

What we have had in the bipartisan bill—and hopefully this will move forward—is $350 billion for small businesses, and if people stay working, those become grants: $500 billion in emergency relief through low-interest loans that could go to businesses and hospitals; $242 billion in emergency appropriations across Federal agencies. Seventy-five percent of that money would go to State, local, and Tribal governments, which are much better at managing their affairs than the Federal Government. There is $250 billion in increased unemployment benefits. I talked about this yesterday. If you normally are going to get $300 in unemployment, with the $300 plus-up, you are at $900 a week. These are all things to keep the economy going. There is an additional $75 billion for hospitals and our healthcare workers.

There is much that is in there. Imagine a bipartisan bill including this—including tax rebates for Americans, $1,200 for individuals, $2,400 for joint filers, $500 per dependent child. There are student loan deferments for those who are affected by COVID–19. All of that—all of that is in a bill. It is so incredibly disappointing to know that we had a failed vote—not once but twice—to get cloture to move forward to get on this bill.

With all of these good-faith negotiations, I have just been appalled, as I said yesterday, with the comments to restructure this bill to meet the progressive vision. You know, there is a season for everything. There is a time and place for everything, and this is neither the time nor the place to have a debate about things like collective bargaining power in the workplace, making our airlines meet emissions standards—the Green New Deal emissions standards by 2025. For goodness’ sake, let’s keep the airlines flying right now. Wind and solar tax credits have nothing—not to do with COVID–19. Come on, I say to my friends across the aisle, let’s set these aside for the appropriate season to discuss this, but it is not now. Election assistance funding? That has nothing to do with COVID–19. Corporate board diversity? It has nothing to do with COVID–19. Same-day voter registration? The list goes on and on. There is a time and place, there is a season, and right now, dealing with the crisis in front of us is what we need to focus on.

I think that yesterday my fellow Republicans and I made it abundantly clear. We do not have time. At this point in time, we do not have time for political games and antics based around a progressive vision.

It is disrespectful of the American people. It is hurtful to those who are directly affected by COVID–19, which, indeed, is everybody. It is important for us to move forward.

I didn’t get everything I wanted. I would have preferred a payroll tax holiday. I would have preferred rebating income taxes that have been paid for businesses and for individuals. I would have even liked to have seen more of my artisan small business SLD Act, Securing America’s Medicine Cabinet. But adults realize you are not going to get everything you want, and reasonable people realize you are not going to get everything you want.

This is a time where we should be respectful and we should be reasonable and we should apply common sense. We know the American people are expecting our best efforts, and they are looking forward to a solution.

As I said yesterday, I had talked to someone who said: You know, I am scared to death.

This is a small business owner who struggled. The Tax Cuts and Jobs Act allowed them to move forward with growth. There are teenagers in the house, and homeschool is starting today.

She said: I am screaming inside silently. I do not want the kids to know that I am afraid.

I encourage my colleagues to lay down your progressive policy wish list. Lay it down. Set it aside. There is a season to everything. There is a time,
there is a season, and I encourage you to realize that this is neither the time nor the season. Let's address the critical issues in front of us.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The assistant Democratic leader.

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, first let me say a word to my colleague from Tennessee.

It is good to see you, and it is a good social distance. I thank you for your presentation. We may not agree on everything, but we do agree on some things, and we are working together on the issues that affect Tennessee, Illinois, and many other places, to increase the number of medical professionals available in small towns and rural America.

As we go through this public health crisis, it reminds us that we need to keep focused on that, and she and I will continue to work on that. I thank her for her bipartisanship. That is a timely issue with or without the current crisis we face, and I look forward to her successful completion on that bipartisan issue.

Madam President, my daughter called me yesterday from New York and talked about her first day in the classroom. You see, our grandkids go to public schools in Brooklyn, and they are, of course, closed, and the kids are back home. Well, yesterday was the first day there was to be remote learning using laptop computers. So my son-in-law took my grandson and my daughter took my granddaughter into separate rooms and spent 3 or 4 hours in that made-up classroom. My daughter said: This is harder than I ever imagined.

So it is a reminder. No. 1, of how much we owe it to teachers every single day, and not with 1 child, usually with more than 1–15 to 30 in a classroom. Let us also remember that the learning losses are critically important as we go through this health crisis. I hope all parents will try—I know my daughter and her husband are trying—to help the kids keep up with their learning process. In some places, it is hard. Kids don't have access to computers or may not have remote-learning possibilities. But it is something that is essential, and I thank the teachers and school districts that are trying to put it together.

Jane Jackson, who is the head of the Chicago Public Schools, called me just a few days ago, and we talked about how they were implementing this in the city of Chicago and how they are trying to distribute school lunches. It is an awesome responsibility.

Let's give special thanks to those who are working overtime to try to make sure our kids can keep up with the learning process and some of the basics in life, like feeding them to make sure something for lunch and breakfast, if not more.

I can go through the long list of people to thank, which I have done before, starting with those in healthcare—nurses, doctors, lab technicians, and others working in senior citizen facilities, our first responders, and many like them. Let us not forget that every single day while we isolate, they are forced to break isolation and to come to our aid whom we need, and we can never thank them enough.

So what is going on in the U.S. Senate? If you hear the other side of the aisle, there is a suggestion that we lost our opportunity, that we are wasting time and not taking action. They argue that we have had two votes in a row—Sunday afternoon and then yesterday—to decide not to debate on the floor the MCCONNELL bill which was produced. The argument is that we can't waste a second, that we need to get to the serious business of helping people across America and turning our economy around.

I just want to say for the record that I left the office not 30 or 40 feet away of Senator SCHUMER. I didn't go and see him because he is in active negotiations at this minute with Treasury Secretary Mnuchin, representing the White House. He is in communication with the Speaker of the House, Nancy PELOSI, about the progress being made, and, as he said on the floor yesterday, he feels positive and optimistic about the outcome. I do too.

This is an awesome undertaking. Consider for a minute that the bill we are trying to style and craft literally is larger than 1 year's Federal budget for domestic discretionary spending, and we are doing it in a matter of days. When it comes to the Federal budget, we spend a year—sometimes longer—putting it together. In this case, we are writing a bill of that magnitude in a matter of days because it is a compelling challenge and should happen.

The argument on the other side of the aisle was that it is not opportune here, that we should have agreed to the MCCONNELL bill that was brought forward for a vote on Sunday and got on with it. But many understood that there was a fundamental flaw in the process Senator MCCONNELL started.

When he suggested that we needed this third bill, it was after we had passed two previous bills.

The first one, the President asked, if you will, for $2 billion. It seems like ancient history—about 3 weeks ago, the President asked for $2 billion to deal with coronavirus. Many of us thought that was totally inadequate, and we put our heads together on a bipartisan basis with the President and raised it to $8 billion. We did it in a timely way, and we did it in a bipartisan fashion. It probably shocked people across America who have limited high regard for Congress to start with.

Quickly thereafter came a need for another bill. We upped the amount from $8 billion to $100 billion in that second bill. It passed in the early morning hours of last Saturday—just last Saturday. What happened in the Senate? Well, the Senate didn't move on the bill until Wednesday of last week. So we are talking about waiting 4 days when we could have considered the bill in the Senate and didn't move forward with it because we didn't have confidence that what has been done that way before. It doesn't have to physically make it across the rotunda. So 4 days passed, and last Wednesday, Senator MCCONNELL called for this vote, and it passed—$100 billion.

Then he announced we would start crafting this third bill. If you notice the calendar days we are facing here, it hasn't been a week since that announcement, and we are considering a bill of the size and magnitude the likes of which we have never seen in a single undertaking. It is a bill for authorization and appropriation that may range somewhere north of $1.5 trillion. Why is it that big? Because the problem is big, if not bigger. Let's have a bipartisan, bicameral approach. He suggested bringing together the four corners, as we call them here—the Democratic and Republican leaders of the House and Senate, together with the White House, getting down at the table to craft this bill.

Senator MCCONNELL refused. He said: We will start this as an exclusively Republican Senate bill. We will ask our task forces to write something. We will get back to the Democrats in the Senate later.

No mention was made of the involvement of the House.

Well, after some 48 hours, we were presented with the proposal from the Republican side. In fairness, there were parts of it that were bipartisan in the MCCONNELL bill. I think of the effort that Senator CARDIN of Maryland and Senator RUBIO of Florida put into the whole question of dealing with small business and the problems that they are facing with this massive public health crisis. They have come up with what I consider a good approach—a good approach that literally could help 50 to 60 million small businesses across America. There were others involved in the conversation—Senator WYDEN, Senator GRAHAM, and others. It was bipartisan—start to finish—and I believe we are this close to coming up with this bipartisan proposal.

However, the other provisions in the MCCONNELL bill were not as bipartisan, and there reached a point where Senator MCCONNELL announced that that was the end of the story. He was bringing the MCCONNELL bill to the floor for further negotiation. That came as a surprise because there were elements that the Democrats were asking for and insisting on that really were fundamental.
PELOSI was part of this negotiation the House of Representatives, NANCY, Secretary, and started engaging on with the White House, with the Treasury Secretary, and started engaging on those issues of importance, and, within a few hours, we involved the Speaker of the House of Representatives, NANCY PELOSI.

Time and again, I have noticed over the last several days that Senator MCCONNELL and others have come to the floor and complained that Speaker PELOSI was part of this negotiation process back to the president. You understand that this is not a unicalement legislature. Both the House and the Senate need to pass a measure for it to be sent to the President. So the involvement of the House leaders—starting, of course, with the majority, Speaker PELOSI, and including Mr. MCCARTHY of California, representing the minority—is an integral part of this process, and it should be. I don’t understand why it is so unnerving for so many Republican leaders to see our colleagues sitting down with this woman from California who happens to be the Speaker of the House and the leader of the majority, who is essential if we are going to get this done in a timely way. I think she should be part of it.

She has been following the progress that is being made with Senator SCHUMER, Mr. Mnuchin, and Senator MCCONNELL. She has made positive statements in the hopes that we can reach a point that is the opposite. We sat down with the White House, with the Treasury Secretary, and started engaging on those issues of importance, and, within a few hours, we involved the Speaker of the House of Representatives, NANCY PELOSI.

So the Democrats have said from day one that we want to make that the highest priority in this third bill. We want to make sure we put money in there for hospitals and for healthcare to respond to this crisis, and I will tell you that progress has been made. Since the negotiation between Senator SCHUMER and Treasury Secretary Mnuchin has been under way, we have made progress, and I hope that if we can hold it, we will have a dramatic increase in the amount of money that was originally in the MCCONNELL bill for this purpose when it comes to hospitals.

I also want to say a word about the unemployment insurance. This is a proposal that comes from the Democratic side but has been embraced by many Republican leaders as well. There is a provision behind it is that those workers who cannot go to work, because there is no work to be done or they have been furloughed or lost their jobs, would have access to the highest levels of unemployment insurance in our Nation’s history. Now, we think that this is a significant change and even a significant restructuring of unemployment insurance to reflect the current crisis we face.

I don’t run away from this issue of restructuring. I have heard many Republican critics, but when it comes to unemployment insurance, we are, in fact, restructuring it. The payments that were given in Illinois, where we are, in the State of Illinois and in other States were just not sufficient for those to maintain a family and pay their bills during times of economic crisis. So we have started moving toward an amount for individual families who still get those unemployment benefits, but it has not been enough. Many of them live week to week, paycheck to paycheck, and we want to make certain that they have that peace of mind. We have measured every proposal for economic recovery against working families in America and against the individual workers and their challenges throughout this crisis.

There has been a complaint that we raised the issue of collective bargaining. We want to make certain that when we give money to corporations, it will not change the collective bargaining agreements whom they have bargained with over the years. We are going to wait, of course, for another day to consider future contracts and work contracts, but for the time being, we want to make certain that whatever money is going into the corporation respects the existing rights of workers under their collective bargaining agreements. I don’t think that is a radical notion. Corporations are going to continue to operate under the laws of America. I think that the workers should be entitled to the rights that have been granted to them under their collective bargaining agreements, and that is basically the bottom line for us when it comes to collective bargaining.

It comes to loans to corporations, that is where we have a serious problem with the MCCONNELL bill. There was a provision in Senator MCCONNELL’s bill, which he calls a bipartisan bill—and I acknowledge that, in part, it was—but there was a provision that was far from bipartisan. It was a provision which said when it came to loaning money to corporations, the Treasury Secretary could waive the disclosure of that loan for up to 6 months. That is unacceptable to me, and it was to most of us on the Democratic side.

We believe that if billions of dollars are flowing through the decision of the Treasury Secretary to individual corporations, there should be transparency and accountability: Who is receiving the money, under what conditions, and what is going to happen with the money that is being sent—taxpayer money that is being sent—for this purpose?

So we have insisted, as we sit down in negotiation here, for this accountability and transparency when it comes to these massive amounts—billions of dollars—that could be transferred by decision of one person in the administration. I don’t think that is too much to ask. We should be held accountable as Members of the Senate and the House of Representatives for the money that is appropriated when we allocate it, and the administration should be held to the same standard.

We also believe that when it comes to the basic standards, we have been burned once and don’t want to be burned a second time. For those of us who advocated legislation to give money to corporations, we want to make certain that that is for the good of the economy and the good of the
workers. Sadly, in the past, we have seen, under tax bills and other provisions that were supposed to benefit the economy, that they ended up being a windfall for executives and corporations in terms of stock buybacks and dividends. Yet, we are holding a standard to back so that we think that the best for the future of any corporate assistance. We should be dealing with this to help the workers and help the economy but not to line the pockets of those who are at the highest levels of corporate governance. I think that this is a logical idea. I think most Americans agree with it, and it is one of the things that we continue to argue for.

I see my friend Senator CARPER has come to the floor. We served in the House of Representatives together, and then he took a little vacation and became Governor of the State of Delaware and then returned to service at the Federal level in the Senate. He knows, as all of us do, that Governors across the States and presidents of county boards, for example, are making exceptional sacrifices to fight this battle against this coronavirus. They are spending a lot more money on public health matters than they ever anticipated. They are seeing more claims at our State level for unemployment insurance than they have seen in history, and many of them are facing fiscal budgetary problems because of it. It is so obvious. We have seen dramatic leadership when it comes to the Governors.

One of our colleagues of the House, Mike DeWine, now the Republican Governor of Ohio, has made some, I think, significant, important, and good decisions for his State. Some of those have involved more spending by the State of Ohio than he ever could have anticipated. The same thing is true for J.B. Pritzker in the State of Illinois. I talk to him virtually every single day. We text many times during the day, and I know that he is spending money that he thinks is necessary to save lives in Illinois.

So the point I am making is that we want to make sure that the bill that emerges helps State and local governments with the fiscal problems they face because of this economic and healthcare crisis. I don’t think that is unreasonable. I think it is the right thing to do, and I hope that we can include it. That is why the original proposal in the McConnell bill did not go far enough and why we have continued to negotiate up to this minute.

I might raise an issue of difference between myself and the Senator from Tennessee, who was on the floor just a few moments ago. She had suggested that we shouldn’t involve ourselves in issues that really have nothing to do with COVID-19, and she used as an example the administration and execution of elections. We will tell you, we went into a debate just a week or so ago in Illinois as to whether to go forward with the primary election. We decided in Illinois to do it, and it wasn’t easy at all. They decided in Ohio to postpone the primary election. The point I am getting to is that the conduct and timing of elections relates directly to COVID-19, whether there are enough people who will be able to vote and enough people to serve as judges and clerks.

So I don’t know if that is being debated in the other room, but we should bring that issue up, because we want to make sure that, in this democracy, the most fundamental element of a free and democratic election is still going to occur. I encourage all of my friends and family to vote by mail and vote early. We can do it in our State. In some States you can’t. I hope we can find a mechanism to guarantee that elections really do reflect the sentiment of the American populace.

Is that related to COVID-19? You bet it is. It is basic. And whether it is included in this bill or in a later bill, I don’t think we should ignore it. I think it is naive to believe this is the last piece of legislation that will be needed. We don’t know where America will stand in 30, 60, or 90 days. But whatever it takes—whatever it takes—we need to come together as a nation, put aside political differences, and agree on a strategy that serves the best interests of families across our country, red and blue States alike, and do it here in Washington as well.

For those who see an empty Chamber and wonder if work is being done, as I mentioned earlier, just across the hallway, Senator SCHUMER, who may come to the floor in a moment to give us an update, has been negotiating around the clock with the White House and with Senator McCONNELL to come up with the better bipartisan package to move forward from this point.

I am going to close now with just one point I would like to make, and that is that many of my colleagues are joining Senator PORTMAN and me in sponsoring what we have called the remote voting amendment in the Senate rules. It is complex because it is the first of its kind where we are discussing using...
modern technology to meet our constitutional responsibilities and obligations. The reason, of course, is obvious. We shouldn’t be gathering on the floor in groups. We have been warned by the Centers for Disease Control not to do that. Yet we do it because we have very few alternatives.

So I am hoping we can work with the Parliamentarian and with the officers of the Senate to come up with something that is bipartisan, makes sense, and protects the integrity of voting on the floor of the Senate.

We need to do our jobs, even in times of national crisis, whether it is a public health crisis or a threat of terrorism. Let us devise a way—let’s work hard on it—that both the Senate and, I hope, the House can agree on that respects the rules and traditions of the Senate but gives us options that make more sense in this time of special peril.

I yield the floor.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic leader is recognized.

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, first, I want to thank my good friend, the Senator from Illinois, for his outstanding work on this issue. He has been the strong voice for the working families of America, for the people who need help. And his empathy and understanding of how average folks are suffering is very, very important.

In fact, I just spoke to his Governor, J. B. Pritzker, and told him that Senator DURBIN is working very hard on something we Democrats believe is important, and that is money for the States and localities because they are getting clobbered economically by this crisis. They have new expenses, and without tax returns being filed until June, much of their income is not going to be there because of States filing in concert with the Federal Government.

Now I will be brief. I just finished a very productive meeting with Secretary Mnuchin, the White House congressional liaison, Eric Ueland, and MARK MEADOWS, the President’s Acting Chief of Staff.

Last night, I thought we were on the 5-yard line; right now, we are on the 2. As I also said last night, at this point, of the few outstanding issues, I don’t see any that can’t be overcome within the next few hours.

Here with me are things that we have been fighting for, we Senate Democrats. First, a Marshall Plan for our medical system. Our hospitals, our nursing homes, our community health centers—our whole healthcare system—need desperately needed dollars. They need them fast and they need them in a very large amount.

Hospital beds have to expand. Expanding capacity is not easy. The need for ventilators, for PPEs for the workers, for masks, even things as simple as swabs are not always available. And in New York City, New York State, and around the country, hospitals are going to be overwhelmed. Our big hospitals, our medium-size hospitals, our small hospitals, and the small and rural hospitals actually face the risk of closing if we don’t help them.

So we Senate Democrats have been pushing very hard for an increase, a significant increase, in money for the hospitals. We are very pleased with what seems to be moving forward in the bill, in the bipartisan bill, that we hope will be brought to the floor.

Second, workers first—the title of our Democratic plan has been “Workers First.” We believe we have to put working people—families, average Americans—ahead of anybody else. They are losing their jobs through no fault of their own. Their kids are staying home because there is no school.

There are so many—so many—problems that are befalling average people, so we wanted to put them first. That has been our No. 1 goal, along with the Marshall Plan for hospitals. That has been our No. 1 goal, along with the Marshall Plan for hospitals.

This bill comes forward, as it is now at least being agreed upon, has a lot of that. It has unemployment insurance on steroids. This is a great plan.

What it says is that if you lose your job in this crisis, you can be furloughed by your employer, you can stay on at your employer’s payroll. If you have health benefits with the employer, you can keep getting them. But, and most importantly, the Federal Government will pay your salary, your full salary, not just partial. It will go on for 4 months, and 4 months looks like what we are going to get when we come to this agreement.

It will mean two things. Most of all, it will put money into the hands of those who need it so much because they have lost their jobs, as I said, through no fault of their own. So that is vitally important, and that will pump money into the economy probably in a better way than anything else could do.

It also has a second benefit. It will keep companies intact. The small restaurant owner, the middle-size business, even the large businesses worry that if they just had to remove their workers, fire them because they don’t have any money coming in, those workers would scatter to the winds, and they would look for other jobs, and when, God willing, this awful crisis is over, these businesses would not be able to reassemble. But with our plan, when the Federal Government gives corporations money.

We are not looking for things that are extraneous to this crisis, and I don’t believe they are in this package.

We are looking at things that deal directly with this crisis, and that is what we have proposed here as Democrats in the Senate. Whether it be workers first, helping our medical system, providing oversight and transparency in the boards, and helping small business, these are all directly related to the crisis. We need them soon. We need them desperately.

In the last few days, we have made huge progress in achieving these goals. Again, I hope, I pray, that we can come together, quickly and pass the large numbers the bipartisan bill that will help the American people, who so badly, badly, badly need our help.

I yield the floor.
Democratic leader talk about the principles of a bill that we want to pass and wanted to pass 2 days ago.

The principles of helping workers first, the principles of helping small business, the principles of looking after the health of our nation—these are the fundamentals of the bill that we have worked on together, in a bipartisan way. Both the Democratic whip and the Democratic leader said that this is and has been a bipartisan bill.

I just got off the telephone with my local radio station, and I had to fight back the notion that the bill that was before us yesterday and Sunday was a strictly Republican bill; it was not. The bill that has the small business provisions that the Democratic leader just said was worked on in a bipartisan way, which we all know was and is a great idea. Jointly, we agree on that. So I think we have talked across the aisle; and, yes, we have worked on issues that we know are going to put workers and families across this Nation first.

So I have spent a lot of time, as all of us have, talking to county commissioners, our mayors, the Governor, health professionals, small business owners, individuals, moms and dads, wondering, Is it safe to have somebody help me with the kids? What kind of contact should I have with my grandchildren? This is something I am in constant debate on myself with my own grandchildren.

So I think what I get from everybody—more than anything—is not just the urgency of now but the urgency of yesterday and the day before. So I am glad to hear the leader say that we are close, on the 5-yard line or the 2-yard line. But let’s not get into too many football analogies. We have all been to football games where we have been on the 2 and people have fumbled the ball. We can’t do that because it has been fumbled long enough.

So, for the past few days, I have been very frustrated, as have many of my colleagues. I know my fellow Senator from Iowa, who is here on the floor with me, and, certainly, the Presiding Officer from Georgia have had great angst and great frustrations that care has been delayed when Americans need it the most—both economic and healthcare.

My fellow Virginians, they want to make sure that our hospitals, our community health centers, and other providers—our nursing homes, our extended-care facilities—have the resources that they need to provide the best possible coverage. That has been in this bill.

I heard the urgency of PPE. We hear that all over the country, certainly in our State, and, also, swabs and other testing equipment. This is part of that bill but also our hospitals, which are hurting because they don’t have the elective surgeries; they don’t have the revenues to keep them going.

The $75 billion that we have in it—sounds like it may be more—fine, good. Let’s keep our hospitals going, particularly our rural hospitals in rural areas where they don’t have the availability of healthcare like they have in other places.

But, I tell you, we want our hospitals to be open. What West Virginians don’t want is a delay in getting them the help they need just to score political points.

The other things West Virginians want are the best medical care for our veterans. We have four medical centers. We have a very patriotic State that has some of the highest per-capita military and veterans in the entire country. We want help for our veterans.

What we don’t want is to use a crisis to advance a partisan or ideological agenda, which we have seen. West Virginians want to make sure that we have protective equipment for doctors, nurses, and first responders on the frontline. I talked to some of my volunteer fire departments. You don’t think how deep this goes or how deep the need is for personal protective equipment until you start thinking about it; you can’t just go out and have contact. I tell you what—they don’t want a Green New Deal in this bill; they want blue masks.

West Virginians want research into new vaccines and treatments to help fight this coronavirus epidemic. When we think about how we are going to get out of this, stopping the flow of the virus is certainly No. 1. But we also have to get confidence back that, if this comes back later, we have the vaccines or the therapeutics that are going to help people be healthier and fight the spread of the virus.

What they don’t want are regulations and bureaucracies that get in the way of action. Our bill helped a lot with alleviating some of those regulatory burdens that we see our healthcare providers fighting—at least in times of an emergency, alleviating those regulatory burdens.

West Virginians want to allow more medical visits to be done by telemedicine during this crisis to keep our patients and our providers safe.

What they don’t want is to read tomorrow morning a newspaper article that says who are the political winners and losers in this because they know, essentially, people are the ones who are losing by the stall tactics that we have seen.

West Virginians want to help small businesses. We are probably 99 percent small business in our State—a small State. We want to stay afloat and keep our employees on the payroll.

What we don’t want is for others to not realize the urgency that small business is feeling. As I said, not the urgency of now—the urgency of yesterday.

We just had a shelter-in-place put in place in our State. Think of all the impacts this has across our State and the State of Iowa and others.

West Virginians want a financial boost to our families during this uncertain time. This is in the bill. I heard the leader talk about it like it was a non-starter. It has been there. It has been in the bill.

They don’t want us to leave our communities without the tools they need to confront this crisis.

West Virginians, we always really hang together. We really do hang everywhere, but I have a particular pride, I think, in my State around neighbors helping neighbors.

West Virginians want us to assist workers who have been laid off as a result of the emergency by extending unemployment benefits. Again, it is in there. It has been in there.

They don’t want for us to fail to show compassion for our fellow citizens during an emergency.

West Virginians want to keep educating our students. We have a particular issue here with our tele-education because we don’t have the broadband. That is a subject for a different day. I know part of that is in this bill, but if anybody joins with me in this fight, which I know will have, the urgency of yesterday is here on the delivery of broadband services into rural America.

What we don’t want is a Federal takeover of our election system that provides some new registration and places Washington bureaucrats in charge of our local officials. West Virginia has a primary on May 12. I am working with the Secretary of State and the Governor to make sure that our State formulates how we can get as many people voting by mail as possible within the parameters of the way we want to conduct our elections. We don’t need a one-size-fits-all here. We need to keep the States in charge.

West Virginians want to keep our economy and do everything possible to avoid a long-lasting economic recession.

What we don’t want is to enact Speaker Pelosi’s Christmas list that includes new regulations on carbon emissions, wind, and solar tax credits, corporate board diversity reports, and a cap-and-trade program for our airlines.

We have a bill before us. We have had it before us for several days. It is appropriately called the CARES Act because it takes care of a lot of the priorities and issues that we have been talking about, that we hear about in our tele-townhalls or in talking to our neighbors and talking to our constituents, the urgency of not now—yesterday. We face a great public health threat, and we face a severe threat to our economy.

I am a total optimist about everything. My glass is always half full and I know we are going to get through this and I know we are going to survive it. I know we are going to be better for it because we are going to learn lessons,
but it sure is tough when you are in it. Even a full-blown optimistic person, I admit to myself and to you today, I have had some pretty low points during this whole thing, where I have wondered, where are we going?

The last thing we need is the political debate that we have had over the last 2 weeks over programs and the parameters that were just laid out by the Democratic leader that were in the bill, have been in the bill.

So we must come together—bipartisan. All of us work together. I work with the Senator from Delaware. We are on EPW together. He was born in West Virginia, so he can’t get too far away from me, and we work together a lot across party lines. This is an example, and I think we are seeing that now.

I think that, with the leader’s comments, we see we are making great progress here.

So I am encouraged that the deal is almost closed and that today might be the day we can join together and say that we will stop delaying care. Because today is the day—yesterday could have been the day, but today is the day—because I am an optimist, and I am always looking forward—today is the day. Together we can take bold action for the American people. I know that is what Americans want, and I know that is what my West Virginians want.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. CRUZ). The Senator from Delaware.

Mr. CARPER. Mr. President, I would say to my colleague, my West Virginia colleague and friend: Don’t lose that sense of optimism. It is going to carry us through this and, hopefully, well beyond.

I live in Delaware. My wife and I live in Delaware. We live in the same house we have lived in for—gosh—33 years, and we raised our sons there and sent them to school in that world.

Every morning that I get up and I come here, I go to the train station. It used to take maybe 15 minutes from my house to get to the train station. Today there were just a few cars on the road—no buses. I got to the train station, and out of the station, came out Delaware Avenue to the Capitol, where people were, again, destitute and begging for work.

There are a lot of people who showed up last week and the week before in this country to ask for and sign up for unemployment benefits. They never imagined in their life that they would be in this situation.

A lot of people who signed up in the last 2 weeks for food, what used to be food stamps—SNAP—food benefits for their family, they never imagined they would have to do that. They never imagined in their life that they would be in this situation.

My colleagues call me a recovering Governor, I was privileged to be Governor of Delaware for 8 years. I chaired the National Governors Association. The Governors who met on the 50-State conference do a concept. I was fortunate enough to talk to some of them afterward and ask them what their priorities were.

They said, among other things: We want to make sure, when people file for unemployment insurance, if they are eligible for it, that it will actually be there; and these State funds that were created, contributed to by employers in 50 States across America, when they are depleted, there needs to be a backup. They were pleading with us to make sure we had that backup there.

I am encouraged that the package that is before us today will provide that liquidity, if you will, for unemployment insurance so people will actually be able to get not necessarily through their full payroll or full salary—full paycheck—back but at least maybe enough to get by.

The Governors asked that we use the term “plus-up” the SNAP program. We used to have food stamps. We now have what are called SNAP cards, and they can be plussed-up or down remotely, electronically, and the Governors were asking that we do something about that to make sure that not only people have at least some kind of payment coming in, through unemployment insurance, to their homes but also something—some additional benefits for the SNAP program.

I don’t think we are going to get that. We made some progress on SNAP in the last 2 weeks we have come through a week or so ago. And we probably, especially, need to focus on food benefits for families who have kids in schools. Schools are closed. Those kids used to get their lunch—maybe their breakfast—at their school. They are not getting it now. Those families, especially, are going to need some help.

The third area I want to mention is health benefits—health benefits. A lot of people who have very good health insurance through their employer are going to lose them or face the possibility of losing them. There are going to be people—millions of people across the country—who are going to sign up for Medicaid who never thought they would be in a position to have to do that.

The Governors are asking that we do a little bit more to help make sure that Medicaid, which is partly funded by the Federal Government and partly by the States, that there are sufficient dollars to meet the demand for healthcare through Medicaid that certainly would not have been imagined a month or so ago.

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I want to just mention a couple of things. I see a colleague from Iowa is here, and I don’t want to take too much more time, but I am asking indulgence for just a couple of minutes.

One of our colleagues mentioned today that we should look ahead to the elections and thinking about the elections. We have great concerns about election security these days, with the Russians trying to interfere with our elections again.

So I have a Postal Service that is in dire straits. The Postal Service, as we know it, has faced great challenges in recent years because of the lack of first-class mail. People have moved off first-class mail into email to do business and personal communications.

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to govern. It sure is, especially in the midst of a pandemic, the likes of which we have never seen in our lifetime.

The third one that comes to mind is actually an African proverb. It goes something like this:

If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together.

Think about that.

If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together.

I think what we have coming together here is our Democrats and Republicans, an Independent or two—who have decided over the last several days that despite our differences, there is not a Republican answer and there is not a Democratic answer; they are the right answers. Hopefully, we get more right answers in this package—which I expect we will be considering later today—than wrong answers.

The American people are counting on us to pull together, and I think we are beginning to do that.

I was saying that this is not the first package—legislative package—that we prepared to adopt in the last 2 weeks or so. This is No. 3. People smarter than me say there will probably be a No. 4 and maybe No. 5 as we learn forward.

The first one is pretty small, $3 billion. The second, which focused on a lot on testing, was over $100 billion. This one is many, many, many times that amount.

I have talks across the country will be encouraged that we were able to get it mostly right in the first legislative package and get it mostly right in the second legislative package. This one is huge. It took another week or so to pound it out, but I think it is probably better because we have gone slowly.

I say to the American people, take heart. We have been through a lot worse than this in our lifetime—a civil war that killed about 800,000 men: families, brothers, sisters, brothers, grandparents, brothers. Hundreds of thousands of other women, children, and old people were killed. After the Civil War was over, President Lincoln was assassinated. A short while later, his successor, Andrew Johnson from Tennessee, was impeached.

We somehow made it out of that century to get into the 20th century just in time to fight not one world war but two world wars—fought them, led them as an Independent or two. I was sitting in CHUCK SCHUMER’s vestibule earlier today, and Secretary Mnuchin was going back and forth, and MARK MEADOWS, who is the new Chief of Staff, was going back and forth. CHUCK SCHUMER and others—there was lot of activity and a lot of optimism than I have seen in the last several days.

America, take heart. We will get through this.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Iowa.

Ms. ERNST. Mr. President, we have a clear objective right now, which is to get additional, immediate relief into the hands of the worker and to do it fast. That is what we are focused on, folks. That is what we have been focused on since passing the phase 1 package, and then the House-led phase 2 relief package last week.

The phase 2 is perfect, but I was happy to support it because it was the right thing to do. It was the support that Iowans needed. Since President Trump signed that package last Wednesday—nearly a week ago—I have continued to hear from Iowans—those in our hospital industry, those in the restaurant industry, agriculture, trucking, retail, childcare, biofuels. I have heard from all of them, one-on-one conversations about the need for additional and immediate relief—relief for the young families in Iowa right now who are feeling very anxious about how they are going to make that end-of-the-month rent payment come April 1; relief for the nurses, like my cousin, and the doctors who are fretting about going into work because they don’t have the personal protective equipment they need to prevent them from getting and spreading the coronavirus; and relief for the small business owner who so badly wants to able to keep her employees on the payroll so that when we get through this pandemic—and folks, we will get through this pandemic—she can get her business up and running and can keep sending her employees those paychecks. We have a lot of those small business owners all across our Main Streets and all around our squares in Iowa.

I also think about the seniors across my home State of Iowa who are probably worried about access to the medical services and the care they might need. During these very challenging times or the middle-aged couple who have been looking at the market and seeing those markets spiraling down every single day and wondering, What does that mean for our future and for our retirement plans?

Folks, the American people are hurting right now. They are very anxious. And now, more than ever, they are looking to us. Iowans and, of course, all Americans need to know that we have their back and that their livelihoods are our top priority.

What we have seen over the past several days is a very sad attempt by folks to crisis as an opportunity to jam through their political wish list. Folks, we can have those policy debates. We can have those another day. But with each passing minute we waste, more lives are at risk, more jobs are lost, and more communities are torn apart.

We are not going to play games anymore in the U.S. Senate. The American people have made it quite clear: They need relief, and they need it now. This phase 3 relief package is not and will not be a “Christmas tree” bill. In fact, folks, it has been the product of hours and hours of bipartisan negotiations from five different groups. Those working groups have worked late into the night and over the weekend to come up with a package that is best for American people.

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This bill is squarely focused on getting immediate relief to millions of hard-working Americans across our great United States.

Just a while ago, the Democratic leader was on the floor, and he was touting a number of these provisions. As my colleague from West Virginia pointed out, those provisions the leader is touting have been in this package. These are not new provisions. These are not new provisions. This is a bill we should have, and we could have, advanced this bill days ago.

This bipartisan phase 3 package includes billions of dollars for our Nation’s healthcare workers and our healthcare system as a whole. This has been a big priority of mine—something I have heard from time and again from Iowa’s hospitals and healthcare professionals and something I have called on Congress to respond to: billions of dollars for additional personal protective equipment and other materials. Healthcare workers are depending on us to help increase the supply of the PPE they need so that they can continue to battle the spread of the coronavirus and care for their patients, some of whom are our most vulnerable.

There are billions of dollars for small businesses across our States to be able to keep employees on the payroll and pay their bills. Again, that is a huge need for Iowa. I’m excited that as my colleague from West Virginia stated, about 99 percent of her businesses in West Virginia are small businesses. That is true in Iowa, as well, with 99 percent of our businesses being small businesses.

There are billions of dollars to provide direct financial assistance to individual Americans to ensure access to testing and a future coronavirus vaccine is covered at no cost—at no cost—to the individual and dollars going to expand telehealth and to increase care for our veterans and also to provide unemployment insurance and to defer student loans.
Folks, the list goes on and on and on. This bipartisan phase 3 relief package is focused on the American worker and our American family.

Again, many of these provisions have been in the bill since the beginning. These are not new provisions. We need to stop this crisis—time for long, drawn-out policy debates on the floor of the Senate.

Folks, now is the time for action. It is time for Congress to step up, put aside our partisan wants, and show up for the people of our States. I am an eternal optimist, and I have hope that we will be able to come together and reassure the American people that they are our top priority.

Each and every one of us in this body has an obligation to the men and the women who elected us to do our jobs, and right now our job is to get Americans the relief that in some instances they are literally crying for.

To my friends across the aisle, I believe with the right policies we can manage a new influx of patients and reassure the hospitals that are struggling to provide peace of mind to tens of millions of borrowers. Employees who have been impacted by the virus should get support now, and they should have jobs to come back to later.

Point is, we must get this act done so that you can stay safe and stay strong. God bless you all. I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas.

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, with every day that passes, the number of COVID-19, or coronavirus, cases continues to tick up, up, and up. A report by the World Health Organization last week noted that while it took more than 3 months to reach 100,000 cases worldwide, it took only 12 days to hit another 100,000. It doubled in 12 days. Now we know it took less than a week to add the next 100,000. Some of this is because of increased access to testing—something we knew we were not ramped up for.

More and more people are getting tested. That is good news. Those who have the virus can be isolated and treated, if necessary. Those who don’t have the peace of mind knowing that they do not carry the disease and they can—by virtue of good personal hygiene and social distancing—remain healthy.

But if we are going to have any success in slowing the trajectory of this virus moving the economic harm, the time to act is now. The eyes of the Nation are upon us. They want to know if partisanship can be set aside in the face of a pandemic. They want us to know that partisanship is an indulgence we cannot afford.

If you are hearing me to figure out the answer, let me recap what has happened in the Senate recently.

For weeks, our Democratic colleagues agreed that this is indeed a crisis, that we need to act promptly and we need to push partisan legislation because our country can’t wait. I agree. Our country is in dire need, and this is no time for politics as usual.

Indeed, this has always been our custom. This has always been our instinct as Americans during crises like 9/11 and like the great recession of 2008. We would have every reason to expect that in the face of another national crisis, like the coronavirus, Democrats and Republicans would come together, but that has not been the case.

We now need Republicans and Democrats to come together as we have in the past to deliver on our shared priorities to support our country during this unprecedented time.

There is, in fact, broad bipartisan agreement about the result. We need to get relief directly from Washington to the American people as soon as possible. We need to provide small businesses with help so they can survive this storm and that so that once the virus is defeated, they are still around to provide jobs to people they have now had to furlough or lay off. There seems to be broad bipartisan agreement that we need to provide large payments to provide peace of mind to tens of millions of borrowers. Employees who have been impacted by the virus should get support now, and they should have jobs to come back to later.

Point is, it seemed like we were making good progress. There had been negotiating between the parties, compromising. As of Sunday morning, it looked like we were just about there. Then the Speaker of the House and the minority leader of the Senate decided the crisis should not be wasted. They claimed all of a sudden that the deal was not good enough even though they themselves helped to write it. The Speaker in particular played a unique role in blowing this up. After sending the House home for a weeklong vacation, she flew back into town at the eleventh hour and laid waste to countless hours of bipartisan work.

When the time came for a routine procedural vote to start the process, but now, in the face of this crisis, it is absolutely unconscionable. It is reckless and irresponsible.

A pandemic has swept across the country with alarming speed. Our hospitals are in need of personal protective equipment, businesses have shut their doors, employees have been laid off, and people across the country wonder just how long they can survive at this pace.

The bill we had last Sunday would have sent desperately needed funding to the hospitals that are struggling to manage a new influx of patients and helped fight the shortage of masks and other personal protective equipment. It would have provided direct financial assistance for medical bills. A family of four would have received up to $3,400 to help cover rent, groceries, electric bills, and other expenses in the
Mr. BOOZMAN. Mr. President, I asked unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

Mr. BOOZMAN. Mr. President, I arrived in Washington in November of 2019, after winning the honor to serve the people of the Third District of Arkansas in the House of Representatives. This was shortly after 9/11. It was a very anxious time in the Capitol. Every one of my colleagues sought to find ways to work together to move forward and to remove the legions that helped to return a sense of normalcy that Americans so desperately sought in the wake of the attacks.

Given all that is at stake right now, for the life of me, I have not been able to understand why we have been struggling to do the same now. Thankfully, the partisanship that has dominated these past few days has subsided. It appears that we can now move forward after this unnecessary delay. This is vital, as we simply can't afford to wait. Many small businesses in Arkansas, large cities and small towns alike, are being forced to close during this crisis, both to protect the public health and to protect their families, and because of a shrinking customer base, as customers are urged to stay home to reduce the spread of the disease. The unexpected closure for small business owners, through no fault of their own, may prevent many of them from reopening by the time this is behind us. Those employed at these operations will be among the hardest hit financially by this crisis.

Entire industries that are so vital to our Nation’s economic well-being have been crushed by the pandemic. The manufacturers have taken a huge hit from the crisis, putting our healthcare sector, strained to capacity right now by the coronavirus pandemic, in the face of substantial challenges moving forward.

Congress’s initial responses in the wake of the crisis were promising. We interim between being laid off and being able to qualify for unemployment compensation. We would have provided them a lifeline, and we still need to do it, and we need to do it now.

This legislation, which we could have passed 2 days ago, would have delivered relief to families that are struggling to stay afloat and ensured that their employees impacted by this coronavirus would be taken care of.

What is more, those small businesses need to be able to continue to exist so that once this virus is under control, these small businesses will actually have jobs to go back to.

But our Democratic colleagues said that wasn’t good enough. They chose to put their partisan political agenda ahead of the health and safety of the American people. So here we are with no end in sight. We keep reading reports from the minority leader and others saying: Well, the bill is on the 2-yard line. Well, you can have the distance and still never get across the goal.

Yesterday, House Democrats released their own coronavirus package, which is really amazing in the face of this bipartisan-negotiated bill. Speaker Pelosi parachutes back into town after a weeklong vacation and drops an 1,100-page piece of a bill which includes a host of proposals that have absolutely nothing to do with solving this crisis. As I mentioned, this includes emissions mandates for airlines, tens of millions of dollars for the Kennedy Center for Performing Arts, and early-voting and vote-by-mail requirements for every State across the country. This isn’t a sincere effort to support our healthcare providers, workers, and small businesses; it is a naked attempt to use a public health emergency as a smoke screen for their radical agenda.

Democrats’ priority simply isn’t solving the healthcare and economic crisis we are dealing with today. It is not. If it were, Senate Democrats would be fighting against a partisan relief bill two times already. And now House Democrats are flouting a bill that does more to advance their agenda and does not solve the crisis at hand. We don’t have time for more liberal virtue signaling. We need to act and act now.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

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

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

Mrs. FISCHER. Mr. President, yesterday, I came to the floor to talk about the need to provide relief for families across this country who are hurting because of this coronavirus crisis. I know small businesses are frustrated that they are stressed, and that they are looking to us to take action. Many people have lost their jobs. Many are watching their hard-earned savings evaporate. Many don’t know when they will be able to go back to work.

Here in this body, my colleagues and I are trying to move forward on a bill that would provide relief to individuals, to families, to small and medium-sized manufacturers and agriculture producers. Our bill would help to stabilize our economy in this downturn. The Senate bill offers reasonable, sorely needed solutions that will help families. Yet, while the anxiety and frustration on this side of the aisle is mounting, the other side is obstructing and delaying the relief that the American people need.

Let’s look at what is happening here and on the other side of this building.

The House Democrats ceased bipartisan negotiations on COVID–19—the relief package that we have been working on—so that they could write their own bill. What are the provisions that Speaker Pelosi and the House Democrats think this crisis right now during this crisis of unprecedented proportion like we have never seen before? It is a wish list about which many of my colleagues have spoken. It is a wish list that has nothing to do with the crisis at hand, with the American people, and no serious, new effort to provide relief.

Yesterday, I also spoke about the fact that, in our bill, we have relief for agriculture. It is the only effort to provide relief for agriculture producers, and it is the only effort to help to be removed from the bill. I don’t often agree with the chair of the Nebraska Democratic Party, but she was right when she said recently, in an interview with The Hill, that the Democrats don’t have a plan for rural America. According to the article, she said that the Democrats only address rural voters directly—people in rural communities—when they show up in Iowa to campaign for votes.

To the hard-working men and women of rural America, I say to you: Take note. Take note on who recognizes your vital role in our country and who is fighting for you.

People are sick and people are scared. As of this morning, my home State of Nebraska now has 62 confirmed cases of COVID–19. Addressing these Democratic priorities will not help our healthcare workers, who are on the frontlines in this fight against this virus. It will not help our small businesses that might have to lay off people or shut their doors for good if they don’t get this assistance. It doesn’t help our ag producers in Nebraska and all across the heartland who are working tirelessly to feed the world during these turbulent times. I will say again what I said yesterday: We don’t have a lot of time here. I urge all of my colleagues to work together and save the debate on a wish list for another day. Today, let’s give the American people what they need, and that is relief—relief for the families who are at home, caring for their children, and doing everything they can to make ends meet; relief for our amazing healthcare workers and community hospitals that are combating this disease, caring for their patients and saving lives; relief for small Main Street businesses—the backbone of America—that make our communities vibrant and prosperous. Let’s give these great Americans the critical relief to help carry them through this crisis.

I urge my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to work in a productive way to get this next phase of relief passed and send it to the President’s desk as soon as possible.

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.
recovery. We have told Americans they can’t go to work, and businesses are unable to operate. As a result of these measures, individuals are not getting a paycheck. We need to be helping them through this crisis by providing cash payouts, expanding unemployment benefits, and by ensuring that there will be job opportunities for Americans to return to when this is all over.

This is not a stimulus plan. It is an existence plan. We have to pass this bill. Americans have lost faith in many of their institutions. This is a defining moment. We have to restore some of the confidence that is being lost by putting the needs of the Nation over the wishes of the political class. Americans are looking toward Washington for leadership right now. This is a true test.

Let’s pass this bill and show that we can rise up to the massive challenge before our Nation.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

Mr. SCOTT of South Carolina. 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. SCOTT of South Carolina. Mr. President, today I rise to speak about the fact that the last 2 weeks—especially the last 2 weeks—have been incredibly difficult times for South Carolinians and for Americans throughout the country. As we always do, our American family has shown resilience, and so many are working to lift up those in need. I think about the folks who are going to drive-throughs and leaving tips. I have heard stories throughout South Carolina—and I am sure it is true throughout America—of folks paying for groceries for the single moms and for those in need behind them. I have heard of restaurants in South Carolina from the Halls food chain that are providing meals for single parents as well as for the homeless. There are so many positive stories coming out today and yesterday about the will of the American family to pull together during this incredibly unprecedented and challenging times. We have also learned a lot about social distancing and how to keep our restaurants open when folks are not allowed to go in.

Schools have had to close down and shift to online-only learning environments, taxing both parents, as I understand, and teachers.

Many workers have been furloughed or laid off. I am sure it is true in North Carolina, but it is certainly true in South Carolina that so many of our restaurant owners—I have been on the calls with hundreds of them talking about that the entire operation. Last Thursday and Friday, I saw that one restaurant with several different locations—I think 6 locations—laid off 900 employees, all going to the unemployment line. Another small restaurant chain with 6 or 7 locations laid off another 1,000 employees. In Myrtle Beach, SC, one of the meccas of tourism in the Nation, restaurant after restaurant, hotel after hotel is laying off parts of their family. Workforces have been draining from restaurants over a decade or two of working at the same place and serving amazing people are today without work, today without the paycheck that gives them the glue to not only keep their families together but to keep their finances together.

Small businesses are scrambling. I have run three different small businesses. I know the pain of not signing the front of the paycheck for yourself, not just being able to sign the back of that same paycheck for yourself because you are willing to do whatever it takes to make sure your employees get to cash their paychecks. I understand the turmoil in the heart of the employee who employer doesn’t have the resources they had just a couple of weeks ago. Even worse, because they did nothing wrong, they find themselves completely and totally exasperated, unable to comprehend and understand how outside of their own control, they no longer have the resources necessary to take care of their own family.

We find ourselves in unprecedented times, but in these times, I am reminded of the true heroes who show up every single day, and typically we are only talking about the law enforcement community and first responders, but today we have to add to the list of American heroes those folks who are clerks in grocery stores, filling the shelves over and over again. We have to add to that list those folks who are helping in the takeout delivery so folks can have hot meals when they go home. We undoubtedly keep in mind the true American heroes—our healthcare workers, the doctors and nurses and, as my mother has been for 45 years, nurse’s assistants, showing up in hospital environments, putting their lives on the line for fellow Americans, folks they don’t even know. They do so because it is their job, not just their duty, but it is their calling and their mission.

We are blessed to live in a nation where everyday people understand that which it seems we do not in this Chamber. That is what makes the last 3 days so incredibly frustrating.

On Saturday, it looked like this was all over. We were so close to a deal—so close that Senator SchUMER himself said on TV that he was very pleased with the negotiation and he spoke about how bipartisan the negotiations were. And then the Speaker of the House returned to town, and the tide of bipartisanship seemed to be coming to an end, making real progress, and the bill text was even released, and then, for absolutely no reason, the Speaker’s passion for partisan hagwosh
started causing the type of delay that doesn’t simply cripple our economy but imperils our healthcare response to the people who are infected by the coronavirus. It impairs our response to the healthcare workers who are providing that response. It compromises our ability to respond with the PPE or, said differently, the material, equipment, and the uniforms necessary to protect the healthcare workers.

I honestly cannot believe we are still here. I had already passed legislation that would make such a big difference in the lives of so many. Instead, we have to waste time explaining to the Speaker and to some of our friends on the other side that airline fuel emissions is not important in this legislation. We can debate that at another time. If you want the airline industry to be carbon neutral by 2025, let’s have that debate, but let’s not have it when people are desperately searching for help. We may even debate the importance of same-day registration and early voting, but let’s not hold up $1 trillion-plus from the hands of the people who can’t take care of their families because of a strong desire to use this crisis to achieve partisan ends.

We all should be interested in diversity, but let’s not hold up assistance to families because some folks, like the Speaker, want to use this legislation as a way to bring diversity to boards. This is not a place for this debate. This conversation should be a conversation about our healthcare workers, about those infected and those impacted, not about partisan political gains.

Imagine that—wasting time on 1,119 pages of the Speaker’s political hierarchy.

Thankfully, the American people are smarter and more resilient than those folks in Congress. The American people may be concerned, and they may feel the uncertainty about how long—weeks or months—that this will play out, but they know what we need: Immediate help for workers, for small businesses, and for healthcare professionals.

That is why, in this legislation, we fund hospitals. More than $70 billion for hospitals are being held up right now. More than $20 billion for veterans are held up right now. Tens of billions of dollars for vaccines, billions of dollars for the National Institutes of Health, billions of dollars for FEMA, billions of dollars in block grants for the States, and tens of billions of dollars of emergency assistance for public transportation so you can get there are held up.

What are they blocking? Well, they are blocking hundreds of billions of dollars in unemployment relief. Let me say it differently. In South Carolina, the average maximum benefit for unemployment is $326 a week. If you are making $50 bucks an hour or $60,000 a year—and the maximum benefit currently is $326 in South Carolina. It is $327 in Tennessee. In our legislation, no less than an additional $600 would flow to the unemployed. It is not just the traditional unemployed, as we have always defined it, but we have expanded the definition of unemployment, who would be eligible, to include the 10.9% or the person working for themselves because we want to make sure that the average person in this Nation, who is taking the risk and taking the chance to do something that they have always dreamed of doing, and they are working for themselves over the result of this crisis that has caused you to lose your paycheck and you are self-employed, we, in a bipartisan fashion, have brought together legislation that takes you into consideration. So instead of giving you the $236 in South Carolina or the $327 in Tennessee, you receive more than an additional $600 on top of that because we know the crisis that you are in is not of your own making.

We provide direct payments in this bill. It is very controversial and very debatable, but here it is, a minimum of up to $7,500 in individual income, $150,000 in household income. With two parents working, 75,000 and 75,000, you can get up to $50,000 for working adult and $500 for the children. That is $3,000 almost held up in a partisan debate.

As a small business owner, knowing how hard it is to keep employees when business is ripped out of your hand and you did nothing wrong, this legislation provides loans to keep your employees on the payroll if that is something that makes sense. If you use the funds that you borrow to keep your employees on the payroll, even a grant from a bank, that is better than a loan. That is a good thing because it is far cheaper for your employer to keep you on the payroll than it is to gamble on the unemployment insurance line.

So I am thankful to the American people. I am thankful to the American people because they have provided us everything. They have provided us examples of hope, reasons to be optimistic, the picture of strength and tenacity and, most importantly, in the midst of a crisis, they have provided us a picture of unity—people helping people. That is the part of the story that we haven’t heard a lot about—people helping people.

So, as this process finally comes to a close, hopefully, by the time we go to sleep tonight, I want to tell my folks back home in South Carolina and the doctors in Washington State, the nurses in New York City, and the restaurant owner in Myrtle Beach one thing: Thank you. Thank you for showing us all what it means to be an American, especially during unprecedented times. Thank you for reminding those blinded by politics in Washington what the actual goal really is.

I know America will not simply survive. America will, in fact, thrive. In the aftermath of this crisis. I know it because I know many, many Americans, and that is what we do. God has blessed the United States of America. Let us be a blessing to each other and get this done.

I suggest the absence of a quorum. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. PORTMAN. 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. PORTMAN. Mr. President, our economy is in a free fall. I just got off the phone with another business in Ohio that was worried about whether they can survive, whether or not they can keep the workers they have, and they are asking us to try to pass something that would actually help.

The bill before us does that. Yet here we are. Another day has gone by. More people have lost their jobs. More small businesses have shuttered. The coronavirus is spreading, and we are not passing legislation that addresses all of those issues.

I ask my colleagues on the other side of the aisle to work with us. Let’s come up with a bill here today.

The bill was the result of a bipartisan process. I was part of it. So I can tell you that. There were four different task forces that were asked to deal with four different parts of the response to the coronavirus. Each one was bipartisan. In our case, there were two Republicans and two Democrats. The administration was involved. We made concessions. The Democrats made concessions. The legislation represented that. There were ideas from both sides.

Yet here we are, 48 hours after the bill was introduced. We had hoped to have the bill signed into law by the President on Monday. I told businesses calling me yesterday saying: I am holding on because I was told this was going to be done by Monday.

My hope is that these meetings that are happening behind those closed doors are happening quickly and that Democrats don’t keep trying to add more things to this bill that are extraneous and that don’t have to do with the coronavirus.

This is not the time to try to get whatever your wish list is on a piece of legislation that is moving. These are not normal times here, where Members try to take advantage of the bill going through by adding something to it. It is also not a time to say: Let’s spend more, more and more on everything.

This is unprecedented. The total spending in this bill will be about $1.5 trillion. That is roughly the size of the entire appropriations that Congress normally does. The entire appropriations that come through the process here, called discretionary spending, is the amount of just one coronavirus emergency bill.

To me, it is a rescue package. It is a rescue package that does three things. No. 1, it tries to keep the doors open in those small businesses that are watching us so carefully right now to see
what is going to happen. Also, as part of keeping the doors open, it means that you can keep your employees.

So goal one is to keep employees attached to businesses. We should all want that. That is where most people get their jobs and get their retirement. That is where we want employees to be as we get over the hump here and begin to control this virus. Then we want to go back to work. We want to get the economy moving again so people can have paychecks and our economy can grow again.

No. 2, we do want to take care of those people who, through no fault of their own, have found themselves out of work. Sadly, in my home State of Ohio and around the country, there are a lot of people in that category.

Our unemployment insurance system is overwhelmed right now. This past week, compared to a week ago, we had a twentyfold increase. That is a 2,000-percent increase in the number of people waiting for unemployment insurance. Our claims have skyrocketed. It has overwhelmed the system. That is happening all over the country. We want to take care of those people.

And No. 3, this legislation does what is perhaps the most important thing, which is that it addresses the problems in our public healthcare system that have resulted in this response to coronavirus not being as strong as we would like it. Think about more masks and more gowns and protective equipment. Think about the anti-viral medication people can take—like for the flu, you can take Tamiflu. We need the anti-viral there to give people some comfort.

Think about the fact that we don’t have enough tests out there, still. Yes, it has improved, and it is improving every day, but we don’t have enough tests. People who are asymptomatic ought to get tests. If they are positive, then we ought to be able to trace it. That is what they did in South Korea. That is what they did in Japan. That is what they have done in other countries to try to get control of this. So that is all in this legislation.

Until we solve the healthcare part of it—that last part, that third part—we are going to continue to have problems in terms of the economic free fall. We can’t spend enough money to stop what is happening in terms of this economic issue we are dealing with the healthcare part of this. I think we are starting to make progress. But do you know what? We need the funding now so that the Centers for Disease Control, so that the States, so that the State departments of public health, and so that the county departments of public health can get to the point where they know who has this, they can trace it, and they can talk with certainty whether we are making progress or not.

One thing this bill will let us do is to develop those metrics so that you and I and everybody every day can see what the status is and how many new cases have been open that day. If we have this information from better testing, from better information flow, from the funding that is in this bill, including billions of dollars going to the Centers for Disease Control and back to the States, then we will be able to have some way to measure our success and eventually be able to say we are making progress and we have actually reversed the trend.

Only then will moms and dads feel safe having their kids go back to school. Only then will workers feel like it is safe to go back to work. Only then will restaurants be able to reopen and have people coming in to take advantage of that hospitality. Only then will the theaters be able to open up and the bowling alleys. This is in this legislation also, in the first two we talked about, helping to keep employees at work and keeping the doors open for small businesses.

Please pass this right away, because there are doors closing as we talk. Every minute we are here arguing over stuff, some of which has nothing to do with the coronavirus, means another business is shut down and another group who wants to get back here and begin to control this virus. So that is all in this legislation.

One thing this bill will let us do is to provide more liquidity during this period. Some people are not going to be able to stay afloat. These loans don’t have to be paid back. There is a direct payment. Perhaps you have heard about that. I think it is $1,200 per person. $2,400 for a joint filer or for a couple, and then $500 per child. Why is that important? Because people need some cash right now.

Some people are not going to be able to get on the unemployment insurance system for a while because it takes a little while to process that. But they will have the ability, because the IRS will be sending these checks out quickly, to be able to have a little help, a little cushion.

So this bill has all of that. This bill is there to help people. This bill is there to ensure that doors can stay open in these businesses and people can stay employed, to the extent possible. Let’s not block it anymore.
People said: Well, there is not enough money in here. That is really what Democrats wanted, to put more money in the bill. There is already $75 billion straight to hospitals, and then I would argue at least another $40 billion going to help hospitals directly or indirectly through Medicare reimbursements and through other changes in the law that help. That used to be a lot of money around here.

My point is, if that is not enough, in a few weeks Congress will be back. We can look at this. We will need to fine-tune this. But don’t block the bill today because it is not enough money for whatever you think your needs are.

We don’t know what the needs are. Let’s be honest. What do we know is this is an unprecedented amount of money. Congress has never passed a rescue package like this before—$1.5 trillion, on top of about $200 billion that was in the legislation that passed only a couple of weeks ago, on top of the $3 trillion on the list was in the first one. This is phase 3.

Then, finally, No. 3, this legislation does provide the help to the healthcare system, particularly the public healthcare system, to be able to provide the personal protective equipment that is needed for our healthcare workers, the additional ventilators and respirators that are needed in our hospitals, the antiviral medication that can help when someone tests positive to know that we have testing to do and we can test more quickly, to test more so that we can have the information to be able to measure whether we are succeeding or not; then, as we begin to measure our success, to be able to get the economy back on track, to be able to ensure people are out there again shopping. The consumer economy is so important.

This can all happen, but this legislation is critical to making it happen, to providing the rescue to help people weather the storm and to ensure that, at the other end of this, we come out strong. And we will. We will. But it requires us working together today, right now, to come out from behind these doors, stop the negotiating to add more here and there, and just say this is a bipartisan product. Nothing is perfect around here, but if you make perfect the enemy of the good, you are going to hurt more people. More small businesses will shut; more people will be out of work; more people are going to be infected with this virus who otherwise could have been saved.

So I ask my colleagues—it has already been too long—let’s pass this legislation today. Let’s begin the rescue package and begin to help the constituencies who deserve it.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. CAPITO). The Senator from Oklahoma.

Mr. LANKFORD. Madam President, 8 days ago we started the process of trying to pull together this economic bill—8 days ago. We have been in continuous session every day since then.

It was our belief that we would vote on this bill 2 days ago, on Sunday. The negotiations have gone on for this entire 8-day time period. Republicans and Democrats have been meeting together every day, working through the process—Republican chairmen, Democratic ranking members, sharing ideas.

Eight days ago, Senator SCHUMER presented a list 10 pages long of ideas and priorities that the Democrats wanted to include in the economic relief package. Multiple of those areas are included in this final package, in this compiled package that had all come together and was all headed toward trying to vote on it on Sunday.

Then Sunday happened, and it was: We are close. That wasn’t the answer of, We are voting on it. It was suddenly the negotiations are “We are close,” and a whole new set of priorities suddenly appeared from our Democratic colleagues to say, well, we have a few more things that we want and a few more things that we want to evaluate. “We are close” is all we heard.

We thought we were done. For the sake of the American people, we need to be done. We have folks at home across the entire country who are trying to figure out if they can get a loan, if they can keep their business going, if they can keep their employees. They have no income coming, and all that is coming out of this body is: We are close. Help us with a few more things that we want to discuss.

Here is a sample of the calls that I got yesterday: A lady from Southwest Oklahoma called, literally in tears, saying she has a small business, and there is little to no business going on right now, with no cashflow, and she doesn’t know about she and her husband’s retirement and she doesn’t know why the bill didn’t pass yesterday.

All we could say to her was we don’t know either because it was suddenly a new set of issues. It seemed to be all day long Sunday, Monday, and now we are deep into Tuesday, and we still can’t get a set of answers.

Painfully enough, I was one of my Senate colleagues on the Democratic side and just asked: What is the problem? What is the holdup? Their answer was: We are compiling our list from everyone right now to try to get down to what our priorities are.

This was yesterday, Monday. We thought we would be done on Sunday. All I could say back to them was: You are compiling your list? You still don’t even know what all you want to be able to include in this bill, and we are just stalling and waiting until we can figure out what to do?

We have been done, and now we are stuck waiting for the other side to say: I am thinking of a few more things we want to include.

I had a lady from Southern Oklahoma come to me because the daycare center where her daughter works has shut down. She did not know what is going to happen and wanted to know—she has heard about this possibility of a check being sent out to every American—that would sure be helpful right now—and wanted to know when that was coming.

All I could say was: I don’t know. We are waiting on our Democratic colleagues to finish compiling their list of the other things they want to add into this bill so we can even discuss it. All I can say is: I keep hearing we are at the 2-yard line or we are this close.

But we never seem to get past the 2-yard line. It is always: We are close. Folks at home don’t need “We are close.” They need things done.

So let me just say, really quickly, what is in this bill and why it is so important to us:

Additional money for testing, additional money for work on vaccines, additional money on trying to be able to go through treatments, ventilators, literally billions of dollars that go to hospitals and clinics and nursing homes and senior centers.

One section of the bill has $75 billion and another section of the bill has $40 billion—just for hospitals and for healthcare.

The hospitals are all telling us the same thing: We need help, and we need help right now. And I would say back to them: Would love to, except we seem to be parked on the 2-yard line while other folks are saying: We are close. We are still thinking of a few other things we want to get into.

There is an immediate check that is to go out to every American to provide some support for utilities and the basic things because so many people are unemployed. To those folks who are calling us saying: When are they coming, all I can say is I don’t know. All I hear is that we are close because the other side wants to include a few more things they are thinking about on their list.

Already in the bill is $200 billion for unemployment insurance, with an increase in the amount that would come on each check. We would love to get that started, except we are on the 2-yard line, and we can’t seem to get past that because the other side is still making a list of the other things they want to include in this bill.

So we can’t get help to hospitals. We can’t get immediate support checks out the door. We can’t get additional unemployment insurance going because they are thinking about a few more other things they want to add into the bill.

Already in the bill is help for small businesses: helping people retain their
full salary if they work at a small business—that is, a business of 500 or less—so that they can stay connected to their employer so that, when we get through this virus, they actually have a job, and they can continue their same salary. That is an immediate offer.

It is not like the one that passed last week that is small businesses are expected to pay for the coverage out of money they don’t have, and someday the Federal Government will figure out a process to reimburse them. This is totally different. This is an immediate, upfront infusion into small businesses, and they don’t have to come up with the cash. It is come up with for them, for them to be able to cover their employees.

That helps their employees from going into unemployment insurance, and it helps this economy recover a lot faster because they are able to come right back to it.

I would love to tell them: Go to your bank right now; that loan is ready—except I can’t because the other side is still thinking about a few more things they want to add into this bill.

And while small businesses can’t make it through the week because of their circumstances because they have had to forcibly closed, the other side is thinking about a few more things they want to add in.

There is help in this for nonprofits that are doing amazing work all over my State; because if they have been forcibly closed, the other side is thinking about a few more things they want to add in.

The YMCA and YWCA, they are feeding youth in the community. The schools are stepping up, doing remarkable work feeding folks. The free community clinic has had to close in some of my communities just because of COVID-19, so they are trying to find ways to help out in other ways.

The Hope Center that is in Woodward is doing a drive-through food distribution right now instead of having people come in. So they are getting food to them.

We have got some of the Youth & Family Services’ facilities that are doing amazing work right now, but they are payroll right now. They are needing some help. Well—guess what—there is help in this bill for those nonprofits to keep their payroll going and to be able to keep going because we desperately need those nonprofits to still be able to provide that help in those communities.

I would love to tell those nonprofits help is on the way, but all I can tell them is we are on the 2-yard line waiting for the other side to determine a few more things that they still want to put in the bill. So it is really—maybe.

A lot of large businesses that employ a lot of people in my State are not asking for grants, though they would love to get those. Obviously, they are asking for capital. They are asking for access to loans. They are asking for the opportunity to take out a loan and to be able to make a payment. That is in this bill. There is not a bailout for big companies. But I can tell you;

This bill provides an opportunity for medium and large companies to get access to credit so they can get a loan to carry their company through. I would love to tell them: You can go out and we are thinking about a few other things that they want to do.

We are waiting. Time is important right now.

While one of my colleagues made a public statement yesterday saying: This is a $2 trillion bill; we should really get it right—oh, I agree, but this doesn’t seem to be a matter of making sure the text is correct. All that I have heard for the last 48 hours is: There are so many things we are thinking about that we want to be able to get into the bill.

Yesterday it was solar energy panels and solar credits, which I don’t know how it connects with COVID-19. It was supposed to be carbon neutral by 2025. It was union representatives on corporate boards. It was limiting the ability of corporations to have any kind of access to doing stock buybacks for the next 10 years.

All those things may be fine to debate. Why in the world are we holding up small businesses and holding up checks to individuals and cutting off support for nonprofits because we are thinking about a few things like solar panels and carbon-neutral footprints for airlines?

Why don’t we get this done? Time is important. People at home who have real lives and real families and a small business have no income coming in right now. They have no cash flow, and they are trying to pay their employees and figure out what is going to happen next, while the other side is thinking about something else they might want to add to this bill.

I am fine with thinking through the details, but in our office, it is really difficult to continue to answer the phone and hear people say: I don’t know how we will stay open any longer.

I will tell you what—why don’t you answer this call for me while you are thinking about what else you might want to add to the bill? A hotel owner in my State just closed their doors while you are thinking about what you want to do next.

I am asking the other side. The bill already has these elements in it, and while I am confident people will step out of negotiations at some point and say “We miraculously saved the bill because we changed five lines in it and because we put additional dollars into this account” or “This account was too low, so now we didn’t give $75 billion to hospitals; we gave $100 billion to hospitals. So, look, we fixed it. And we didn’t give $10 billion to cities; we gave $15 billion to cities, and so we saved it”—well, while you are arguing about adding a few more dollars at the end of these different things, in the meantime, small businesses and people in these communities are asking: Can I get the first dollar while you are arguing about the fifteen-billion-dollar? Can I get some help now?” Time is important. Let’s stop pretending it is not. It may not be to some folks in this room; it is to the 4 million folks in my State.

We were ready on Sunday with this bill and thought we were voting on it to finish it. Now, 48 hours later, the other side is still thinking about something they might want to add to this.

Let’s vote.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Arizona.

Ms. MCSALLY. Madam President, we are at war. Unlike the enemies I fought against in uniform, this enemy is invisible, but it is just as deadly. Earlier today, the World Health Organization cautioned that the United States could be the next epicenter of this deadly virus. The Governor of Arizona General sounded the alarm that things would get drastically worse this week. Economists are warning of a prolonged economic downturn that will devastate the country financially in ways unseen since the Great Depression.

As of right now, more than 600 Americans have died from the coronavirus. In Arizona, our Governor announced this morning that the death toll from the outbreak is up to five. In the past 4 days, we have seen more than a 200-percent increase in the number of cases in my State. It is going to go up. These aren’t just numbers; they are people. Our hearts and our prayers are with the grieving families who lost their loved ones and those fighting for their lives right now.

The Nation has embarked on a massive effort to flatten the curve of the coronavirus to protect the vulnerable, buy time, and ensure our healthcare system doesn’t get overwhelmed. These aggressive steps will save lives, but this path creates another calamity of massive economic hardship unlike anything we have experienced. We are telling people to stay home and not work. The financial devastation is wide and deep.

Arizonans are stepping up to do their part to save the vulnerable. Working people deserve relief, and their needs are urgent.

I was home in Arizona a week ago Sunday and saw a neighbor, a single mom with three kids. She owns a food truck. She told me that her income just went to zero, with all events canceled. “What am I supposed to do?” she asked me, with her son by her side at the food truck. I told her I was heading back to DC to pass legislation to get her cash fast for her rent and food, plus additional support for her small
business. She was scared. I can’t imagine the fear that must be gripping all Arizona parents just like her who must provide for their families in the face of this open-ended economic lockdown.

That same day, I ordered takeout at my favorite local restaurant. There was hardly anyone there when it is usually packed, and this was before the Governor’s order to shut down eating in dining rooms. This is a family-owned, small restaurant where they poured their savings, their hearts, and their sweat building this local success story. I asked how they were coping, and they said they were deeply concerned. “What are we supposed to do?” they asked. I told them to hang in there and that relief was on the way.

More fear in the eyes of people whose only sin is to have worked hard and played by the rules in pursuit of their American dream.

On Monday morning, I walked to the gate in the airport terminal where I usually see people who shine shoes. We kept our distance, but I asked how the virus impacted her. She said that she had only one client that day and that things were grinding to a halt. “What am I supposed to do?” I heard again on the phone later, and I told her relief was on the way soon.

This morning, she is waking up to no relief bill and a new story that airlines have plans to shut down altogether. It is a nightmare with no end in sight for so many like her.

On the plane back to Washington, DC, I texted the woman who grooms my dog Boomer to ask how the virus impacted her. She said she couldn’t because she had to pay her bills. What is she supposed to do? I pleaded with her on text to go home and said relief was on the way.

Later that day, I heard from a doctor who asked me to send a message of encouragement to the healthcare workers serving on the frontlines of the VA.

“We’re gonna need it,” he texted. “It’s coming.” He shared with me their concerns about their patients and families. “We want to do the best we can against an unknown enemy in darkness,” he said. He went on to share that he was most impressed by the nurses and the support staff, like the housekeepers who keep the hospital clean. They still smile, but terrified inside. I put a short video together to thank these heroes, and I told him that relief was on the way soon.

Over the past 8 days, I have heard countless stories similar to these from Arizonans across the State. The situation is dire, and it is urgent. These are real people who are suffering real harm from this pandemic. Relief must be delivered posthaste, bold and swift.

First and foremost, every Senator in this Chamber has promised a constituent that relief is on the way soon, but the actions by some Members in this Chamber have resulted in broken promises to the American people. By blocking advancement of this urgent relief package that was drafted by Senators of both parties, Democratic leadership has ushered in one of the saddest chapters in American history.

Although I have only been in the Senate for a little over a year, I can say it has lived up so far to its reputation as a place where nothing happens fast, but with a sense of urgency. Republicans and Democrats came together to work around the clock to build this comprehensive relief package. We worked on this with the goal of keeping employees connected to employers to the max extent possible, and we strengthened unemployment benefits for those laid off. Working Arizonans need cash now to pay rent and buy food. Small businesses need to be rescued from closing forever. Our economy needs to be stopped from collapsing. Our hospitals need resources now to meet the coming tsunami.

If passed on Sunday, this package would send $3,400 in cash to every family of four in Arizona making $150,000 a year or less. It would give small businesses money to pay back their employees on the payroll and pay other overhead costs like rent. Those businesses are in danger of closing down in the next week or so, and they won’t be around to provide jobs when the virus is defeated. We must urgently—urgently—act to keep them afloat.

The legislation also allows larger employers that provide jobs for people in each of our States to take out loans to keep people on the payroll as their revenues plummet. Take PetsSmart and Best Western Hotels, both headquartered in Arizona—these businesses and others like them provide jobs for our neighbors, and those are at risk today.

For our frontline warriors in this pandemic fight, our initial bipartisan framework provides $75 billion to hospitals, more than $1 billion to the Indian Health Service, $20 billion for veterans’ health services, $11 billion to develop treatments and vaccines, and $1.7 billion for the Strategic National Stockpile for essential equipment like masks, test kits, and ventilators.

If you want to plus it up, we could have done it Sunday afternoon. We could have had that conversation and swiftly passed this bill.

We also significantly increased unemployment benefits. Currently in Arizona, unemployment is $250 a week. We increased that to $500, while expanding eligibility for those who are self-employed, independent contractors, part-time workers, and gig economy workers, like Uber and Lyft drivers.

All of that—that is what the Democrats asked on Sunday and then again on Monday. And for what? So they could throw money at liberal pet projects that have absolutely nothing to do with treating the health and economic fallout of the coronavirus—nothing whatsoever.

Relief was on the way. It was all but a done deal. And then NANCY Pelosi landed in DC, and she and CHUCK SCHUMER decided to blow it all up for their unrelated, ideological wish list. People are losing their jobs, running out of money, and they are looking for us to provide strong relief now, but that doesn’t seem to matter to them. We said relief was on the way, and now it isn’t.

This morning, Senator SCHUMER is presiding over this Chamber on Sunday night after the first failed vote when CHUCK SCHUMER waltzed in that door and objected to opening up the Senate early on Monday, instead forcing us to wait until noon. He gave a theatrical speech from over there, filled with flat-out lies, saying that we had set an “artificial deadline” to pass this bill. An artificial deadline for whom?

The following day was the deadliest day of the U.S. fight against COVID-19, with more than 100 new deaths reported, and people in Arizona are losing their jobs every single day. While the Senator from New York may not worry about where his next meal is coming from, the people I talk to every day in Arizona do. In fact, they are more than worried. They are afraid.

People are dying, and the Democratic leaders think this is an opportunity to score political points and grab power. How despicable. It is immoral, and it must stop.

This is an unprecedented challenge for our country, but I am confident we will prevail. Just like other severe crises in our history, this pandemic is bringing out the best of America and the best of Arizona. I am inspired every day by stories of Arizonans who are stepping up to serve others and putting their own concerns and fears aside.

During this crisis, our country is not divided. Our States are not divided. Our communities are not divided. Instead, Arizonans are being selfless and serving others. Young people are delivering groceries to the elderly. Healthy people are volunteering at food banks and donating blood. Neighbors are pitching in to provide childcare for essential healthcare workers. Faith communities are delivering care packages to the vulnerable and first responders. They are rising to the occasion because that is what we do. So here in the Senate, what are we supposed to do? Follow their example. Rise to the occasion. Put selfish motives aside. Stop with the opportunism. Stop with the ideological wish list, and start voting yes immediately to get relief to America. It is infuriating. It is immoral, and it must stop.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Missouri.

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Madam President, I am tempted to talk about all the problems we have had in getting out of this point with this legislation, but I am wondering if now is not the time to talk about why we need to get this
done. We have heard a lot about who is wrong and who is right and who is taking advantage of the moment, but this is a moment at which we need to do something. This is truly an emergency piece of legislation that deals with a set of circumstances that has historically affected our country. We have a virus that people are reacting to in a way that both encourages them and, in some cases, requires them to withdraw from the normal economic activity of the country.

This is different than 9/11. With 9/11, the American people said: We are going to show those terrorists that they can’t slow us down. In many cases, people got out even more aggressively into the economy than they had been before. In 2008 and 2009, we clearly had a huge economic problem, but that economic problem didn’t get dramatically changed by people’s unwillingness to participate, but there was a concern about participating. Now we have, fundamentally, a very strong economy that people have been asked to withdraw from or have chosen to withdraw from or have been advised to withdraw from, and we need to figure out what to do about that both on the healthcare side and economic side.

Our role here is limited. We can’t legislate an end to the coronavirus. If we could, we would. We can’t legislate exactly how people will behave, and if we could, we probably shouldn’t. We can’t talk people who have to wash their hands. We can talk a lot about the washing of hands, but, legislatively, there are a lot of limits there. There are some things we can do, and now is the time to do the things we can do.

How do we get the most help to the most people in the quickest way? I hope we can come together today, in the next few hours, and decide that the moment is more important than everybody’s winning everything one would want for this issue. It is a moment in which to make the most of it because it will not come around again. Frankly, in my view, it is going to come around again pretty quickly. I would say that the minute we are done with phase 3, we will start talking about phase 4 because all of us know that phase 3 can’t include everything that needs to be included and that it can’t look at some of the details that will become only more available and obvious after we get into phase 3.

What do we need to do right now?

First of all, we have to create a way for people to see immediate cash assistance coming for expenses they didn’t have before—either healthcare expenses they didn’t have before or childcare expenses they didn’t have before or other kinds of expenses. In many cases, we are going to see many, many more people who will have new or current expenses but will not have the income they had before.

Unusually, a very typical middle-class family of four would get somewhere in the neighborhood of $3,000 to $4,000 sometime in the early days of April. We will immediately begin to talk about whether that needs to be repeated again as the summer progresses, but that is not the point right now. The point is, what happens 2 and 3 weeks from now? This is the time that and should provide emergency funds for food and nutrition programs. It will create a temporary pandemic unemployment assistance program to give assistance to workers who normally wouldn’t be eligible for unemployment yet or who wouldn’t be eligible at a rate that would sustain their families’ expenses. This would include an additional $600 a week for every recipient of unemployment insurance for the next 3 weeks. By the time we are done, it might be longer than 3 weeks, but the goal here is to get money into the hands of families and, more importantly, to let them know that this money is on the way.

We need to help small businesses that are, in many cases, being told they have to close. Restaurants and other retail businesses have been told by Governors in several States that they have to close their businesses—that they can’t be in those businesses. If you are in the restaurant business, you probably right now have a business, but it will no longer be the business you used to have, wherein people would come in and sit down and order or would come in and order and then sit down and the staffing is different. People are going to be out of unemployment lines and on the unemployment rolls.

Part of the goal of this legislation is to see that this doesn’t happen. The goal is to make loans available to small businesses. One of the possible ways to satisfy those loans is just to keep your employees in place as part of your employee structures for as long as you can. In Missouri, we have 332,000 small businesses. More than 90 percent of which would have to close if they would not qualify to meet that small business standard. Now, it is difficult enough to run a small business in the best of times, but these circumstances certainly don’t allow us to look at this as the best of times.

This legislation would provide money to make sure that workers keep those jobs. It is easier to bring somebody back to work than it is to hire somebody for work. It is easier if we can keep the employees and others in place. In fact, at the Big Business level, I think one of the criteria for some of the potential programs would be that you would have to keep your employees in place, as in the case of the airlines, through sometime in September. Hopefully, by September, businesses will have recovered to the point at which it will not be a hardship to keep those employees in place. We would start with small businesses and then look at all of the businesses, using the PPPs, using loans to cover interest on their mortgages, if they are small businesspeople, or their rent or utilities—using loans in a way that they would if they had their normal levels of cashflow but that are not there now.

Every day we wait makes it harder for a small business or any business to decide: Can I keep these people on the payroll any longer or is the only choice I have to put them on the unemployment roll? Every day we wait, there are more businesses that are making that decision. Remember, you have no income coming in. All of your money is going out, and you are in a situation where you have the vague promise that Congress is trying to do something about this. People are getting let go every single day. There are more people out of work today than were out of work on Monday morning. There will be more people out of work tomorrow than there are today.

We can have a positive impact on that if we will just act in a way that will help them keep their doors open when there is any business to be had and to keep their people who work for them in the payroll.

By the way, with a small business, it is usually not just the people who work for you but the people who work with you—the small businessperson who, in many cases, is doing every single job in the restaurant business, along with somebody else. What can we do to keep the door open, to keep the people on the payroll, and have them ready to bounce back the minute the immediate crisis is over?

The need to do things in this bill that will support healthcare workers and healthcare providers. This bill will make sure, I think, that to do that in any form it is taking at this moment. Certainly, in the healthcare part that I have worked on as the chairman of the subcommittee, testing for the coronavirus is going to be paid for. It is going to be paid for by Medicare. It is going to be paid for by Medicaid. It is going to be paid for by private insurance. Hospitals will get relief in terms of the payments they are supposed to make. It will be the regulatory relief they need to have as they are trying to adapt to a new situation.

Hospitals will have the flexibility with more telehealth services. We already put that in bill No. 2. We are trying to further refine it here in this bill, bill No. 3. One thing that particularly has resonance at this moment is telehealth. If you are telling people, ‘‘Who do you go to the Doctor unless your doctor tells you that you have to go to the hospital’’ or ‘‘Don’t go to the emergency room as your first place to go; rather, find a doctor to talk to’’ or ‘‘Don’t even go to the doctor; rather, find a doctor to talk to,” telehealth will allow you not only to talk to a doctor but also to have that doctor look at you and have you look at him as you talk to each other.

We need to be sure that doctors have what they are now calling the personal protective equipment, the PPEs. It is a term that, 6 months ago, I am not sure I would have recognized—maybe not 6 weeks ago—but it is very
much part of this discussion. As a matter of fact, it is one of the reasons hospitals are being told not to perform elective surgeries. Elective surgery is, by definition, elective, which means you don’t have to have it at that moment. Yet, if people had plenty of equipment, there would be no reason for those surgeries not to happen. Make sure you have the protective equipment you need when the coronavirus hits your community.

We start out by cutting down the need for that equipment by expanding—again—telehealth and by not encouraging people to take the test because every one of those tests requires one to wear a pair of gloves, a unique mask, and maybe, with some frequency, different protective equipment. We are trying to figure out how to do all of that.

We are adding funds for agencies like the National Institutes of Health and the University of Missouri Foundation so they may move toward both therapeutics and vaccines as quickly as we can. Therapeutics probably happen more quickly than vaccines, but we are looking for ways to do that and ways to ensure proper production.

Community health centers matter. Certified community behavioral health centers matter. In this bill, we are looking at how we will extend the legislation to allow them to exist, for we reached the end of the authorized period in May. There is no reason to have that happen in May. This bill should take those healthcare extension programs out longer than the 22nd of May, and I believe it will.

There are a lot of competing interests here that we have to balance. By the time we vote on the bill, no person who will vote on it will think everything in it is exactly what he would like to have there. We don’t get to legislate from just hope that there will not be so much in it that I won’t like that it will create a bigger problem than I will want to have. I want to vote for this bill. I want to get it done. I want to get it out there for people to see. It is harder for me to do that if it includes a lot of extraneous things that will clearly have nothing to do with this healthcare emergency. I hope that we will not have to make that decision. I hope we will get focused.

All of those whom I, the Presiding Officer, and Senator ENZI—sitting here beside me—have talked to have pretty good cases about how this is affecting them. Charities call in and say: We just had to cancel our one, big fundraising event of the year. Charities call in and say: Our volunteers aren’t showing up.

The for-profit people are impacted; the not-for-profit groups are impacted; travel is impacted; agriculture is impacted. We are about to get to the fourth of the year where people have community festivals and community fairs—the Missouri State Fair, Ozark Empire Fair, the carnivals that occur in our State. The 6- to 10-month travel destinations, like Silver Dollar City or Six Flags or Worlds of Fun—if you lose part of that season, that season is lost, and you are not going to get that May or that June or that April back. You won’t have that back. Let’s deal with that by saying: Well, we will just be open in January to make up for the people who would have been at our theme park in June. That is not going to happen.

We are going to have the Ozark Empire Fair out in Missouri sometime different of the year than August because August is hard this year.

I noticed today they announced that the Olympics in Tokyo are going to be postponed by 1 year. You never get that year back. You never get that back. You never get that county fair, that agricultural opportunity to look at agriculture and horticulture and local industry back once it is gone, whether it is the midyear operations or the part-time operations that make those things work. All those things are getting away from us, and we have to begin to look—and I think we will do that more in part 4 than we were able to do in part 3. How do we go back in and more quickly as possible, protect these businesses and these not-for-profits so that a year from now they are still around? How do you miss all or part of this year’s activity and still be able to do next year?

So we have our work cut out for us. It won’t end with the bill we are working on right now. So if anybody out there, my colleagues, is waiting until this bill solves every problem we need to solve, we will wait too long.

Just as we were able to move forward with part 1 and get money out there quickly for the healthcare providers, for the researchers at the Federal level, part 2 did more of that at the State and local levels, as well as beginning to think about people staying at work. Part 3 does all the things I have just talked about and more, but there will be a part 4. We have to get this done.

People are unemployed today who would not have been unemployed if we would have done this work on Monday. People will be unemployed tomorrow who would not have been unemployed if we finish this work today.

Let’s get our business done. Let’s get started on finding out the gaps that still need to be filled. Let’s do what the American people expect us to do and treat an emergency like it is an emergency, not like it is an opportunity.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. BLACKBURN). The Senator from Wyoming.

MR. ENZI. Madam President, today I come to the floor to talk about the plight of America’s small businesses, to talk about the plight of their owners, to talk about the plight of their employees.

As a former small business owner myself, I am here to plead their case and reiterate how important it is that Congress helps them and helps them now.

Small businesses are an important part of our American economy that help our country and its inhabitants to thrive, and they employ millions of people.

Here is what Congress has done so far in response to the coronavirus crisis: We passed package No. 1. It was $8 billion. Around here, that used to be a big number—$8 billion for healthcare.

Then we did package 2, and that beefed up the healthcare needs and other things.

I should mention that that package was put together by the House without input from the Senate. It was put together by Democrats without Republican input. We in the Senate saw things they did not want and things that were missing, the bill passed in 1 day without amendments. We held our nose and swallowed. We recognized the urgency of the situation.

Now a package has been put together through task groups with equal representation from both sides of the aisle, and it is being decried as a Republican bill. This package is to take care of the second wave of disaster—the massive unemployment—caused by government caution. Government caution is saving lives, but it is putting people out of work.

The virus has closed businesses while in turn, lay off employees. It has closed schools. It has changed every aspect of our daily lives, and it has left people isolated. It has put a strain on healthcare workers and first responders. It has done it in what was a strong and growing economy.

Why isn’t there more concern for the employees out of work? Why haven’t we already done at least the parts of this bill that give nongovernment employees some comfort and hope?

The main reason is government can’t identify with the small businessman. No one in Congress has to be concerned about how to pay his or her employees. That is the first place government money goes, even if government doesn’t have any.

Government employees—our staffs know they have a job and they will be paid. Employees in the private sector don’t have any confidence in their next paycheck in this new turmoil. They may have been laid off. They have lost their paycheck. They have lost their health benefits. The schools and daycare have closed. Their world has been upended. They went from a bright future to unemployed in a couple of weeks. Congress can’t even imagine their dilemma. Congress is immune economically.

A small business doesn’t exist for the government; it exists in spite of the government. Someone with a lot of data on commercialization and who think they think is a good idea has the gumption to start a business. They take risks without guarantees. Many folks, without any help from Congress, launched
new businesses to sell their products or services and were successful enough to hire employees.

At that point, they built a business family. Successful small businesses work in that way. They know their employees and share a sense of pride for helping them. They also know the family of the employee. Usually, they work side by side with those employees. They share their joys and their sorrows.

But in contrast to government, they have to sell something of value. They have to make a profit or they have no money to pay employees.

None of them like to lay off employees, but we have built a backstop of unemployment so that the employees can still get some money. However, the owner of the business doesn’t have that backstop. The owner of the business would rather be employing his people.

But here is the dilemma we have for our small businesses, and it is unprecedented. Government has effectively taken their customers away. Government, to protect people from the virus, has virtually closed down everything but grocery stores, hospitals, and clinics. Government has even recommended curtailing nonessential medical services if they are not for addressing the virus or some other life-or-death situation.

But the real sector that has been hurt is the employees in the small business sector. They have no fault of their own nor any fault of the person managing the business. Government has taken their jobs away.

Answers are available and have been worked out by a group of equal number from both parties, but we continue to be stopped in our efforts.

I sincerely hope this is not about bringing down the President or someone trying to take advantage of a crisis in order to gain political achievements otherwise.

I gave a speech last Friday about the way to save the employees of small businesses. The package was ready then. That employee retention package is part of what has been held up since Sunday.

Yes, we stayed through the weekend to get a solution before the markets opened on Monday, but it was voted down.

In record time, we accepted a Democratic bill written in the House last week without any amendments. Now a bipartisan product has been held up. For what? Some of the demands of those across the aisle have nothing to do with the virus. There are demands for climate change. The economic climate has changed and is changing daily, and they want to wedge in some ideas they know would fail standing alone.

I have always said the best legislation is step-by-step legislation, but we always try to be comprehensive. Maybe that is so that it is incomprehensible and too big for anyone to understand or know.

Now, here is how the small business employee retention part works: Businesses across America are shut down or considering shutting down. Many businesses don’t have any sales. No sales, no money—no money to pay employees or other bills that come due.

Every employer has that experience of sitting straight up in bed in the middle of the night and saying: Payroll is coming. Payday is coming. Do I have enough cash to pay my employees? That comes with a decrease in sales.

But this time many businesses are faced with no business—no business—and not through a fault of their own. So the only controllable variable is employees. They can lay off employees to cut costs. If employees get laid off, they can file for unemployment, but they lose their health insurance at a time when health expenses could be imminent.

Most people in government can’t appreciate this dilemma. It is happening in the business world. In fact, the lines at some unemployment offices are so long, they discourage filing. And the rule about keeping safe distance? Wow.

In this instance, the government has essentially shut down many businesses, eliminating their sales and eliminating their cash to pay employees. For small businesses, their bank says: I am sorry. I can’t loan you any money because you don’t have any sales, and you can’t pay me back. They have to lay off employees, file for bankruptcy, but small businesses do.

The owner probably also has to pay rent, heat, and utilities, to name a few essentials.

But their main concern is with employees. They need employees. They need trained employees. When they lay off their loyal, trusted employees, they can’t be sure they can get them back later.

So this bill has a solution, and I congratulate the people who worked on it. One of them has joined me here on the floor, Senator SHAHWEEN. Senator CARDIN worked on it. This bill has a solution.

While Congress continues to negotiate, here is the direction it is heading: The Federal Government will loan the businesses the money to pay their employees, provided they don’t lay them off and they rehire the ones who have been laid off. The employees keep their jobs and their health insurance, even if the business is closed down.

When things come back to more normal, if the owner has been keeping all of his employees, that part of the money that they got is forgiven. They have the skilled employees they had, and business can continue to pay the employees.

That part of the bill alone generally takes care of employees of any business with fewer than 500 employees, even if 1 employee, which would be many businesses based in my home State of Wyoming. In Wyoming there are a lot of communities that do not even have 500 residents. We are a State made up of small towns, some of which have only one or two businesses. And in my State, hundreds or could be laid off each day. Provisions to stop that are an instant part of our bill.

Another part of the bill helps those whose business is gone. In cases in which the pay retention for employees doesn’t work, the unemployment has been increased up to $600 a week in addition to the normal unemployment benefits.

And to keep things intact during the transition, the bill provides direct payment to every taxpayer of $1,200 if making less than $75,000 or $2,400 if filing jointly and making less than $150,000 combined. Plus there will be $500 for each child in the family. That is to tide people over while the other relief kicks in.

But it shouldn’t take long for the employer retention part to kick in, as all the structure is in place now. Any community bank, any lending institution, can give the loan to a small business without having to check collateral or any of the other cumbersome steps to normally getting a loan, and the loan is guaranteed by the Federal Government.

Loans to others. You have heard about big businesses that have lost their customers in response to the virus. Generally, if they have over 500 employees, they are eligible for the employee retention piece, but there are loans quickly available. There are no grants for big companies, just loans, and the companies are prohibited from using the money to buy back stock and are also prohibited from pay increases or bonuses to managers. The loans are at market rate with no forgiveness. They will have to be paid back. This is a lifeline to keep jobs.

There is money available to State and local governments—$186 billion. For hospitals there is another $75 billion; for veterans, $20 billion; another $11 billion for vaccines, therapeutics, and diagnostics; $4.5 billion more for the Centers for Disease Control, in addition to what was done before; $12 billion for K–12 education; $10 billion for airports; $20 billion for public transportation.

These and other solutions have been held up by the Democrats. Every single employee they are eligible for so far. They say they need more time to negotiate. They promise an agreement is imminent.

My colleagues across the aisle have used Senate procedures to unnecessarily drag this out. Let me describe the Senate process and how long it can take to get a final product. It can be necessary to get three clotures. That means a vote supported by at least 60 Senators. Anyone absent counts as a no vote. Neither party has 60 Members. So the small majority they have today votes from their side are necessary. Anyone who is sick from the virus and cannot be here counts as a no vote. If
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the virus hits Congress harder, it will be harder for us to even function. So we can’t wait.

Back to how cloture works and why it takes so long, bills can be delayed in the Senate almost a week if even one person opposes it. That’s what is happening now, except it is a lot more than one person. A shell bill from the House has been put up to conform to a constitutional rule that spending bills have to originate in the House. What we have been voting on isn’t even the real bill. It is a shell.

A motion to proceed to the bill has to be by unanimous consent or have cloture filed. If 60 Senators vote for cloture, then there can be 30 hours of debate on whether we should take up the real issue.

To actually get to amend the bill takes another 60 votes, to allow amendments and another 30 hours, unless everybody agrees. After amendments are finished or if there is a feeling that we couldn’t finish even without unanimous consent, there would be a final vote to close off debate. That would also take 60 votes. So the need to have leverage before the first cloture vote on the shell in order to negotiate just doesn’t cut it. Either a cloture vote or the second vote and the expenditure of 30 hours between each vote. That is why we stayed around and voted on Sunday, so maybe we could get the first 30 hours out of the way while negotiations went on and then get to the bill and then get to the amendments.

My colleagues across the aisle are using this process to forward their agenda even for issues unrelated to this crisis. We are not doing climate change as part of this emergency bill. Everything should have a direct connection to the coronavirus. Rome is burning and Congress is fiddling. This bill should take care of our country’s inhabitants and communities. Protections for small businesses, their owners, and employers are vital and an important piece of this response. I implore everyone to vote for cloture.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Hampshire.

Mrs. SHAHEEN. Madam President, I come to the floor today, like so many of my colleagues, during what is undoubtedly the worst crisis that I have seen in my lifetime. It reminds me of hearing from my parents and grandparents about what it was like in America during the Depression and during World War II. This crisis in some ways is even worse because it is an enemy we can’t see—the novel coronavirus, or COVID-19.

Not since the 1918 outbreak of the Spanish influenza has a pandemic posed such an immense threat to the public health of our country. As of this morning, more than 47,000 Americans who tested positive have died from this disease. Just yesterday, health officials reported that more than 100 Americans lost their lives in a single day.

I know that everyone in this Chamber is thinking of those families and those people who have been lost due to this disease.

Sadly, no one is immune. Everyone is affected, including in my home State of New Hampshire. We have had more than 100 Granite Staters who have fallen ill from the coronavirus, and, sadly, just in the last few days, one person has died. My heart goes out to these families and to the family of the person we have lost.

This virus hasn’t only threatened the public health of the Nation, but it threatens our economy as well. Millions of Americans have been asked to stay in their homes. Schools and businesses have been closed. While we all understand that this is a necessary step to help curb the spread of the disease, it is taking a huge toll on our workers, our families, and our economy as a whole. The aftermath of this nationwide emergency could leave tens of millions of families without work or steady income.

I have been working closely with my colleagues here in Congress and with the rest of the delegation from New Hampshire and with our Governor to try and think about what we should come up with, what kind of package we can put together that are hurting. During the past couple of weeks, I have had many phone calls with mayors, public health officials, small business owners, social service agencies, and all of those people who are on the frontlines of this crisis.

I have heard from nonprofit organizations that provide vital services to with those with disabilities, to our senior citizens and veterans, and to those in recovery from substance use disorder. These organizations as we are grappling with the impact of this coronavirus, New Hampshire is still sadly in the midst of a persistent substance misuse epidemic. Thanks to the tireless efforts of advocates, providers, policymakers, and so many in our State, we have made strides toward curbing the substance misuse crisis. We are ensuring that resources are there so that people can get the care they need. Even though we are facing a pandemic, substance misuse doesn’t take a day off.

However, organizations that provide essential treatment and counseling for Granite Staters are also dealing with decreased capacity and revenue shortfalls that threaten their ability to continue to be a resource for their communities over the long-term. Our critical frontline healthcare providers, as well as first responders, police, firefighters, and EMTs, who are on the frontlines of responding to and treating coronavirus patients, need access to the resources, personal protective equipment that is so necessary to do their jobs at this critical time. We are hearing from hospitals and performances that are facing an uncertain financial future due to the crisis. All of these troubling situations point to the need for immediate relief so that the organizations and agencies that Granite Staters rely on can continue to be there for us.

I agree with my colleagues who have come to the floor over the last 2 days to say that Congress must act. We must act to provide relief so that so many Americans who are suffering can get the help they desperately need. In the past 2 weeks, Congress has taken several steps to provide immediate help to those families who are affected by the coronavirus. These in- tense efforts paid sick leave to many workers who get infected with the virus, who have had to self-quarantine, or who need to take care of family members. We provided emergency measures to ensure that everyone has access to coronavirus testing costs fully covered. We have expanded unemployment insurance for those who are laid off as a result of the virus.

We can and we must do more. Congress must work to address the economic devastation that so many are facing because of this virus. Just yesterday, we heard from a senior Federal Reserve official who warned that the U.S. unemployment rate could skyrocket because of this pandemic, and we are seeing that. I know that all of us are seeing that in our States. At home in New Hampshire, we have had thousands apply for unemployment insurance because they have been laid off in the last few weeks.

The message from the frontlines is this: We need help and we need it fast, and Congress must provide that help—Congress must provide the help. Our hospitals, healthcare providers, and first responders as they prepare for a surge in demand for treatment as this virus spreads.

We want to make sure that they have the medical equipment and the supplies they need. We can’t let them treat so many people who are ill. We need financial relief and paid leave to workers, especially to hourly workers and to those who have been laid off because of the impact of this virus.

We need support for small businesses. Small businesses are the lifeblood of New Hampshire’s economy. We have to make sure they stay afloat and that their workers can stay closed or have reduced demand. We need to provide childcare and elder care for healthcare workers, especially for those who are being asked to work extra shifts. We need assistance so Americans can afford their healthcare treatment. That is what I am fighting for.

We are making significant progress. We have seen movement in the last couple of days. I want to call out my colleagues, Senators Bruno and Cardin, the chair and ranking member of the Small Business Committee, and Senator Collins. The four of us have
work together on small business provisions that are in this bill. Work continued through the weekend and late into the night last night to reach agreement on these provisions, and we are almost there. I am confident that in the end we will be able to deliver a package of well-thought-out provisions that will provide over $350 billion in assistance for small businesses and nonprofit organizations in New Hampshire and throughout the country. This bipartisan bill will provide immediate cash flow assistance so that small businesses can continue to pay their employees, make their rent, pay their mortgage, and pay their utility bills.

The bill will also provide support to small business development centers, to women’s business centers, to veterans business outreach centers, and all those resource agencies that can help small businesses as they try to figure out how to navigate this crisis and how to get the help they need. We are also providing 6 months of relief for existing SBA borrowers. Of course, to make this work, we need all those lending institutions—our banks and financial institutions that are ready on the frontlines trying to help small businesses. They are going to be critical to making this package work.

There is much more to be done. We still need to provide funding for State and local governments because, as we speak, tax revenues are plummeting and the costs of responding to this crisis are skyrocketing. I have heard from so many municipal officials who are on the frontlines,”

...
I have listened to the rhetoric on this floor the past few days, accusing Democrats of delaying critical assistance to America. This is ridiculous. Democrats have spent the last 48 hours fighting for funding and legislation that will help people, not just corporations. We have been fighting for more money for healthcare, more money for children, more money for hospitals, more money for our schools. And in the last few days we have secured more funding for all of those things.

I feel that we will soon reach a deal. The Appropriations Committee's component is only one part of this massive package. But the pandemic we face demands this response. The Senate has a history of being the conscience of the nation, and we must prove that history true again during this crisis whether it is today or tomorrow. We will get this done, and we will get it done soon.

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. CASSIDY. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. McSALLY). Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. CASSIDY. Madam President, I would like to speak to the coronavirus—more specifically, the Senate's response to the coronavirus or, shall I say, apparently the absence of a response.

I am a doctor, and one of the most exciting things they often show in a TV show is when there is an emergency—there is a car wreck, somebody's heart stops beating, somebody faints, something like that—every resource is brought. I have been in that situation, and when it occurs, there is something that might be called—something, you know, runs the show, if you will, or the captain of the show and begins to say "You must do this" or "You must do that." At that point, nicety does not matter. Orders are given, you respond, and things are done. That is because there is not a moment to be lost.

I think I bring that sense of urgency to this situation. Our Presiding Officer was in the military as a combat pilot. She knows quite well that sometimes minutes matter. Sometimes minutes matter. I would argue that "sometime" is now.

I have been staying away from grocery stores, et cetera, and eating through my frozen food. There is stuff in the fridge. Somebody told me they went to the grocery store, and businesses that had been in business last week are now boarded up. I am having calls regularly with small business owners back in Louisiana, and they are so worried about cashflow and trying to keep their business going. Some have already laid off folks, wondering what they can do. The uncertainty is destroying their livelihood. If the livelihood of a small businesswoman is destroyed, so is the livelihood of everyone she employs. There is a sense of urgency that everyone in the Nation should feel but is not being acted upon now.

Now, let's describe the situation, because I have been on the record—"I have tried to understand why that urgency is not here. It is not a general lack of urgency; it is a specific lack of urgency of the Speaker of the House and the minority leader in the Senate—the minority leader put together a Senator from New York. It is a specific lack of urgency in which they attempt to leverage the misery of the American people so that they can achieve their political goal.

I have thought deeply about that political goal. In fact, I have noticed whenever something is said by the minority leader—the senior Senator from New York—I have to think, well, it is opposite day, as my children will say. There is actually something opposite being said. I have not quite figure out what that opposite thing is.

So let's go through where we are, and then we will go through the opposite-day aspect of our conversations.

First, people but not just people being laid off. Schools have been discharged. My wife cofounded a school for children with dyslexia—a public charter school. Children of all backgrounds come and have their dyslexia addressed. It is critical that those children be in school. There is actually something opposite being said—what is happening is that people are being told to stay home. That is not a bailout. That is a loan to keep people employed, and to keep their business going. When we get through this rough patch, their business can restart as before.

Now, the opposite-day rhetoric of the Senate minority leader is that this is a bailout for big corporations. It was a sweetheart deal put together by Republicans. Oh, opposite day. It was actually a bipartisan deal that goes through the Federal Reserve in a way that is sector-specific but not business-specific with the goal of keeping people employed.

The opposite-day rhetoric is that it is a bailout. These are loans—specifically, loans that have to be paid back. By law, the Federal Reserve cannot take a loss. That is a loan to keep people employed, and it is wise public policy brought together on a bipartisan basis—bipartisan, Democrats and Republicans—to come up with a solution reflecting all viewpoints across the country.

So, despite the opposite-day rhetoric, as somebody who wishes to disparage, who wishes to diminish, who wishes to deprecate a process that worked as the Senate is supposed to work—instead, it is not. I kept asking myself why? Why? We were to do it in a little bit.

What else about the opposite-day process? That not enough is spent on healthcare. I am a doctor. I went through those provisions for healthcare. We are spending literally—literally—tens of billions of dollars on healthcare, trying to find where to use it best. The opposite-day rhetoric is that we are not. I didn't quite figure that one out.

We are not spending on the average American—opposite-day rhetoric. We give $1,200 to an individual and $2,400 to a couple. That just goes out the door. Those folks get it. That is a commitment.

We are also committed to keeping small businesses afloat with an expedited process by which that small business can obtain cash and a loan, and that loan, the portion of which is used to keep people employed, is forgiven—forgotten. So if I borrowed—if I were a restaurant owner and I borrowed $100,000 and I use $75,000 of it to keep my employees employed, that $75,000 is
We will see that bill. We will vote on it after not having time to read it because it has been crafted in a small room with people who did not include Senators of both parties from different places because they had something they wished to put in there, and we will find later what those stakeholders were able to get.

My stakeholders are the American people. My stakeholders are the ones who are boarding up their buildings right now because a bill we could have voted on Sunday was not decided upon because somebody had a special deal which they wish to place.

The way the Senate works is not a four corners arrangement, where all the powers are in a group of one or two or three or four, in which deals are released the night before, released the next day, and no one has a chance to read, but some people are taken care of. Rather, it is to be as the Senate majority leader put up, where there is bipartisan agreement with an opportunity to study, to understand, to reflect upon, the American people are represented, and special interests are kept in their place. That is the way it should be. Unfortunately, that is not where we are now. I wish it were not opposite day, but we shall find out.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Georgia.

MRS. LOEFFLER. Madam President, last week, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security recognized agriculture for its critical role in the United States’ COVID-19 response.

Today, in recognition of National Ag Day, I want to highlight the work that millions of Americans do each day to make the agriculture industry in America the greatest in the world.

This industry is incredibly expansive, and at its most basic level, it is defined by the food, feed, fiber, and fuel it generates. But it is so much more. It fuels the global economy and is driven by millions of dedicated hard-working people who are working every day to deliver these products.

These folks are our Nation’s farmers, ranchers, foresters, and producers. This includes those who manufacture and sell equipment, who drive trucks and barges to move products, who provide seed and fertilizer, and who store, process, and market these products.

It spans small and large businesses, from family farms to community food banks, to universities, to science, veterinarians, and livestock operations.

In my home State of Georgia, agriculture is our No. 1 industry. It accounts for more than 1 in 7 jobs, and we have 42,000 farms in Georgia.

I grew up working in the soybean fields and the feedlot of my family’s farm. I know firsthand those in agriculture work to provide poultry, peanuts, pecans, cotton, cattle, and blueberries. The risks they take each
day and the exposure with global markets and changing regulations, technology, consumer pressures, and economic pressures—our ag industry rises to all of these challenges.

This is especially true right now as our country and the world face the coronavirus outbreak. We have all seen how vital each role in our supply chain is, from the ground to the grocery store, and from the cotton gin to the global export market that the Savannah Harbor connects to around the world. Americans are used to a readily available supply of food, but in recent weeks, we have seen empty aisles in grocery stores. But we know that this is not the new normal. These shelves are quickly restocked because of the tireless work that is done each day by our farmers, food processors, truck-drivers, and grocery store personnel. Without them, empty shelves and food shortages could be the norm.

Today, Americans are heeding the call to protect themselves from the coronavirus. At the same time, agribusiness is continually managing their production, processing, and manufacturing. It is not just planting and harvesting.

While some businesses are being forced to take measures to slow their operations, sadly, such as restaurants, other businesses, such as grocery stores, are seeing unprecedented demand. Everyone is dealing with uncertainty and volatility.

In Georgia, fruits and vegetables are being planted as I speak. Cotton and peanuts will be planted very soon. Some products, like Georgia’s Vidalia onions, will be harvested in the next month.

As we recover from the crisis in the months to come, farmers will still be in their fields, working tirelessly to ensure that Americans have access to the food and the products they need.

As a member of the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry, I am strongly committed to supporting America’s leading role in agriculture.

I want to thank President Trump for his strong support of American agriculture and for recognizing the contributions of the American Farm Bureau, the FFA, 4-H, and so many others.

Last week, my colleague from Georgia, Senator David Perdue, and I urged the administration to support our farmers by giving them flexibility for the labor that they rely on for their harvest and planting.

As the third coronavirus relief bill comes to the floor, we worked to support rural America by expanding telehealth funding and additional healthcare programs that are so needed in our rural communities. This comes in the form of economic aid for agribusiness and farmers, whether through small business loans or other facilities, and by supporting things like telecommunication and broadband.

Agriculture is perhaps the world’s most important industry, and it is important to mark their contributions every year. But on this year’s National Ag Day, I call on my colleagues to reflect on where our country would be today without the contribution of the American agriculture industry and without the contribution of Georgia’s farmers.

In this unprecedented challenge, we couldn’t do it without those who feed and clothe the world.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. Rounds). The Senator from South Carolina.

Mr. Graham. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to enter into a colloquy with my good friend Senator Daines from Montana.

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

Mr. GRAHAM. He is on the way. Here is the state of play. Folks, if you are at home and you are a nurse or you are a doctor and you are running out of supplies, there is a whole section in this bill that will help you. We just need to pass the damn bill.

What is going on here? Endless negotiations.

Mr. President, in case you are watching, tell Steven Mnuchin to come back to the White House and end negotiations.

I am all for negotiating. I try to make deals. I understand the give-and-take of life and the give-and-take of politics. I have been called by two good friends on the Democratic side in the last 5 or 6 hours wanting more money.

End the negotiations. This bill is $2 trillion. There is a ton of money in this bill for people who need it. But what we are doing now is every special interest group in town is trying to get a little bit more—nickel-and-dime and little at a time when people are dying—literally dying. Businesses are having to make a decision on whether to keep my employees on unemployment or do I hope that Congress can act so that I can keep them on the payroll?

I tried to do my part in terms of bipartisanship, but this is ridiculous. Steven Mnuchin has done a good job. I appreciate his efforts to negotiate a bill that will help America.

Senator McConnel says we are on the 2-yard line. I believe it. The problem is that there are 20 people playing defense, and we need to take some people off the field. What bothers me is that at this late hour, I am still getting calls from people wanting more money.

This is the last bill we will do, but this is the last chance we have to save some lives in realtime. I am encouraging the President—begging the President—to end negotiations now. Write what we have done, and let’s vote. If it is not perfect, we will try to fix it later, but it is damn good.

There is money there to help people in small business who have had to close because they have no customers. Maybe we can change the containment policies, but it needs to be based on science.

States now are sheltering in place. Anything the President does to try to open up the economy, count me in if it is based on sound science. It needs to be contained-based. We cannot leave Arizona or South Carolina, if we can pass this bill, you can go to a bank, a credit union, and you can borrow money, which will become a grant to pay the rent. We just need to pass the bill.

In the upper portion of South Carolina, the most you can get is $326 a week. We add $600 to that—if we can pass this bill.

To the hospitals on the frontline, there is a ton of money to help you with supplies shortages on the medical side. To the nurses and doctors, there is money there for you. Elective surgery has been banned in some States. We need to help hospitals which are losing revenue. It is all in the bill.

If you have student loan debt, we defer all payments, I think, until October. I can’t remember. It is in there. That is good for you. It takes one rock out of your sack that you have to carry. It relieves your burden.

Pass the damn bill. Stop negotiating. Enough is enough. This has been going on for 2 days. Like everybody else in the country, I have lost my patience with the political process. We are being nickel-and-dimed now. The big stuff we have pretty well right. If it is not perfect, I can fix it later, but we need to vote tonight.

The reason I am on the floor is because I have been called by two Democratic colleagues in the last 5 or 6 hours wanting more money. The store is closed.

Mr. President, end negotiations. Require us to vote. Draft the bill. Do it tonight.

There is $10 billion in this bill—a $2 trillion bill—that is more good than any $10 billion in the bill in terms of defeating the coronavirus. Everybody says we are at war.

Senator Daines, do you agree we are at war with this virus? If you have student loan debt, would you want to starve the virus, starve the enemy. If we will practice good containment policy and stop going to the beaches and interacting with each other in an irresponsible way, we will stop the virus because it needs human transmission to survive. Containment policies well-practiced will starve the virus. Therapies, bomb the...
Mr. DAINES. I will.

Mr. GRAHAM. Have you gotten phone calls from Democratic colleagues wanting more money?

Mr. DAINES. I have.

Mr. GRAHAM. That makes it appear to me that negotiations are not on the 1-yard line.

Mr. DAINES. We are at the 1-yard line, we were told last night. Negotiations would go all night. Everybody here said it has to be a good, bipartisan bill. But what we have 1-light now is an economic emergency on our hands. This is like somebody has been seriously injured and called the ambulance, and we are debating right now about what color ambulance to send, while the patient is dying on the side of the sidewalk.

Listen to some of these stories I had just today from the people of Montana. There is a 60-year-old woman who provides cleaning services in Ravalli County. It is in the Bitterroot. It is a beautiful part of our State. She said that normal business is almost down to nothing because folks are scared to let her clean their homes and businesses because of the coronavirus. To make ends meet, she said that she had to do outside yard work during these times. She is worried about becoming homeless. This is a real story that came from a Montanan today.

I posted a video, Senator GRAHAM, about her plight and a couple of others I am going to share with you tonight. Here is a warming part of this story. We had Montanans hear about her situation, and they said: We are going to band together here and help her. We are going to hire her and try to make sure she doesn’t become homeless, which is her current concern.

Listen, we were told that we were at the 1-yard line last night to get this done. All I have to say is, the Senate bill, that I just laid out yesterday, it will not be a loan but a grant that will be forgiven. In other words, he won’t have to pay it back as long as he keeps the payroll paid, the rent paid, the mortgage paid. That makes a lot of sense.

Mr. GRAHAM. Hire back the people. Mr. DAINES. He wouldn’t have to lay them off today. In fact, he continues to write that they just canceled conferences in the last week that total $848,000. This is a big deal in Montana. The president told us that they had another owner laid off or having reductions in work hours.

Mr. DAINES. Senator, I am the General Manager of Fairmont Hot Springs Resort.

Mr. GRAHAM. I would like to ask a question. I don’t know how many employees the gentleman has, but do you agree with me that if you have 500 or less employees, you are a small business, and under this bill, instead of laying off your employees, you can go to a bank or credit union and get an SBA loan that will eventually become a grant to pay your employees up to $80,000 per employee; you can also pay the rent that is coming due? Do you agree that is in this bill?

Mr. DAINES. Senator GRAHAM, that is in this bill.

For these small businesses, help is on its way. But we can’t send the help, Senator GRAHAM, until we pass the bill. Yet the good news for the general manager of Fairmont Hot Springs is that, and he did tell us, it will become a grant, and not a loan, that will be forgiven. In other words, he won’t have to pay it back as long as he keeps the payroll paid, the rent paid, the mortgage paid. That makes a lot of sense.

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they are currently looking at additional layoffs. They are looking at cashflows of nearly zero.

OK. So, right now, we are hearing about the plight of Montanans who are losing their jobs and losing their businesses. There are 14,700 Montanans who have filed for unemployment claims, and what is the Senate doing tonight, Senator GRAHAM? Look around this Chamber. There is nobody here. It is you and I.

Mr. GRAHAM. If the Senator would yield for a second, all of the people who are negotiating are my friends. I have been in tough negotiations, and it is hard to get to yes, but we have never faced a problem like this since World War II and 9/11. This is not any time. This is not any bill. This is not just another legislative endeavor. This is life. It is death. It is the difference between bankruptcy and having economic hope. It is the difference between having the supplies you need to save lives and not getting it.

To my colleagues who are doing the negotiations, stop. It is over. Write the bill. Let’s vote.

Every time I hear it is close, that means we are just a couple of hundred billion away. The reason I am so agitated is not to try to be cheap—the bill is $2 trillion. It is that, like Senator DAINES, I have been called in the last few hours by people who are wanting more money for this and that. All of it could be very worthy projects, but we need to stop negotiating at this very moment, write the bill, and vote tonight or no later than tomorrow.

Senator DAINES, I have a proposition for you. If we cannot do that as the U.S. Senate, don’t you agree with me that we should stop getting paid?

Now, legally, maybe we can’t stop our salaries, for it will take a future Congress to do that, but we can all volunteer to stop our money. I have a hard time with my continuing to get paid when we can’t solve the problem. We have been doing this for days now, and enough is enough.

Senator DAINES, do you believe it is time for there to be consequences for the body in our failing to deliver for the American people?

Mr. DAINES. Senator GRAHAM, I support the idea, if we don’t get something done here, that Members of Congress should not get paid. There are constitutional issues, but we can get around that by just saying we will donate our paychecks to some important COVID–19 relief effort that is going on. We will find something.

Here is what we get. At least here in the Senate tonight, we have a choice as to whether we want to donate our paychecks or not. There are 14,700 Montanans who don’t have that choice because they have lost their paychecks in the last 7 days. I am usually a guy who stays pretty calm, cool, and collected. Mr. GRAHAM. Yes.

Mr. DAINES. LINDSEY, you could probably testify to that.

Mr. GRAHAM. Yes, I can.

Mr. DAINES. This is a moment in which I am just bringing the frustration and the fear that I hear in the voices of Montanans who are asking: What in the world is going on back in Washington, Mr. GRAHAM?

We have a package. As you can see, what happened today in the markets around the world is that there was optimism. Why? Because we have something here that is going to be a rescue. First of all, there has been a rescue package. Then they called it a recovery package. I think this is called a rescue package. We are into a rescue here—rescuing this economy and rescuing the jobs of these small businesses owners. We could spend the next 30 to 40 minutes going through, in detail, all of the things that are in this bill that are going to help working people in this country and small businesses.

In the meantime, Senator GRAHAM, I agree with you. If we can’t get this passed—a robust Congress should start donating his pay to a charity that is currently on the frontline of dealing with the coronavirus and COVID–19.

Mr. GRAHAM. If I may. I think the Senator is speaking for most Montanans. I know he is speaking for South Carolinians. Let’s go back to the 14,000 people in Montana who are on unemployment. I don’t know what kind of spike that is. I have been to Montana—great place, a lot of land, not that many people, hardy folks. They don’t want to be unemployed; they want to be working. I know the Senator’s people pretty well. They are probably pissed off that they have been laid off, but there is nothing we can do about it until we control this virus, and we will.

Do you realize, Senator, that in this bill, every unemployed person in Montana will get $600 on top of the State unemployment they would like, but the two Senators who would like, but the two Senators who are here with me tonight are from out West. This is the cavalry coming over the hill. You are under attack; you are under siege. If we can pass this bill, the cavalry will be there for your businesses, and it will be there for your families.

The only way we are going to pass this bill, Senator DAINES, is to stop negotiations and write the bill.

Do you agree?

Mr. DAINES. There has been plenty of time to negotiate, Senator GRAHAM. There have been good faith negotiations on both sides, and there has been shuttle diplomacy going on between both sides. There has been a lot of give and get. We are at a point now at which we need to vote, and we should be able to pass tonight the bill of the Senate.

Regarding that $10 billion that is in this bill, I have been spending a lot of time thinking about how we get out of this war.

Mr. GRAHAM. How do you kill it?

Mr. DAINES. How do you win this war?

Mr. GRAHAM. How do you kill this virus?

Mr. DAINES. When you step back for a moment and think about the bases—of the panic and fear that the American people have with regard to this economy—the panic and the fear will not stop until the pandemic stops, and the pandemic will not stop until these great drugs start.

Here is what we are thinking about, and I want to give a reason for great hope and optimism as to how we are going to get over this great hurdle that we face in our Nation today. We have some amazing vaccines in development as we speak. In fact, they started a trial in Seattle a week ago on Monday. They vaccinated 45 adults aged 18 to 55. They are getting the initial results. They will be looking at the safety as
well as the efficacy—how well does it work—over the course of several weeks.

We have some other amazing, miracle drugs. They are called monoclonal antibodies. That is the technical term for them. When you take that drug, it provides protection against the coronavirus so that you don’t even get the COVID-19 disease.

Here is the challenge, Senator GRAHAM. We are operating like parallel paths right now to make sure we have those drugs available to the American people in a widespread fashion before the next flu season hits this fall. We are seeing reports right now from Singapore and Hong Kong, and there are some reinfections going on. That should put us on notice.

Assuming our containment strategy works and that we bend this curve, as we have talked about, so that we look more like Italy—we pray for that and hope for that and are working to that end—the challenge will be our not having enough immunity in our society coming up this fall. That will leave us vulnerable to a second wave of this virus.

The solution—the way we win this war—is to start manufacturing some of these drugs earlier, in parallel with the testing that is going on, so that, by the time the fall hits, we will have it available to the American people. That is in this bill.

Listen, every hour that goes by in which we don’t pass this bill is an hour that is lost in this fight. We see what is going on at what the World Health Organization’s numbers—we are calculating them on a daily basis and sometimes on an hourly basis—every hour matters right now, and every day matters. We have now lost 2 days this week. It has been incredible in Italy—we pray for that and hope for that and are working to that end—the challenge will be our not having enough immunity in our society coming up this fall. That will leave us vulnerable to a second wave of this virus.

Lindsey, it is Wednesday tomorrow. It is time to vote. This Chamber is empty. Senator GRAHAM, let’s get this Chamber full of Senators, and let’s have an up-or-down vote. Let’s get it done.

Mr. GRAHAM. We will end where we began. The reason I am here with Senator DAINES is that I have been getting done. Have an up-or-down vote. Let’s get this done.

The reason we are here tonight is that we are both upset that people are still talking about adding to the bill 48 hours after having been on the 5-yard line. We may be on the 1-yard line, but, apparently, there are 20 people on defense when we need to get the ball in the end zone.

I am just begging of my colleagues who have worked very hard—and I am not being critical as much as I am being insistence—because enough is enough. You have done a good job for the Democratic causes. We have done a good job for the Republican causes. The cause is the country.

If you are out of work, we are going to keep you on the job. People aren’t going to have to go on unemployment if your employer decides to go that route. If you are on unemployment, we are going to give you $600 more so you can actually survive better than you would if you were without this bill. If you are a nurse or a doctor and you are running out of supplies, this bill has a tremendous supply chain in it.

So our message is simple: No more negotiations. It is over. Let’s vote.

Mr. DAINES. Steve Luebeck.

Mr. GRAHAM. Mr. Luebeck, I have never met you. Maybe one day I will. I enjoy my visits to Montana. Give us 24 more hours. I am hoping and praying that we can write the bill. End the negotiations right now, write the bill, and vote on this thing, House and Senate, and put it on the President’s desk in the next 24 hours. Sir, if we can’t, we have let you down and everybody else in the country.

To my Governor in South Carolina, you had to institute some very strong containment policies so we don’t become New York. People in my state—there are 1,700 restaurants in Myrtle Beach right now. We are going into Easter in a few weeks, and that is when the season begins.

Our Canadian friends would be coming down any day now. They want to go swimming in March. We are glad to have them. We don’t like swimming in March because it is too cold for us, but the Canadians like it. It is a win-win.

Those 1,700 restaurants and bars, in this bill, if we pass it, can go to a credit union or a bank. You can borrow money to pay your employees up to $8,000. You can borrow money to pay the rent, pay yourself as the owner, and we will forgive it and make it a grant for 6 or 8 weeks. That will change everybody’s life all over South Carolina.

It is time to change people’s lives. It is time to stop negotiating. It is time to vote.

RECESS

Mr. GRAHAM. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate stand in recess until 9:30 p.m.

There being no objection, the Senate, at 8:32 p.m., recessed until 9:30 p.m. and reassembled when called to order by the President pro tempore (Senator MCCALSY).

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Louisiana.

Mr. CASSIDY. Madam President, I spoke to you earlier when you were presiding. I am about to take the Presiding Officer’s place, as she took my place earlier, and we will swap once more. Yet, before I sit down, I want to repeat the message I gave earlier.

As we wait for a decision to be made between the Democratic minority leader, the Speaker of the House, and the administration, we had a deal that they had agreed to that was bipartisan, on which Senators from both parties came together and rethought, and had an awareness of. No Senator thought it was a corporate bailout. If one did, one didn’t say so at the time. Every Senator felt like this was the way to emerge. This could have been a wonderful win-win, but we are nowhere close, apparently.

Tonight, I asked on a TV show: What about the single mother in Baton Rouge? What would I tell her? Who do you know who would say to that single mother? I would tell her I care about single moms. I would say that we had a deal, but then the Speaker of the House and the Democratic minority leader decided to leverage the misery of the American people, the businesses that are shutting down as we speak, and the people who are being laid off every day, to their political advantage. I am so sorry to say that, but that is the fact.

Then, afterward, they had to come up with a big, sort of, “Oh, my gosh. We can’t support it because of this or that.” It wasn’t what they were saying when they agreed to it. They had to come up with a reason to justify mendacity. They are leveraging the misery of the American people to their political advantage. A deal could have been signed on Sunday—a bipartisan deal that 100 Senators had some input into and that the Speaker of the House had input into.

Someone pointed out the irony to me—and I have to wrap up shortly—so I tweet that the Democratic minority leader and the Speaker of the House
tried to impeach the President of the United States for allegedly withholding aid from Ukraine, and now they withhold aid from the American people. Whatever gloss they put on it, we could have finished this up on Sunday, and now we are stretching it out to their political advantage.

I believe that was the allegation against the President: To his political advantage, he was using aid that was to go to the Ukrainians. Now we see two people—again, the Speaker of the House and the Senate majority leader—both of whom are from States that have been hard-hit; my State of Louisiana and theirs, being New York and California, have been hard-hit—those are using that misery as leverage to their political advantage.

I am sorry to be so worked up, but I have people calling me, asking: Do I have to lay somebody off? Oh, my gosh. I have lost my job. Will I have unemployment benefits? You say that. That is the deal. When will this legislation pass?

I realize it could have been done on Sunday until two people saw an opportunity that was to their political advantage. In their political advantage, they tried to withhold aid from the American people, but they tried to impeach the President for such an allegation against another person.

I hope they answer to the voters. I understand that the people who support them might not be touched by this, but my people are touched by it, and my State is affected by it. As a physician, I don’t care where you live in the country, for I feel, as a physician, that we should be doing everything we can for those who are in distress right now and not using it to our political advantage or using it in a way to extract a little bit more—maybe in requiring airlines to do this or that or maybe in sneaking a sweetheart deal in for a friend because we will get that language and have to vote on it 2 hours later.

This is not how our Founding Fathers imagined it. It is, unfortunately, how it has become—not to the benefit of the American people, to the benefit of two people, and I find that outrageous.

I yield the floor.

(Ms. MCSALLY assumed the chair.)

(Mr. CASSIDY assumed the chair.)

(Ms. McSALLY assumed the chair.)

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. McSALLY). The majority leader.

Mr. McCONNELL. Madam President, I have an update for the information of all the Senators for the information of the American people, and it is good news. It is good news for the doctors and nurses in emergency rooms around the country who are waiting for more masks and more funding. It is good news for families all across America.

After days of intense discussions, the Senate has reached a bipartisan agreement on a historic relief package for this pandemic. It will rush new resources onto the frontlines of our Nation’s healthcare fight, and it will inject trillions of dollars of cash into the economy as fast as possible to help American workers, families, small businesses, and industries make it through this disruption and emerge on the other side ready to soar.

The bipartisan CARES Act will squarely address each of the four big priorities that I laid out in my legislation at the beginning of the process. It will ensure financial assistance to Americans through direct checks to households from the middle class down and through a significant and creative expansion of unemployment insurance during this emergency.

It will deliver historic relief to Main Street America through hundreds of billions of dollars in emergency loans so more small businesses can survive this and keep paying their workers.

It will help secure our economic foundations and stabilize key national industries to prevent as many layoffs as possible, while keeping big companies accountable, as both sides have sought to do.

And, of course, it will push major relief to hospitals and healthcare providers, invest in new medicines and vaccines so we can beat this virus faster, and help get more equipment and masks to the frontline heroes who put themselves at risk to care for patients.

In effect, this is a wartime level of investment into our Nation. The men and women of the greatest country on Earth are going to defeat this coronavirus and reclaim our future, and the Senate is going to make sure they have the ammunition they need to do it.

I am thrilled that we are finally going to deliver for the country that has been waiting for us to step up. I am thrilled that my distinguished Democratic colleagues are ready to take yes for an answer. This has been a long week for the Senate, but it has been a much longer week for the hundreds of millions of Americans who find themselves in this strange new reality, where every morning brings new worries about their health, about their loved ones, and about whether their job or their small business will still exist at this time next week.

So, Madam President, help is on the way. The American people are already rising to this grave challenge, and the Senate is about to follow suit. We are going to pass this legislation later today.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic leader.

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, after 5 days of arduous negotiations, after sleep-deprived nights, and marathon negotiating sessions, we have a bipartisan agreement on the largest relief package in American history. This is not a moment of celebration but one of necessity. We have the anguish of the American people, their wondering about the future of their health, the health of their loved ones, and the economy. It necessitates us to do all we can to help them and help our country.

From the very beginning, the Democrats and Republicans were willing to do the serious and hard work, the bill is much better off than where it started. The Democrats have succeeded in making the bill substantially better on many counts.

There are four major pillars of the bill.

First, a Marshall Plan for our hospitals and medical needs—there is much more money for our hospitals, for our nurses and physicians, for our cancer centers and community health centers to do the jobs they need to do, over $30 billion.

Second, workers first—so many people are being put out of work through no fault of their own. They don’t know what their futures are going to be like. How are they going to pay the bills? Well, we come to their rescue, and the most significant part of that is something we are proud to have devised. We call it unemployment compensation on steroids. All American workers who are laid off will have their salaries remunerated by the Federal Government so they can pay their bills. Because so many of them will be furloughed rather than fired, if they have benefits, they will continue, and—extremely important—they stay with the company or small business. That means that company or small business can reassemble once this awful plague is over, and our economy can get going quickly.

Third, strict oversight, transparency, and accountability of all loans made to corporate America—we need oversight. We need transparency. Every loan document will be public and be made available to Congress very quickly so we can see where the money is going, what the terms are, and if it is fair to the American people. There will be an oversight board, as well as an IG, to make sure things are done on the level.

Fourth, real resources for our State and local governments—that was one of the last decisions we had to make. There is $150 billion that will go to States and localities that are so hard-pressed because of all the new expenses that COVID-19 puts upon them, and because they are not getting the resources they usually get, taxes will be delayed until June.

Finally, there is real, real help for small businesses. My dad was a small
businessman, an exterminator. I know how small business people worry and suffer. They will get loans, and their employees will be paid by the Federal Government while they are closed because they don’t have customers or services, and they can, too, bounce back afterward. This agreement is really an outstanding agreement.

To them and to all Americans, I say help is on the way, big help and quick help. We are going to take up and pass this package to care for those who are now caring for us and help carry millions of Americans through these dark economic times.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

ORDERS FOR WEDNESDAY, MARCH 25, 2020

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today, it adjourn until 12 noon, Wednesday, March 25; further, that following the prayer and pledge, the morning hour be deemed expired, the Journal of proceedings be approved to date, the time for the two leaders be reserved for their use later in the day, and morning business be closed; further, that following leader remarks, the Senate resume consideration of the motion to proceed to H.R. 748.

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

MORNING BUSINESS

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–4361. A communication from the Secretary of Defense, transmitting a report on the approved retirement of Vice Admiral Matthew Destro, United States Navy, and his advancement to the grade of vice admiral on the retired list; to the Committee on Armed Services.

EC–4362. A communication from the Secretary of Defense, transmitting a report on the approved retirement of Lieutenant General Leon S. Rice, Air National Guard of the United States, and his advancement to the grade of lieutenant general on the retired list; to the Committee on Armed Services.

EC–4363. A communication from the Inspector General of the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to a violation of the Antideficiency Act; to the Committee on Appropriations.

EC–4364. A communication from the Assistant Secretary for Export Administration, Bureau of Industry and Security, Department of Commerce, transmitting pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled “Temporary General License: Extension of Validity” (RIN0669–AH97) received in the Office of the President on March 24, 2020; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC–4365. A communication from the Chairman of the District of Columbia, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report on D.C. Act 23–244, “Deputy Mayor for Planning and Economic Development Limited Grant Making Authority for Check It Enterprises Amendment Act of 2020”; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–4366. A communication from the Attorney-Advisor, U.S. Coast Guard, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled “Safety Zone: Monongahela River Mile 28.0 to Mile 30.0, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania” (RIN1625–AA00) (Docket No. USCG–2020–0080) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on March 24, 2020; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–4367. A communication from the Attorney-Advisor, U.S. Coast Guard, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled “Safety Zone; Hurricanes, Tropical Storms and Other Disasters in South Florida” (RIN1625–AA00) (Docket No. USCG–2018–1067) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on March 24, 2020; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–4368. A communication from the Attorney-Advisor, U.S. Coast Guard, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled “Safety Zone: Alameda Estuary, Alameda, California” (RIN1625–AA00) (Docket No. USCG–2020–B149) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on March 24, 2020; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–4369. A communication from the Attorney-Advisor, U.S. Coast Guard, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled “Safety Zone Harbor, San Juan, Puerto Rico” (RIN1625–AA00) (Docket No. USCG–2019–0686) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on March 24, 2020; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.


EC–4371. A communication from the Attorney-Advisor, U.S. Coast Guard, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled “Drawbridge Operation Regulation; Hackensack River, Little Snake Hill, New Jersey” (RIN1625–AA00) (Docket No. USCG–2019–0086) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on March 24, 2020; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–4372. A communication from the Attorney-Advisor, U.S. Coast Guard, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled “Drawbridge Operation Regulation; Chelsea River, Chelsea, Massachusetts” (RIN1625–AA09) (Docket No. USCG–2019–0089) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on March 24, 2020; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–4373. A communication from the Attorney-Advisor, U.S. Coast Guard, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled “Special Local Regulation, Salinas Power Boat Race; Bahia De Rincon, Puerto Rico” (RIN1507–AA00) (Docket No. USCG–2020–0108) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on March 24, 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. CRAMER (for himself and Mr. ROHRABACKER): S. 3572. A bill to require the removal of United States Armed Forces from Saudi Arabia; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

By Mr. SCOTT of Florida: S. 3573. A bill to require personal protective equipment to be included in the strategic national stockpile, and to require the Federal Government to procure such equipment from United States sources, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. TILLIS: S. 3574. A bill to protect consumers from price-gouging during emergencies; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

By Mr. BLUMENTHAL: S. 3575. A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to restore eligibility for rehabilitation programs for veterans affected by school closures or disapprovals, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Veterans’ Affairs.

By Ms. KLOBUCHAR (for herself, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Ms. HIRONO, and Ms. CORTEZ MASTO): S. 3576. A bill to clarify that the Federal Trade Commission Act prohibits excessive and unjustified price increases in the sale of certain products and services when an emergency or disaster results in abnormal disruptions of the market, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

By Mr. PETERS (for himself, Mr. BLUNT, and Mrs. BLACKBURN): S. 3577. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide a tax exemption for distilled spirits used for hand sanitizer; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. GRASSLEY: S. 3578. A bill to provide oversight for the care and assistance provided to businesses under the coronavirus relief package; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

SUBMISSION OF CONCURRENT AND SENATE RESOLUTIONS

The following concurrent resolutions and Senate resolutions were read, and referred (or acted upon), as indicated:

By Ms. MCSALLY: S. Res. 351. A resolution providing that the signature of Senators shall be held in escrow until the Senate has passed legislation that appropriately addresses the COVID–19 outbreak; to the Committee on Rules and Administration.

By Mr. HAWLEY (for himself, Ms. MCSALLY, Mr. CORNYN, and Mr. COTTON): S. Res. 552. A resolution supporting an international investigation into the handling by the Government of the People’s Republic of China of COVID-19 and the impact of handling COVID–19 on the entitlement of the people of the United States and other nations; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

By Mrs. BLACKBURN (for herself and Ms. CORNYN): S. Res. 553. A resolution expressing the sense of the Senate that the Government of
the People's Republic of China made multiple serious mistakes in the early stages of the COVID-19 outbreak that heightened the severity and spread of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, including the intentional spread of misinformation to downplay the risks of COVID-19, a refusal to cooperate with international health authorities, internal censorship of doctors and journalists, and a malicious disregard for the health of ethnic minorities; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

ADDITIONAL COSPONSORS

S. 1074

At the request of Mr. SCHATZ, the name of the Senator from Mississippi (Mr. WICKER) and the Senator from Ohio (Mr. BROWN) were added as cosponsors of S. 1074, a bill to reinstate Federal Pell Grant eligibility for individuals incarcerated in Federal and State penal institutions, and for other purposes.

S. 3569

At the request of Mr. SCHATZ, the name of the Senator from Alabama (Mr. JONES) was added as a cosponsor of S. 3569, a bill to amend the Fair Credit Reporting Act to provide for disaster protection for workers' credit.

S. 3508

At the request of Mr. WYDEN, the name of the Senator from Virginia (Mr. WARNER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 3508, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide advance tax refunds to small businesses, and for other purposes.

S. 3509

At the request of Mr. BENTNET, the names of the Senator from Nevada (Ms. ROSEN), the Senator from North Dakota (Mr. HOEVEN), the Senator from Mississippi (Mr. WICKER), the Senator from Iowa (Ms. ERNST), the Senator from Arizona (Ms. MCSALLY) and the Senator from West Virginia (Mr. MANCHIN) were added as cosponsors of S. 3509, a bill to provide emergency financial assistance to rural health care facilities and providers impacted by the COVID-19 emergency.

S. 3569

At the request of Ms. KLOBUCAR, the names of the Senator from Missouri (Mr. HAWLEY), the Senator from North Dakota (Mr. HOEVEN), the Senator from Nevada (Ms. CORTEZ MASTO) and the Senator from New Mexico (Mr. BERNIE) were added as cosponsors of S. 3569, a bill to help small business broadband providers keep customers connected.

S. RES. 548

At the request of Mr. PORTMAN, the names of the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. CASEY), the Senator from Missouri (Mr. HAWLEY), the Senator from Vermont (Mr. SANDERS), the Senator from Alaska (Mr. SULLIVAN) and the Senator from Illinois (Ms. DUCKWORTH) were added as cosponsors of S. Res. 548, a resolution amending the Standing Rules of the Senate to enable the participation of absent Senators during a national crisis.

STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTION

By Mr. GRASSLEY:

S. 3578. A bill to provide oversight for the care and assistance provided to businesses under the coronavirus relief package; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the text of the bill be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the text of the bill was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, today I am introducing legislation in response to the coronavirus outbreak. I submitted this proposal to Senate Leadership earlier this week. It is my expectation that the language I've developed will be included, in some form, in the final agreement we're negotiating. The legislation is designed to remove a stumbling block to enactment of a third coronavirus relief package.

Specifically, the proposal I've developed responds directly to the concerns—voiced by some of my colleagues in recent days—that we should add accountability provisions to the relief package not considered by this chamber. It's my understanding that the Senate leaders are seriously considering including this or very similar language in their compromise. I applaud them for their efforts and strongly urge their colleagues' support for these sensible provisions.

My proposal would impose strict congressional oversight over the Treasury Department fund that is tasked with extending lending and other assistance to air carriers and American companies that have been hard hit by the coronavirus pandemic. It mirrors closely the language that this chamber adopted in 2008, during consideration of the Troubled Asset Relief Program.

For example, like that 2008 statute, calls for the creation of a special inspector general for the coronavirus relief program and would authorize $50 million for this purpose. The special inspector general would be appointed by the President and confirmed by the Senate. As stated in the bill, this appointment must be made "on the basis of integrity and demonstrated ability in accounting, auditing, financial analysis, law, management analysis and public administration, or investigations."

The bill I've developed also calls for creation of a bipartisan oversight board, comprised of five high ranking executive branch officials. This board would meet every two weeks to review the activities of the Exchange Stabilization Fund, a Treasury Department vehicle through which hundreds of billions of dollars in loan assistance would flow to distressed sectors of the United States economy. This oversight board would be expected to report any suspected fraud or malfeasance to the special inspector general that this legislation creates. Again, it is very similar to a board that Congress established in 2008, during another National crisis.

In addition, my proposal calls for the head of the Office of Management and Budget to issue regulations to minimize conflicts of interest that may arise in coronavirus relief activities. It also imposes limits on executive compensation to senior officers of companies that accept lending assistance through the Treasury Department's Exchange Stabilization Fund.

The bill also calls for greater oversight and audits by the Government Accountability Office, a nonpartisan watchdog agency of Congress. Specifically, GAO is tasked with ongoing oversight, including conducting audits of the programs and financial transactions of Federal agencies that extend financial assistance to private companies in response to the coronavirus pandemic.

The bill also creates a bicameral, bipartisan Congressional Oversight Panel within the legislative branch. This panel would be comprised of five members of the House of Representatives and Senate, appointed by the other chamber's Speaker and the Senate Leader. This oversight panel would review the state of the financial markets and submit regular reports on certain topics, such as Federal officials' use of coronavirus relief authority and the impact of Federal assistance on the financial markets, air carriers, and medical providers. This congressional panel would have the ability to convene hearings, call witnesses, take testimony, hire staff, get official data, and meet regularly. The panel, like many of the programs established under this bill, would terminate after this emergency ends.

Mr. President, my office has approached multiple colleagues, including those on the other side of the aisle, about these provisions, received encouraging comments from many. I believe this language could be accepted and urge that it be included in the final relief package, so that we can remove one of the remaining obstacles to moving forward.

SEC. 1. SHORT TITLE AND TABLE OF CONTENTS

This title may be cited as the “COVID-19 Funding Accountability Act.”

SEC. 2. PURPOSE

Provides that the purpose of this Act is to ensure that the Federal authority and assistance provided in response to the outbreak of the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) is used in a manner that:

- promotes economic sustainability of severely distressed sectors of the United States economy;
- provides jobs for working Americans and maximizes overall returns to the taxpayers of the United States; and
- provides public accountability for the exercise of such Federal authority and assistance.

SEC. 3. DEFINITIONS

SEC. 4. COVID–19 RELIEF OVERSIGHT BOARD

Creates a COVID–19 Relief Oversight Board ("Oversight Board"), comprised of executive branch officials, which is responsible for reviewing the exercise of authority under the COVID–19 Relief Program that relates to policies implemented to—

- Increase loan forgiveness, loan eligibility, and loan deferral of eligible small businesses, under section 1102(a) of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 636(a));
- Extend grants or other forms of financial assistance to businesses in concern with respect to the COVID–19 outbreak;
- Extend emergency relief to distressed sectors of the United States economy through the Treasury Department's Exchange Stabilization Fund.

Tasks the Oversight Board with reviewing the effect of such policies and initiatives on the supply chain and the economy and with making recommendations, as appropriate, to designated executive branch officials. Specifies that this Board also shall have the authority to ensure that the policies implemented through the Treasury Department's Exchange Stabilization Fund are—

in accordance with the purposes of this Act;

in the economic interests of the United States; and

consistent with protecting taxpayers' interests.

Clarifies that Oversight Board may appoint a credit review committee for the purpose of evaluating the efforts of the authorities provided under the COVID–19 Relief Program. Also calls for the Oversight Board to report any suspected fraud, misrepresentation, or malfeasance to the Special Inspector General for the COVID–19 Relief Program (created under this Act) or the Attorney General of the United States.

Calls for the Oversight Board to meet every two weeks, report to Congress at least quarterly, and include in its membership the following: (1) the Administrator of the Small Business Administration; (2) the Secretary of the Treasury; (3) the Secretary of Transportation; (3) the Secretary of Commerce; (4) the Secretary of Health and Human Services; and (5) the Administrator of the Federal Emergency Management Administration.

Calls for the chair to be elected by members of the board from among the board members (other than the Administrator of the Small Business Administration and the Secretary of the Treasury).

Specifies that the Oversight Board's role comes to an end after the expiration of the national emergency declared by the President with respect to the COVID–19 or after the Exchange Stabilization Fund ceases to make payments, and identifies other assistance to air carriers and other key businesses affected by COVID–19.

SEC. 5. CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

Calls for Director of the Office of Management and Budget ("OMB") to issue any regulations or guidelines necessary to address and manage, or to prohibit, conflicts of interest that may arise in connection with the administration and execution of the authorities provided under the COVID–19 Relief Program. Deadline for their issuance is "as soon as practicable after the date of enactment" of this Act.

SEC. 6. EXECUTIVE COMPENSATION AND CORPORATE GOVERNANCE

Specifies that any private entity receiving loans, loan guarantees, grants, or other assistance through the Exchange Stabilization Fund shall be subject to executive compensation requirements in the Act and the provisions under the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as such provisions apply to this COVID–19 relief from providing incentives for senior executive officers of a private entity to take unnecessary and excessive risks that threaten the value of such entity. Also bars the entity from making any bonus, incentive compensation or golden parachute payments to a senior executive officer during the period in which such private entity receives Federal assistance through the Exchange Stabilization Fund. Defines the term "senior executive officer" as an individual who is an officer in the United States who is a paid executive of a public or private corporation or limited liability company.

Includes a sunset provision, specifying that these limitations on executive compensation will apply only to arrangements entered into during the period in which the entity received Federal assistance in response to the COVID–19 outbreak.

SEC. 7. OVERSIGHT AND AUDITS

Calls for the Comptroller General, which heads the nonpartisan watchdog agency of Congress, to conduct oversight of Federal coronavirus relief initiatives and activities. Authorizes this government watchdog agency, the Government Accountability Office ("GAO"), to have access, upon request, to any information that is needed, or any property needed to carry out this oversight function.

Requires that the U.S. Treasury to reimburse GAO for costs of such oversight, and requires GAO to report, at least every 60 days, to Congress and the Special Inspector General for the COVID–19 Relief Program established under this Act. Confirms that GAO may also submit special reports under this subsection as warranted by the findings of its oversight activities.

Further clarifies that GAO may audit the programs, activities, receipts, expenditures, and financial transactions of Federal entities involved in extending authority or assistance to private entities in response to the COVID–19 outbreak. Federal agencies or departments subject to such audits must maintain in the audits, as appropriate or to certify to appropriate committees of Congress that no action is necessary or appropriate. Specifies that Special IG shall report to the GAO on oversight authority under the national emergency or the coronavirus relief activities cease.

SEC. 8. SPECIAL INSPECTOR GENERAL FOR COVID–19 RELIEF PROGRAM

Establishes the Office of the Special Inspector General for the COVID–19 Relief Program and authorizes $50 million for this purpose in fiscal year 2021. Specifies that such individual shall be appointed by the President, by and with the advice and consent of the Senate; and the appointment shall be made "for such term, and at such place, or on such terms or conditions, as the Senate may approve." The effectiveness of the program from the standpoint of minimizing long-term costs to the taxpayers and maximizing the benefits for taxpayers.

SEC. 9. CONGRESSIONAL OVERSIGHT PANEL

Creates a Congressional Oversight Panel ("Oversight Panel") within the legislative branch, comprised of five members appointed in accordance with the purposes of this Act.

Specifies that its duties are to review the current state of the financial markets and submit the regular reports to Congress on the following:

- The use by Federal officials of authority to implement COVID–19 Relief Programs;
- The impact of the COVID–19 Relief Program on the financial markets, air carriers, and medical providers;
- The extent to which the information made available on taxpayers pursuant to the Exchange Stabilization Fund has contributed to market transparency.

The effectiveness of the program from the standpoint of minimizing long-term costs to the taxpayers and maximizing the benefits for taxpayers.

SEC. 10. COOPERATION WITH THE DEPARTMENT

Requires that reports that must be submitted every 30 days after the date on which the Exchange Stabilization Fund begins to make loans, loan guarantees, and investment assistance in response to the COVID–19 outbreak. Also calls for panel to submit a special report on regulatory reform by March 31, 2021, analyzing the current state of the regulatory system and its effectiveness at overseeing the recipients of COVID–19 relief and protecting consumers, and providing recommendations for improvement.

Sets the rate of pay and travel expenses of each member of the Oversight Panel, authorizes the hiring of staff, executive branch detailees, and temporary consultants. Bars outside provision of advisory services for paid purposes to Federal employees from receiving additional pay, allowances, or benefits by reason of their service on the panel. Provides that four members of the Oversight Panel shall constitute a quorum but a lesser number may hold hearings. Clarifies that a vacancy on the Oversight Panel shall be filled in the manner in which the original appointment was made.

Provides that the panel shall meet at the call of the chair or a majority of its members. Permits the panel, for the purpose of carrying out this section, to hold hearings, swear in witnesses, take testimony, and receive evidence as it considers appropriate. Also clarifies when the panel can get official data, and receive reports required to be submitted to the panel under this Act. Specifies a termination date for the Oversight Panel. Authorizes such sums as may be necessary for the Oversight Panel to operate, with this funding derived from the applicable COVID–19 Relief Program income, and half of which shall be derived from the Senate's contingent fund.

SEC. 11. COOPERATION WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE AND THE FBI

Provides that any Federal financial regulatory agency shall cooperate with the Department of Justice and the Federal Bureau of Investigation in the investigation of violations of Federal law in connection with the provisions of this Act.
of Investigation and other law enforcement agencies investigating fraud, misrepresentation, and malfeasance with respect to development, advertising, and sale of financial or other assistance.

SEC. 11. INFORMATION FOR CONGRESSIONAL SUPPORT AGENCIES

Provides that all information used by Federal officials in connection with activities authorized by this Act (including the records to which GAO is entitled under this Act) will be made available to the Congressional Budget Office and the Joint Committee on the Budget upon request, so that these agencies can assist with congressional oversight monitoring, and analysis of the COVID–19 relief assistance activities.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the “COVID-19 Funding Accountability Act of 2020”.

SEC. 2. PURPOSE.

The purpose of this Act is to ensure that the Federal authority and assistance that is extended to eligible entities in response to the outbreak of the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (referred to in this Act as “COVID-19”) is used in a manner that—

(1) promotes economic sustainability of severely distressed sectors of the United States economy;

(2) promotes retention of jobs and working Americans and maximize overall returns to the taxpayers of the United States; and

(3) provides public accountability for the exercise of such Federal authority and assistance.

SEC. 3. DEFINITIONS.

In this Act:

(1) APPROPRIATE COMMITTEES OF CONGRESS.—The term “appropriates committees of Congress” means—

(A) the Committee on Appropriations, the Committee on Finance, the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs, and the Committee on Small Business of the Senate;

(B) the Committee on Appropriations, the Committee on Energy and Commerce, the Committee on the Budget, the Committee on Small Business of the Senate; and

(C) the Committee on Appropriations, the Committee on Commerce, the Committee on Energy and Commerce, the Committee on Finance, the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs, and the Committee on Small Business of the House of Representatives.

(2) CONGRESSIONAL SUPPORT AGENCIES.—The term “congressional support agencies” means—

(A) the Congressional Budget Office; and

(B) the Joint Committee on Taxation.

(3) COVID-19 RELIEF PROGRAM.—The term “COVID-19 Relief Program” means initiatives established or implemented by Federal officials in accordance with—

(A) the CARES Act, Public Law 116-132;

(B) the Families First Coronavirus Response Act, Public Law 116-127;

(C) the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (also known as the “CARES Act”), H.R. 748 (116th Congress); and

(D) any successor legislation to the same general intent and effect as the legislation described in subparagraphs (A), (B), and (C).

(4) EXCHANGE STABILIZATION FUND.—The term “Exchange Stabilization Fund” means the assistance program for distressed sectors of the United States economy that is established by the CARES Act, H.R. 748 (116th Congress) or any successor program established by Federal law.

SEC. 4. COVID-19 RELIEF OVERSIGHT BOARD.

(a) ESTABLISHMENT.—There is established a COVID-19 Relief Oversight Board, which shall be responsible for—

(1) reviewing the exercise of authority under the COVID-19 Relief Program that relates to policies implemented to—

(A) increase loan forgiveness, loan eligibility, and loan maturity for small businesses under section 7(a) of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 636(a));

(B) extend grants or other forms of financial assistance to businesses in response to the outbreak of COVID-19;

(C) make resources available, through the Medicare and Medicaid programs to hospitals and long-term care facilities for the elderly in response to the COVID-19 outbreak; and

(D) extend emergency relief to distressed sectors of the United States economy through the Exchange Stabilization Fund of the Department of the Treasury;

(2) reviewing the effect of such policies and initiatives in mitigating supply chain disruptions, preventing disruptions in the distribution and sales of products and services, and ensuring the sustainability of severely distressed sectors of the United States economy due to the COVID-19 outbreak;

(3) making recommendations, as appropriate, to the Small Business Administration, the Secretary of the Treasury, the Secretary of Commerce, the Secretary of Health and Human Services, and the Secretary of the Treasury regarding use of such statutory authority; and

(4) reporting any suspected fraud, misrepresentation, or malfeasance to the Special Inspector General for the COVID-19 Relief Program or the Attorney General of the United States, consistent with section 535(b) of title 28, United States Code.

(b) MEMBERS.—The COVID-19 Relief Oversight Board established under subsection (a) shall be comprised of—

(1) the Administrator of the Small Business Administration;

(2) the Secretary of the Treasury;

(3) the Secretary of Transportation;

(4) the Secretary of Commerce; and

(5) the Secretary of Health and Human Services;

(c) PETITION.—The COVID-19 Relief Oversight Board shall have the authority to ensure that the policies implemented through the Exchange Stabilization Fund are—

(1) in accordance with the purposes of this Act, including the sustainability of jobs of workers in severely distressed sectors of the economy;

(2) in the economic interests of the United States; and

(3) consistent with protecting taxpayers’ interests.

(d) CREDIT REVIEW COMMITTEE.—The COVID-19 Relief Oversight Board may appoint a credit review committee for the purposes of evaluating the exercise of the authority provided under the COVID-19 Relief Program, as the COVID-19 Relief Oversight Board determines appropriate.

(e) REPORTS.—The COVID-19 Relief Oversight Board shall report to the appropriate committees of Congress and the Congressional Oversight Panel established under this section not less frequently than quarterly, on the matters described in subsection (a)(1).

(f) TERMINATION.—The COVID-19 Relief Oversight Board, and its authority under this section, shall terminate on the expiration of the 15-day period beginning upon the later of—

(1) the date on which the national emergency declared by the President under the National Emergencies Act (50 U.S.C. 1601 et seq.) with respect to the COVID-19 expires; or

(2) the date on which the Exchange Stabilization Fund of the Department of the Treasury ceases the direct lending, loan guarantee, and investment activities for carriers and businesses designated to receive such assistance under the CARES Act, H.R. 748 (116th Congress) or any successor program established under Federal law.

SEC. 5. CONFLICTS OF INTEREST.

(a) STANDARDS REQUIRED.—The Director of the Office of Management and Budget shall issue regulations or guidelines necessary to address and manage or to prohibit conflicts of interest that may arise in connection with the administration and execution of the authorities provided under the COVID-19 Relief Program.

(b) TIMING.—Regulations or guidelines required by this section shall be issued as soon as practicable after the date of enactment of this Act.

SEC. 6. EXECUTIVE COMPENSATION AND CORPORATE GOVERNANCE.

(a) APPLICABILITY.—Any private entity that receives loans, loan guarantees, or other assistance through the Exchange Stabilization Fund of the Department of the Treasury shall be subject to the executive compensation requirements of subsection (b) and the provisions under the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as applicable.

(b) CRITERIA.—The standards required under this subsection shall include—

(1) limits on compensation that exclude incentives for senior executive officers of a private entity to take unnecessary and excessive risks that threaten the solvency of such entity during the period in which the entity receives financial assistance in response to the COVID-19 outbreak; and

(2) prohibitions on the entity making any bonus, incentive compensation or golden parachute payment to a senior executive officer during the period in which such private entity receives Federal assistance through the Exchange Stabilization Fund.

(c) DEFINITION.—For purposes of this section, the term “senior executive officer” means an individual who is one of the top 5 highly paid executives of a public or private corporation or limited liability company.

(d) APPLICATION.—This section applies only to arrangements entered into during the period in which the entity received a Federal loan, loan guarantee, or other investment or assistance in response to the COVID-19 outbreak.

SEC. 7. OVERSIGHT AND AUDITS.

(a) COMPTROLLER GENERAL OVERSIGHT.—

(1) SCOPE OF OVERSIGHT.—In furtherance of the purpose of this Act, the Comptroller General of the United States shall commence ongoing oversight of the activities and performance of the COVID-19 Relief Program and any agents of the executive branch involving Federal authority or rendering assistance to private entities in response to the COVID-19 outbreak.

(2) CONDUCT AND ADMINISTRATION OF OVERSIGHT.
AGAO ACCESS TO RECORDS.—To the extent otherwise consistent with law, the Comptroller General shall have access, upon request, to any information, data, schedules, books, contracts, financial records, reports, files, electronic communications, or other papers, things, or property belonging to or in use by Federal entities that exercise authority or assistance to private entities through the COVID-19 Relief Program. The Comptroller General may make and retain copies of such books, accounts, and other records of the Comptroller General deems appropriate.

(B) REIMBURSEMENT OF COSTS.—The Treasury shall reimburse the Government Accountability Office current when the payment is received and remain available until expended.

(2) Appointments of Inspector General; Removal.—The Comptroller General may audit the programs, activities, receipts, expenditures, and financial transactions of Federal entities involved in extending authority or assistance to private entities in response to the COVID-19 outbreak.

(b) Requesting Audits.—The Comptroller General shall carry out the duties specified in paragraphs (1) and (2), the Inspector General shall also have the duties and responsibilities of inspectors general under the Inspector General Act of 1978 (5 U.S.C. App.).

(c) Power and Authority.—The Inspector General shall have the authorities provided in section 6 of the Inspector General Act of 1978.

(2) Requirement.—The Special Inspector General shall have the authorities provided in section 6 of the Inspector General Act of 1978.

(3) Cooperation and Assistance.—The Inspector General shall cooperate and assist the Comptroller General in discharging his duties.

(4) Reporting.—The Special Inspector General shall report to the Comptroller General and the Congress on the activities of the Inspector General under this section, regularly and not less frequently than every 60 days.

(5) Political Activities on Duty.—For purposes of section 7321 of title 5, United States Code, the Special Inspector General shall not be considered an employee who determines policies to be pursued by the United States in the nationwide administration of Federal law.

(6) Compensation.—The annual rate of basic pay of the Special Inspector General shall be the annual rate of basic pay for an Inspector General appointed to the Inspector General Act of 1978 (5 U.S.C. App.).

(b) COMPTROLLER GENERAL AUDITS.—The Comptroller General shall have access, upon request, to any information, data, schedules, books, accounts, financial records, reports, files, electronic communications, or other papers, things, or property belonging to or in use by Federal entities that exercise authority or render assistance to private entities in response to the COVID-19 outbreak.

(c) Sharing of Information.—Any report or audit required under this section, regularly and not less frequently than every 60 days, to the appropriate committees of Congress, and the Oversight Panel established under section 9.

(d) Termination.—Any oversight, report, or audit requirement under this subsection shall—

(d) Power and Authority.—The Special Inspector General shall have the authorities and responsibilities of inspectors general under the Inspector General Act of 1978 (5 U.S.C. App.).

(e) PERSONNEL, FACILITIES, AND OTHER RESOURCES.—

(f) Reporting.—The Special Inspector General shall report to the Comptroller General and the Congress on the activities of the Inspector General under this section, regularly and not less frequently than every 60 days.

(g) Political Activities on Duty.—For purposes of section 7321 of title 5, United States Code, the Special Inspector General shall not be considered an employee who determines policies to be pursued by the United States in the nationwide administration of Federal law.

(h) Compensation.—The annual rate of basic pay of the Special Inspector General shall be the annual rate of basic pay for an Inspector General appointed to the Inspector General Act of 1978 (5 U.S.C. App.).

(i) Certification.—The Inspector General shall certify to appropriate committees of Congress that no action is necessary or appropriate to discharge the duty under paragraph (1).

(j) In General.—In carrying out the duties described in subsection (c), the Special Inspector General may obtain services as authorized by section 3109 of title 5, United States Code, by entering into contracts for personal services under section 3109 of title 5, relating to classification and General Schedule pay rates.

(k) Experts and Consultants.—The Special Inspector General may enter into contracts for personal services under section 3109 of title 5, relating to classification and General Schedule pay rates.

(l) Assistance from Other Departments.—(A) In General.—The Special Inspector General may enter into contracts for personal services under section 3109 of title 5, relating to classification and General Schedule pay rates.

(m) Audits and Analyses.—The Special Inspector General shall enter into contracts for personal services under section 3109 of title 5, relating to classification and General Schedule pay rates.

(n) Assistance from Other Departments.—(A) In General.—The Special Inspector General shall enter into contracts for personal services under section 3109 of title 5, relating to classification and General Schedule pay rates.

(o) Timeliness.—Any oversight, report, or audit requirement under this subsection shall terminate on the date that is 1 year after the termination date described in section 4(h).

(2) Requirement.—The Special Inspector General shall carry out the duties specified in subsection (c)(1) in accordance with section 4(b)(1) of the Inspector General Act of 1978 (5 U.S.C. App.).

(3) Audits and Analyses.—The Special Inspector General may obtain services as authorized by section 3109 of title 5, United States Code, by entering into contracts for personal services under section 3109 of title 5, relating to classification and General Schedule pay rates.

(4) Assistance from Other Departments.—(A) In General.—The Special Inspector General shall enter into contracts for personal services under section 3109 of title 5, relating to classification and General Schedule pay rates.

(B) Requirement.—The Special Inspector General shall enter into contracts for personal services under section 3109 of title 5, relating to classification and General Schedule pay rates.

(5) Reporting.—The Special Inspector General shall report to the Comptroller General and the Congress on the activities of the Inspector General under this section, regularly and not less frequently than every 60 days.

(6) Political Activities on Duty.—For purposes of section 7321 of title 5, United States Code, the Special Inspector General shall not be considered an employee who determines policies to be pursued by the United States in the nationwide administration of Federal law.

(7) Compensation.—The annual rate of basic pay of the Special Inspector General shall be the annual rate of basic pay for an Inspector General appointed to the Inspector General Act of 1978 (5 U.S.C. App.).

(8) Certification.—The Inspector General shall certify to appropriate committees of Congress that no action is necessary or appropriate to discharge the duty under paragraph (1).

(9) In General.—In carrying out the duties described in subsection (c), the Special Inspector General may obtain services as authorized by section 3109 of title 5, United States Code, by entering into contracts for personal services under section 3109 of title 5, relating to classification and General Schedule pay rates.

(10) Experts and Consultants.—The Special Inspector General may enter into contracts for personal services under section 3109 of title 5, relating to classification and General Schedule pay rates.

(11) Assistance from Other Departments.—(A) In General.—The Special Inspector General shall enter into contracts for personal services under section 3109 of title 5, relating to classification and General Schedule pay rates.

(B) Requirement.—The Special Inspector General shall enter into contracts for personal services under section 3109 of title 5, relating to classification and General Schedule pay rates.
COVID-19 Relief Program assistance and protecting consumers, and providing recommendations for improvement, including recommendations regarding whether any particular financial markets that are currently outside the regulatory system should become subject to the regulatory system, the rationale underlying such recommendations, whether there are any gaps in existing consumer protections.

(c) MEMBERSHIP.—
(1)组成 The Oversight Panel shall consist of 5 members, as follows:
(A) 1 member appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives;
(B) 1 member appointed by the minority leader of the House of Representatives;
(C) 1 member appointed by the majority leader of the Senate;
(D) 1 member appointed by the minority leader of the Senate;
(E) 1 member appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives and the majority leader of the Senate, after consultation with the minority leader of the Senate and the minority leader of the House of Representatives.

(2) PAY.—Each member of the Oversight Panel shall each be paid at a rate equal to the daily equivalent of the annual rate of basic pay of a Member of Congress, as determined under subparagraph (A) of section 501 of the United States Code, plus a per diem for each day (including travel time) during which such member is engaged in the actual performance of duties vested in the Committee.

(3) PROHIBITION OF COMPENSATION OF FEDERAL EMPLOYEES.—Members of the Oversight Panel who are full-time officers or employees of the United States or Members of Congress may not receive additional pay, allowances, or benefits by reason of their service on the Oversight Panel.

(4) TRAVEL EXPENSES.—Each member shall receive travel expenses, including per diem in lieu of subsistence, in accordance with applicable provisions under subchapter I of chapter 65 of title 5, United States Code.

(5) QUORUM.—Four members of the Oversight Panel shall constitute a quorum but a lesser number may hold hearings.

(6) VACANCIES.—A vacancy on the Oversight Panel shall be filled in the manner in which the original appointment was made.

(7) MEETINGS.—The Oversight Panel shall meet at the call of the Chairperson or a majority of its members.

(d) STAFF.—
(1) AUTHORIZATION OF PERSONNEL.—The Oversight Panel may appoint and fix the pay of any personnel as the Commission considers appropriate.

(2) EXPERTS AND CONSULTANTS.—The Oversight Panel may procure temporary and intermittent services under section 3109(b) of title 5, United States Code.

(3) STAFF OF AGENCIES.—Upon request of the Oversight Panel, the head of any Federal department or agency may detail, on a reimbursable basis, any of the personnel of that department or agency to the Oversight Panel to assist in carrying out its duties under this Act.

(e) POWERS.—
(1) HEARINGS AND SESSIONS.—The Oversight Panel may, for the purpose of carrying out this section, hold hearings, sit and act at times and places, take testimony, and receive evidence as the Panel considers appropriate, administer oaths or affirmations to witnesses appearing before it.

(2) POWERS OF MEMBERS AND AGENTS.—Any member or agent of the Oversight Panel may, in the name of the Oversight Panel, take any action which the Oversight Panel is authorized to take by this section.

(3) OBTAINING OFFICIAL DATA.—The Oversight Panel may secure directly from any department or agency of the United States information necessary to enable it to carry out this section. Upon request of the Chairperson of the Oversight Panel, the head of that department or agency shall furnish that information to the Oversight Panel.

(4) REPORTS.—The Oversight Panel shall receive and consider all reports required to be submitted to the Oversight Panel under this Act.

(f) TERMINATION.—The Oversight Panel shall terminate on the date that is 180 days after the termination date described in section 4(h).

(g) FUNDING FOR EXPENSES.—
(1) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There is authorized to be appropriated to the Oversight Panel such sums as may be necessary to carry out the provisions of this Act, and such sums shall be derived from the applicable account of the House of Representatives, and half of which shall be derived from the contingent fund of the Senate.

(2) REIMBURSEMENT OF AMOUNTS.—An amount equal to the expenses of the Oversight Panel shall be promptly transferred by the Secretary of the Treasury, from time to time upon the presentment of a statement of such expenses by the Chairperson of the Oversight Panel, from funds made available to the Oversight Panel under this Act to the applicable fund of the House of Representatives and the contingent fund of the Senate, as reimbursement for amounts expended from such account and fund under paragraph (1).

SEC. 10. COOPERATION WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE AND THE FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION.

Any Federal financial regulatory agency shall cooperate with the Department of Justice and the Federal Bureau of Investigation and other law enforcement agencies investigating violations of fraud and malfeasance with respect to development, advertising, and sale of financial or other investment products.

SEC. 11. INFORMATION FOR CONGRESSIONAL SUPPORT AGENCIES.

Upon request, and to the extent otherwise consistent with law, all information used by the Federal officials in connection with activities authorized under this Act (including the records to which the Comptroller General is entitled under this Act) shall be made available to congressional support agencies in accordance with their obligations to support the Congress as set out in their authorizing statutes for the purposes of assisting the committees conducting oversight, monitoring, and analysis of the activities authorized under the COVID-19 Relief Program.

SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

SENATE RESOLUTION 551—PROVIDING THAT THE SALARIES OF SENATORS SHALL BE HELD IN ESCROW UNTIL THE SENATE HAS PASSED LEGISLATION THAT APPROPRIATELY ADDRESSES THE COVID-19 OUTBREAK

Ms. MCSALLY submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Rules and Administration:

S. Res. 551

Resolved, SECTION 1. NO COVID-19 RELIEF, NO PAY.
(a) DEFINITIONS.—In this section—
(1) the term “covered period” means the period beginning March 25, 2020, and ending on the earlier of—
(A) the date that the Senate passes COVID-19 relief legislation; or
(B) the last day of the One Hundred Sixth Congress;
(2) the term “COVID-19 relief legislation” means legislation that the Majority Leader of the Senate determines appropriately addresses the COVID-19 outbreak; and
(3) the term “Secretary of the Senate” means the Secretary of the Senate, or an em­
presentive of the Office of the Secretary of the Senate who is designated by the Secretary to carry out this resolution.

(b) IN GENERAL.—
(1) DEADLINE FOR PASSING COVID-19 RELIEF LEGISLATION.—If, by March 24, 2020, the Senate does not pass COVID-19 relief legislation, before the end of the covered period, the Secretary of the Senate shall—
(A) deposit in an escrow account all payments otherwise required to be made during the covered period for the compensation of the Senators; and
(B) release amounts deposited in an escrow account under subparagraph (A) to the Senator only upon the expiration of the end of the covered period.

(2) WITHHOLDING AND REMITTANCE OF AMOUNTS FROM PAYMENTS HELD IN ESCROW.—The Secretary of the Senate shall provide for the same withholding and remittance with respect to a payment deposited in an escrow account under this section as would apply to the payment if the payment were not subject to paragraph (1).

(3) RELEASE OF AMOUNTS AT END OF THE COVERED PERIOD.—In order to effect the release of any amounts that are deposited in escrow under section 1 of this Act, the Senate shall provide for the same withholding and remittance with respect to a payment held in escrow under this section as would apply to the payment if the payment were not subject to a withholding and remittance under paragraph (1).

(4) ROLE OF SECRETARY OF THE TREASURY.—The Secretary of the Treasury shall provide that the provisions of subsection (b) are in effect; and

(5) NOTIFICATION.—The Majority Leader of the Senate shall—
(1) upon the date of enactment of this reso­lution, inform the Senate of the date the Senate has passed COVID-19 relief legislation; or
(2) notify the Secretary of the Senate when the Senate has passed COVID-19 relief legislation and the covered period has ended.


Mr. HAWLEY (for himself, Ms. MCSALLY, Mr. CORNYN, and Mr. CORINTHINOS) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations:

S. Res. 552

Whereas the novel coronavirus (referred to in this resolution as “COVID–19”) emerged in the People’s Republic of China and began to spread as early as November 2019; Whereas, by late December, dozens of citizens of the People’s Republic of China had fallen ill with COVID–19; Whereas, on December 30, Wuhan, China health authorities identified, interrogated,
and reprimanded multiple doctors in response to their decisions to warn other Chinese citizens of the danger posed by this new disease;

Whereas, on January 1, 2020, the Wuhan Public Security Bureau questioned 8 Chinese doctors who had posted information about COVID-19 on WeChat;

Whereas, on January 2, the Hubei provincial health commission ordered laboratories to stop testing for COVID-19 and destroy samples of the same;

Whereas, on January 2, the Wuhan Institute of Virology mapped the genome of COVID-19 in order to inform development of public health interventions and medical treatments for COVID-19, but the Government of the People’s Republic of China withheld genetic information on COVID-19 until January 9;

Whereas, on January 11, the Wuhan municipal health commission insisted that there were no new cases of infection by COVID-19;

Whereas, on January 15, the first COVID-19 case outside of the People’s Republic of China was announced in Thailand;

Whereas, on January 14, the World Health Organization announced that the Government of the People’s Republic of China had seen “no clear evidence of human-to-human transmission of the novel coronavirus”;

Whereas, on January 23, the Government of the People’s Republic of China began to implement quarantine measures to stem the spread of COVID-19 at the same time as the disease had already begun to proliferate throughout the world;

Whereas, on March 11, the World Health Organization declared COVID-19 a global pandemic, with 118,000 persons infected and 2,921 dead in 114 different countries at the time of the announcement;

Whereas the Government of the People’s Republic of China has argued recently that COVID-19 did not originate in the People’s Republic of China;

Whereas the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People’s Republic of China has alleged that the United States Army may have delivered COVID-19 to the city of Wuhan in the People’s Republic of China;

Whereas the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People’s Republic of China has said, “China’s endeavor to combatting [sic] the epidemic has bought time for [international] preparedness and assistance”;

Whereas a University of Southampton study found that earlier intervention by the Government of the People’s Republic of China could have “significantly” limited the geographic spread of COVID-19: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) condemns the decision by the Government of the People’s Republic of China to hide the emergence and spread of COVID-19 within its borders during the initial weeks of the outbreak;

(2) finds that the decision by the Government of the People’s Republic of China to hide the emergence and spread of COVID-19 during that period almost certainly contributed to the rapid spread of that disease throughout the Indo-Pacific region, Europe, and the rest of the world;

(3) finds that the Government of the People’s Republic of China should be held accountable for the impact, of its decision to hide the emergence and spread of COVID-19, on the lives and livelihoods of the people of the United States and other affected nations to determine if the Government of the People’s Republic of China of the COVID-19 outbreak prior to March 31, 2020, contributed to the emergence of the COVID-19 global pandemic; and

(5) calls on the international community to—

(A) quantify the harm caused, by the handling of the COVID-19 outbreak by the Government of the People’s Republic of China, to the health and economic well-being of the people of the United States and other nations; and

(B) design a mechanism for delivering compensation from the Government of the People’s Republic of China to all affected nations for the harm caused by its decision to hide the emergence and spread of COVID-19 during the initial weeks of the outbreak;


Mrs. BLACKWELL (for herself and Mr. COTTON) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations:

S. Res. 553

Whereas records of the Government of the People’s Republic of China suggest that the first human became infected with COVID-19 on November 17, 2019, in the Hubei Province of China;

Whereas, on December 27, 2019, Zhang Jixian, a doctor from the Hubei Provincial Hospital of Chinese and Western Medicine, reported to the Wuhan Center for Disease Control and Prevention that he had treated a patient with a novel strain of coronavirus; whereas Dr. Yu Wenling and a team of researchers from Xishuangbanna Tropical Botanical Garden reported that the Huanan Seafood Wholesale Market greatly contributed to the spread of COVID-19 throughout the city of Wuhan;

Whereas, on December 31, 2019, the Wuhan Institute of Virology announced and strictly enforced quarantine of employees who had visited the Wuhan Wholesale Market in Wuhan, the Government of the People’s Republic of China waited 5 days to shut down the market;

Whereas Zhou Xianwang, the mayor of Wuhan, stated that 5,000,000 of the 14,000,000 residents of Wuhan left Wuhan before the Government of the People’s Republic of China imposed a lockdown;

Whereas, on December 30, 2019, Ai Fen, the director of the emergency department of Wuhan Central Hospital, shared a diagnosis report of COVID-19 virus with a group of doctors through the social media application WeChat;

Whereas, on December 30, 2019, Dr. Li Wenliang warned his medical school classmates of an outbreak of an unknown SARS-like virus through WeChat;

Whereas, on January 3, 2020, the World Health Organization and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People’s Republic of China publicly denied that COVID-19 was transmissible through person-to-person contact until January 15, 2020, despite having uncovered contrary evidence in late December and having been alerted of the transmissibility of COVID-19;

Whereas, on January 18, 2020, more than 10,000 families attended the annual Lunar New Year Banquet of Wuhan, which was organized and sponsored by the Wuhan city government;

Whereas the People’s Daily, the largest newspaper in China, first reported on the coronavirus on January 21, 2020, nearly a month after the virus was internally confirmed;

Whereas, on February 7, 2020, 1 month after checking into Wuhan Central Hospital, Dr. Li Wenliang died of a severe case of COVID-19;

Whereas the COVID-19 outbreak has disproportionately harmed the persecuted Uyghur Muslim minority of China as a result of actions taken by the Government of the People’s Republic of China;

Whereas the Government of the People’s Republic of China detained more than 1,000,000 Uyghur Muslims and other ethnic minorities in “re-education” centers where crowded and unsanitary conditions make the camps hotspots for viral disease and leave prisoners at an elevated risk of contracting COVID-19;

Whereas, as reported by the Uyghur Human Rights Project, and corroborated by video evidence and Radio Free Asia, an announcement and strictly enforced quarantine of millions of residents of the predominantly Uyghur Muslim Xinjiang Province of China around January 24, 2020, resulted in mass starvation and shortages of basic medical supplies;

Whereas, on February 25, 2020, Xinhua News Service reported that the Government of the People’s Republic of China “pre-located” 30,000 Uyghur laborers to temporarily shuttered factories in the Hotan prefecture, exposing them to health risks that the Government of the People’s Republic of China determined were unacceptable for the ethnically Han majority;
Whereas the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the premier infectious disease research institution in the world, was well situated at the beginning of the COVID–19 outbreak to both assist the response of the People and Government of the People’s Republic of China and prepare the people and Government of the United States to handle the virus in the case of international spread; and

Whereas the National Health Commission of China failed to include individuals who tested positive for COVID–19 but remained asymptomatic in its daily tally of confirmed COVID–19 cases, hampering the ability of public health authorities in the United States to account for the rate of spread and the health risks of the virus; and

Whereas a Foreign Ministry Spokesman of the Government of the People’s Republic of China, Zhao Lijian, claimed that COVID–19 originated in the United States and that the United States Army brought COVID–19 to Wuhan to wage biological warfare on China; and whereas other officials of the Government of the People’s Republic of China, including scientists working on the COVID–19 response of China, the Ambassador to South Africa of China, Xing Haiming, claimed that COVID–19 originated in the United States and that the United States Army brought COVID–19 to Wuhan to wage biological warfare on China; have claimed that there is no evidence that COVID–19 originated in the United States; and

Whereas, on March 4, 2020, Xinhua News Agency published an article threatening to cut off medical supply exports to the United States and that (the United States) into the mighty sea of coronavirus; and

Whereas, on March 17, 2020, the Government of the People’s Republic of China expelled nationals of the United States working at the Wall Street Journal, the Washington Post, and the New York Times, reducing their ability to provide information on the COVID–19 outbreak in China; and whereas a study by the University of Southampton found that if the Government of the People’s Republic of China had taken action 3 weeks earlier, the spread of COVID–19 would be reduced by 96 percent globally; Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) calls on the Government of the People’s Republic of China to—

(A) publicly state that there is no evidence that COVID–19 originated anywhere else but China;
(B) denounce the baseless conspiracy that the United States Army placed COVID–19 in Wuhan;
(C) revoke the expulsion of journalists of the United States;

(D) denounce the persecution of Uighur Muslims and other persecuted ethnic minorities; and

(E) end all forced labor programs;

(2) condemn—

(A) the censorship of the Government of the People’s Republic of China of doctors and journalists during the early days of the COVID–19 outbreak, particularly the treatment of Dr. Li Wenliang;
(B) the refusal of the Government of the People’s Republic of China to allow scientists from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to assist its response to COVID–19 for more than a month after cooperation was offered, needlessly endangering the lives of its own citizens and hampering the early attempts of the United States to learn more about COVID–19; and

(C) the duplicitous denial of the National Health Commission of China of the persons to persons transmission of COVID–19;

(3) calls for the Director-General of the World Health Organization, Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, to retrace highly misplaced support of his response to the COVID–19 outbreak of the People’s Republic of China to COVID–19, especially his praise for the “commitment from top leadership [of the Government of the People’s Republic of China], and the transparency they have demonstrated”.

**AMENDMENTS SUBMITTED AND PROPOSED**

SA 1574. Mr. CRAMER submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 748, to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to repeal the excise tax on high cost employer-sponsored health coverage; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 1575. Mr. MORAN submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 748, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 1576. Mr. SASSE (for himself and Mrs. CAPITO) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 748, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

**TEXT OF AMENDMENTS**

SA 1574. Mr. CRAMER submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 748, to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to repeal the excise tax on high cost employer-sponsored health coverage; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

**TITLE.—BUTCH LEWIS ACT OF 2020**

SEC. 1. SHORT TITLE. This title may be cited as the “Butch Lewis Act of 2020”.

SEC. 2. PENSION REHABILITATION ADMINISTRATION; ESTABLISHMENT; POWERS.

(a) ESTABLISHMENT.—There is established in the Department of the Treasury an agency to be known as the “Pension Rehabilitation Administration”.

(b) DIRECTOR.—

(A) APPOINTMENT OF DEPUTY DIRECTORS, OF OFFICERS, AND EMPLOYEES.—The Director may appoint Deputy Directors, officers, and employees, including attorneys, in accordance with chapter 51 and subchapter III of chapter 5 of title 5, United States Code.

(B) SERVICE UNTIL APPOINTMENT OF SUCCESSOR.—The term of office of the Director at the expiration of a term may continue to serve until a successor is appointed.

(C) POWERS.—

(A) APPOINTMENT OF DEPUTY DIRECTORS, OFFICERS, AND EMPLOYEES.—The Director may appoint Deputy Directors, officers, and employees, including attorneys, in accordance with chapter 51 and subchapter III of title 5, United States Code.

(B) CONTRACTING.—

(I) IN GENERAL.—The Director may contract with any person for the provision of services (including those related to budget and accounting, financial reporting, personnel, and procurement) with the General Services Administration, or such other Federal agency as the Director determines appropriate, for which payment shall be made in advance, or by reimbursement, from funds of the Pension Rehabilitation Administration in such amounts as may be agreed upon by the Director and the head of the Federal agency providing the services.

(ii) SUBCONTRACTS.—Contract authority under clause (i) shall be effective for any fiscal year only to the extent that appropriations are available for that purpose.

(C) TRANSFER OF FUNDS.—The Secretary of the Treasury may transfer for any fiscal year, from unobligated amounts appropriated to the Department of the Treasury, to the Pension Rehabilitation Administration such sums as may be reasonably necessary for the administrative expenses of the Pension Rehabilitation Administration.

**SEC. 3. PENSION REHABILITATION TRUST FUND**

(a) IN GENERAL.—Subchapter A of chapter 98 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 is amended by adding at the end the following new section:

“**SEC. 9512. PENSION REHABILITATION TRUST FUND.**

“(a) CREATION OF TRUST FUND.—There is established in the Treasury of the United States a trust fund to be known as the ‘Pension Rehabilitation Trust Fund’ [hereafter in this section referred to as the ‘Fund’], consisting of such amounts as may be appropriated or credited to the Fund as provided in subsection (b).

“(b) TRANSFERS TO FUND.—

(1) AMOUNTS ATTRIBUTABLE TO TREASURY BONDS.—There shall be credited to the Fund such amounts transferred under the Butch Lewis Act of 2020.

(2) LOAN INTEREST AND PRINCIPAL.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—The Director of the Pension Rehabilitation Administration shall deposit in the Fund any amounts received from the Secretary for administrative and operating expenses pursuant to such Act.

(3) AVAILABILITY OF FUNDS.—Amounts credited to or deposited in the Fund shall remain available until expended.

(4) EXPENDITURES FROM FUND.—Amounts in the Fund are available without further appropriation to the Pension Rehabilitation Administration for the purpose of making the loans described in the Butch Lewis Act of 2020.

(5) LOAN INTEREST AND PRINCIPAL.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—Subchapter A of chapter 98 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 is amended by adding at the end the following new item:

“**SA 1576. Mr. CRAMER submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 748, to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to repeal the excise tax on high cost employer-sponsored health coverage; which was ordered to lie on the table.**

**SEC. 4. LOAN PROGRAM FOR MULTIEmployer DEFINED BENEFIT PLANS.**

(a) LOAN AUTHORITY.—

(I) IN GENERAL.—The Pension Rehabilitation Administration established under this Act is authorized—

(A) to make loans to multiemployer plans (as defined in section 414(h) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986) which are defined benefit plans (as defined in section 414(c) of such Code) and which—

(i) are in critical and declining status (within the meaning of section 432(b)(6) of such Code and section 305(b)(6) of such Act) as of the date of the enactment of this Act,

(ii) to which a suspension of benefits has been approved under section 432(e)(9) of such Code and section 308(e)(9) of such Act as of such date,

(iii) in any such case, are in critical status (within the meaning of section 432(b)(2) of such Code and section
The terms of the loan shall not make ref-
tor of the Pension Rehabilitation Adminis-
1974; and
any suspension which has been approved but
Code, before making any loan under paragraph (1), and
than 2 to 3; or
subject to subsection (b), to establish
such loan.
(3) ESTABLISHMENT OF LOAN PROGRAM.—
(A) IN GENERAL.—A program to make the
loans authorized under this section shall be
established not later than September 30, 2019, with guidance regarding such program to be
consulted with the Secretary of the Treasury, the Secretary of Labor, and the Director of the
Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation and the Department of Labor no later than December 31, 2019.
(B) LOANS AUTHORIZED BEFORE PROGRAM DATE.—Without regard to whether the pro-
gram under subparagraph (A) has been estab-
ished, a plan may apply for a loan under this
section before either date described in such subparagraph, and the Pension Reha-
bilitation Administration shall approve the application and make the loan before estab-
lishment of the program if necessary to avoid any suspension of the accrued benefits of partici-
pants and beneficiaries.
(b) LOAN TERMS.—
(1) IN GENERAL.—The terms of any loan
made under subsection (a) shall state that—
(A) the plan shall make payments of inter-
est on the loan for a period of 29 years begin-
ing on the date of the loan (or 19 years in the case of a loan under subsection (c)(5)); and
(B) final payment of interest and principal shall be due in the 30th year after the date of
the loan. The Federal Reserve System rate of interest, as determined under subsection (c)(5),
shall be such lesser rate, not exceeding the rate
necessary to collect revenues sufficient to admin-
ister the program under this section.
(c) LOAN APPLICATION.—
(1) IN GENERAL.—In applying for a loan under subsection (a), the plan sponsor shall—
(A) demonstrate that, except as provided in subparagraph (C), the plan is also ap-
portant Corporation and the Secretary of Labor, con-
and demonstrations in the application unless
accepted the determinations of the Secretaries of
of the Pension Rehabilitation Administration, in
consultation with the Pension Benefit Guar-
ity Corporation and the Department of Labor,
the Secretary of Labor, and the Director of the
Pension Rehabilitation Administration shall notify
the plan sponsor of the denial
within such 90 days, the Di-
rector notifies the plan sponsor of the denial
of such application and the reasons for such denial, and
the plan sponsor may submit additional informa-
tion to the Director pursuant to subsection (g).
(3) REQUIRED ACTIONS; DEEMED APPROVAL.—
The Director of the Pension Rehabilitation Admin-
istration shall approve or deny any application under subsection (a) in accordance with the
requirements of section 432(c)(9) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 and section 305(e)(9) of the
Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 or under section 418E of such Code, before the
loan is made, determined without regard to the
suspension, including retroactive pay-
ment of benefits which would otherwise have been payable during the period of the suspen-
sion.
(2) COORDINATION WITH PBGC FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE.—In the case of a plan with respect to which a
suspension of benefits has been authorized or are inconsistent with any rules
(4) CERTAIN PLANS REQUIRED TO APPLY.—
The plan sponsor of any plan with respect to which a suspension of benefits has been
approved under section 432(e)(9) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 and section 305(e)(9) of the
Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 or under such Code, before the date of the enact-
ment of this Act shall apply for a loan under this sec-
tion if the Pension Rehabilitation Administra-
tion shall provide for such plan sponsors to use the simplified applica-
tion under subsection (d)(2)(B).
(5) INCENTIVE FOR EARLY PAYMENT.—The plan sponsor may elect at the time of the ap-
plication to repay the loan principal, along with the remaining interest, over the 10-year
period beginning with the 21st year after the
date of the loan. In the case of a plan making
this election, the interest on the loan shall be reduced by 0.5 percent.
(a) LOAN AMOUNT.—
(1) AMOUNT OF LOAN.—
(A) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided in subparagraph (B), the amount of any loan under subsection (a) shall be as determined under subsection (c) if (i) the plan is making payments of interest and principal, (ii) the amount needed to purchase annuity contracts or to implement a program described in paragraph (3)(C) (or a combination of the two) is sufficient to provide benefits of particip-
ants and beneficiaries of the plan in pay status, and terminated vested benefits, at the time the
loan is made.

The plan sponsor of any plan with respect to
subparagraphs (B) and (C); and
shall be purchased, and
would cause the plan to be within 18 months of be-
coming insolvent at any point during such
period, the loan amount shall be such lesser amount as the plan sponsor determines the
amount needed to purchase annuity contracts or to implement a program described in
paragraph (3)(C) (or a combination of the two) to provide benefits of particip-
ants and beneficiaries of the plan in pay status, and terminated vested benefits, at the time the
loan is made.
(B) LIMITATION ON ABILITY TO APPLY.—At the time of the application under subsection (c) the plan sponsor deter-
minds that, based on a repayment schedule that would provide for repayment of the full
amount determined under subparagraph (A) or (C)(i) within the 30-year period described in
subsection (b)(1), making payments would cause the plan to be within 18 months of be-
coming insolvent at any point during such
period, the loan amount shall be such lesser amount as the plan sponsor determines the
amount needed to purchase annuity contracts or to implement a program described in
paragraph (3)(C) (or a combination of the two) to provide benefits of particip-
ants and beneficiaries of the plan in pay status, and terminated vested benefits, at the time the
loan is made.
(C) PLANS WITH SUSPENDED BENEFITS.—In the case of a plan with respect to which a
suspension of benefits has been authorized under section 432(e)(9) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 and section 305(e)(9) of the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 or under section 418E of such Code—

(1) the suspension of benefits shall not be taken into account in applying subparagraph (A) of

(ii) except as provided in subparagraph (B), the loan amount shall be such lesser amount as the plan sponsor determines the
amount needed to purchase annuity contracts or to implement a program described in paragraph (3)(C) (or a combination of the two) to provide benefits of particip-
ants and beneficiaries of the plan in pay status, and terminated vested benefits, at the time the
loan is made.
necessary to determine the eligibility for and amount of the loan under this section and the financial assistance under section 4261(d) of such Act; and

(ii) Oversight of non-annuity investments.

(I) In general.—Any portfolio implemented under this paragraph shall be subject to an annual audit by the Pension Rehabilitation Administration, including a mandatory triennial review of the adequacy of the portfolio to provide the benefits described in paragraph (A) and the ability to provide such benefits (provided it remains within a reasonable period of time) of any decision by the plan sponsor to change the investment manager of the portfolio.

(II) REMEDIAL ACTIONS. —If the triennial review under subclause (I) determines an inadequacy, the plan sponsor shall take remedial action to ensure that the inadequacy will be cured within 5 years.

(E) OMBUDSPERSON.—The Participant and Plan Sponsor Advocate established under section 4004 of the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 shall act as ombudsperson for participants and beneficiaries on behalf of whom annuity contracts are purchased or who are covered by a portfolio under this paragraph.

(F) Collection of repayment. —Except as provided in subsection (i), the Pension Rehabilitation Administration shall make every effort to collect repayment of loans under this section in accordance with section 3711 of title 31, United States Code.

(G) Loan interest rate. —If the plan is unable to make any payment on a loan under this section when due, the Pension Rehabilitation Administration shall negotiate with the plan sponsor a new payment agreement (including installment payments over a reasonable period or forgiveness of a portion of the loan principal), but only to the extent necessary to avoid insolvency in the subsequent 18 months.

(H) Authority to issue rules, etc. —The Secretary of the Treasury, in consultation with the Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation and the Department of Labor, is authorized to issue regulations and make rules and regulations for purposes of this section, and as circumstances may require contributions under section 412.

(II) any other portfolio prescribed by the Secretary of the Treasury in regulations issued at fixed or zero coupon rates; or

(B) Annuity contract requirements. —The annuity contracts purchased under subparagraph (A) shall be issued by an insurance company which is licensed to do business under the laws of any State and which is rated A or better by a nationally recognized statistical rating organization, and the purchase of such contracts shall meet all applicable fiduciary standards under the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974.

(C) Portfolios.

(I) In general.—A portfolio described in this subparagraph—

(i) a cash matching portfolio or duration matching portfolio consisting of investment grade (as rated by a nationally recognized statistical rating organization) fixed income investments, including United States dollar-denominated public or private debt obligations issued or guaranteed by the United States or any agency or instrumentality thereof or an association, corporation, or other entity which is in each case deemed to be a government agency or instrumentality of the United States, and which is rated A or better by a nationally recognized statistical rating organization and which is one that is already receiving financial assistance (other than under section 4261(d) of such Act) from the Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation at the time of the application for the loan under this section.

(II) Any portfolio described in subparagraph (I) and any annuity contracts purchased and portfolios implemented under the laws of any State and which is licensed to do business under the laws of any State and which is rated A or better by a nationally recognized rating agency (other than under section 4261(d) of such Act) from the Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation at the time of the application for the loan under this section which may be used by an insolvent plan to maintain such plan and which is already receiving financial assistance (other than under section 4261(d) of such Act) from the Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation at the time of the application for the loan under this section.

(III) Plans already receiving PBGC assistance and amount of the loan under this section and the financial assistance under section 4261(d) of such Act; and

(J) Special rules for plans receiving pension rehabilitation loans. —

(1) Determination of withdrawal liability.

(A) In general.—If any employer participating in a plan at the time the plan receives a loan under the Butch Lewis Act of 2020 withdraws from the plan before the end of the 30-year period beginning on the date of the loan, the withdrawal liability of such employer shall be determined—

(i) by applying section 4219(c)(1)(D) as if the plan were terminating by the withdrawal of every employer from the plan, and

(ii) by determining the value of non-forfeitable benefits under the plan at the time of the deemed termination by using the interest assumptions prescribed for purposes of section 4014 of the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974, as prescribed in the regulations under section 4281 of the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 in the case of such a mass withdrawal.

(B) Annuity contracts and investment portfolios purchased with loan funds.—Annuity contracts purchased and portfolios implemented using loan funds received under the Butch Lewis Act of 2020 shall not be taken into account in determining the withdrawal liability of any employer under subparagraph (A), but the amount equal to the greater of—

(i) the benefits provided under such contracts or portfolios to participants and beneficiaries, or

(ii) the remaining payments due on the loan under such Act, shall be so taken into account.

(C) Determining the value of such funds.

(i) In general.—If any employer participating in a plan at the time the plan receives a loan under the Butch Lewis Act of 2020 withdraws from the plan before the end of the 30-year period beginning on the date of the loan, the withdrawal liability of such employer shall be determined—

(1) by striking at the end of clause (i) "(i) by applying section 4219(c)(1)(D) as if the plan were terminating by the withdrawal of every employer from the plan, and

(2) by adding at the end of the following new clause:

(iii) indebtedness with respect to a multiemployer plan, (2) by striking at the end of clause (i)(II) and inserting "; or;"; and

(3) by adding at the end of the following new clause:

(iv) the benefits provided under such contracts or portfolios to participants and beneficiaries, or

(v) the remaining payments due on the loan under such Act, shall be so taken into account.

(D) Amendment to Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974.—Section 305 of the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 (29 U.S.C. 1085) is amended by adding at the end the following new subsection:

(k) Special rules for plans receiving pension rehabilitation loans. —

(1) Determination of withdrawal liability.

(A) In general.—If any employer participating in a plan at the time the plan receives a loan under the Butch Lewis Act of 2020 withdraws from the plan before the end of the 30-year period beginning on the date of the loan, the withdrawal liability of such employer shall be determined—

(1) by applying subsection (a) to a plan that is, at the time the plan is terminating by the withdrawal of every employer from the plan, or

(ii) by applying section 4219(c)(1)(D) as if the plan were terminating by the withdrawal of every employer from the plan, and

(iii) by determining the value of non-forfeitable benefits under the plan at the time of the deemed termination by using the interest assumptions prescribed for purposes of section 4014 of the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974, as prescribed in the regulations under section 4281 of the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 in the case of such a mass withdrawal.

(B) Annuity contracts and investment portfolios purchased with loan funds.—Annuity contracts purchased and portfolios implemented using loan funds received under the Butch Lewis Act of 2020 shall not be taken into account in determining the withdrawal liability of any employer under subparagraph (A), but the amount equal to the greater of—

(i) the benefits provided under such contracts or portfolios to participants and beneficiaries, or

(ii) the remaining payments due on the loan under such Act, shall be so taken into account.

(C) Determining the value of such funds.

(i) In general.—If any employer participating in a plan at the time the plan receives a loan under the Butch Lewis Act of 2020 withdraws from the plan before the end of the 30-year period beginning on the date of the loan, the withdrawal liability of such employer shall be determined—

(1) by striking at the end of clause (i) "(i) by applying section 4219(c)(1)(D) as if the plan were terminating by the withdrawal of every employer from the plan, and

(2) by adding at the end of the following new clause:

(iii) indebtedness with respect to a multiemployer plan, (2) by striking at the end of clause (i)(II) and inserting "; or;"; and

(3) by adding at the end of the following new clause:

(iv) the benefits provided under such contracts or portfolios to participants and beneficiaries, or
“(ii) the remaining payments due on the loan under such Act, shall be so taken into account.

“(2) COORDINATION WITH FUNDING REQUIREMENTS.—(A) The Secretary shall—

“(i) maintain in the case of a plan which receives a loan under the Dutch Lewis Act of 2020—

“(A) annuity contracts purchased and portfolios implemented using loan funds received under such Act, the benefits provided to participants and beneficiaries under such contracts or portfolios, shall not be taken into account in determining minimum required contributions under section 302;

“(B) payments on the interest and principal under the loan, and any benefits owed in excess of those provided under such contracts or portfolios, shall be taken into account as liabilities for purposes of such section, and

“(C) if such portfolio is projected due to unfavorable investment or actuarial experience to be unable to fully satisfy the liabilities which it covers, the amount of the liabilities projected to be unsatisfied shall be taken into account as liabilities for purposes of such section.”.

SEC. 6. ISSUANCE OF TREASURY BONDS.

The Secretary of the Treasury (in consultation with the Director of the Pension Rehabilitation Administration established under this Act) shall from time to time transfer to the Pension Rehabilitation Trust Fund established under section 9512 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 such amounts as are necessary to fund the loan program under this Act, including from proceeds from the Secretary’s issuance of obligations under chapter 31 of title 31, United States Code.

SEC. 7. PLANS RECEIVING PENSION REHABILITATION LOANS.

(a) In General.—Subpart E of part III of subchapter A of chapter 61 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 is amended by adding at the end the following new section:

“SEC. 6059A. REPORTS OF PLANS RECEIVING PENSION REHABILITATION LOANS.

“(1) In General.—In the case of a plan receiving a loan under the Dutch Lewis Act of 2020, with respect to the first plan year beginning after the date of the loan and each of the 29 succeeding plan years, if the plan is in the 90th day of each such plan year the plan sponsor shall file with the Secretary a report (including prescribed electronic information) which contains—

“(1) the funded percentage (as defined in section 432(i)(2)) as of the first day of such plan year;

“(2) the market value of the assets of the plan (as of the last day of the plan year preceding such plan year);

“(3) the total value of all contributions made by employers and employees during the plan year preceding such plan year;

“(4) the total value of all benefits paid during the plan year preceding such plan year;

“(5) cash flow projections for such plan year and the 9 succeeding plan years, and the assumptions used in making such projections;

“(6) funding standard account projections for such plan year and the 9 succeeding plan years, and the assumptions relied upon in making such projections;

“(7) any investment gains or losses during the plan year preceding such plan year;

“(8) any significant reduction in the number of active participants during the plan year preceding such plan year, and the reason for such reduction;

“(9) a list of employers that withdrew from the plan in the plan year preceding such plan year, and the resulting reduction in contributions;

“(10) a list of employers that paid withdrawal liability to the plan during the plan year preceding such plan year and, for each employer, a total assessment of the withdrawal liability (including the annual payment amount, and the number of years remaining in the payment schedule with respect to such withdrawal liability);

“(11) any changes to benefits, accrual rates, or contribution rates during the plan year preceding such plan year, and whether such changes relate to the terms of the loan;

“(12) details regarding any funding improvement plan or rehabilitation plan and updates to such plan;

“(13) the number of participants and beneficiaries during the plan year preceding such plan year who are active participants, the number of participants and beneficiaries in pay status, the number of terminated vested participants and beneficiaries,

“(14) the amount of any financial assistance received under section 4261 of the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 to pay benefits during the preceding plan year, and the total amount of such financial assistance received for all preceding years;

“(15) the information contained on the most recent annual funding notice submitted by the plan under section 10(i)(1) of the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974;

“(16) the information contained on the most recent annual return under section 6056 and actuarial report under section 6059 of the plan, and

“(17) copies of the plan document and amendments, other retirement benefit or ancillary benefit plans relating to the plan and contribution obligations under such plans, a breakdown of administrative expenses of the plan, participant census data and distribution of such data, a recent valuation report as of the plan year, copies of collective bargaining agreements, and financial reports, and such other information as the Secretary shall determine in consultation with the Director of the Pension Rehabilitation Administration, may require.

“(b) ELECTRONIC SUBMISSION.—The report required under subsection (a) shall be submitted electronically.

“(c) INFORMATION SHARING.—The Secretary shall share the information in the report under subsection (a) with the Secretary of Labor and the Director of the Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation.

“(d) REPORT TO PARTICIPANTS, BENEFICIARIES, AND EMPLOYERS.—Each plan sponsor required to file a report under subsection (a) shall—

“(1) provide, in a form prescribed by the Secretary, a copy of the information described in paragraph (1) to each participant and beneficiary;

“(2) provide such information to each employer with an obligation to contribute to the plan;

“(3) provide such information to each employer plan—

“(A) if the plan is an employer plan; and

“(B) if the plan is an employer plan that is a participant in the plan for purposes of section 305(e)(9) as of such date of enactment; or

“(4) any other party that is a party to such loan or has any other interest in such plan for purposes of section 305(e)(9) as of such date of enactment.

“(e) PENALTY.—Subsection (e) of section 6522 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 is amended—

“(1) by inserting ‘‘, 6059A (relating to reports of plans receiving pension rehabilitation loans)’’ after ‘‘deferred compensation’’;

“(2) by inserting ‘‘$100 in the case of failures to furnish a report under this section, and’’; and

“(3) by adding at the end the following—

‘‘(In the case of a failure with respect to section 6059A, the amount imposed under this subsection shall not be paid from the assets of the plan.’’.

“(c) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sections for subpart E of part III of subchapter A of chapter 61 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 is amended by adding at the end the following new section:

‘‘Sec. 6059A. Reports of plans receiving pension rehabilitation loans.’’

SEC. 8. PBGC FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE.

(a) In General.—Section 4261 of the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 (29 U.S.C. 1431) is amended by adding at the end the following new subsection:

“(d)(1) The plan sponsor of a multiemployer plan—

“(A) which is in critical status (within the meaning of section 305(b)(6)) as of the date of the enactment of this subsection, or with respect to which a suspension of benefits has been approved under section 305(e)(9) as of such date;

“(B) which, as of such date of enactment, is in critical status (within the meaning of section 305(b)(2)), has a funded percentage of less than 40 percent (as determined for purposes of section 305), and has a ratio of active participants to inactive participants which is less than 2 to 3; or

“(C) which is insolvent for purposes of section 305(e)(9) as of such date of enactment, if the plan became insolvent after December 16, 2014, and has not been terminated, which is applying for a loan under the Dutch Lewis Act of 2020 may also apply to the corporation for financial assistance under this subsection, by jointly submitting such applications in accordance with the rules of such Act. The application for financial assistance under this subsection shall demonstrate, based on projections by the Secretary, that as of the date of the anticipated loan amount under such Act, the plan will still become (or remain) insolvent within the 30-year period beginning on the date of the loan.

“(2) In reviewing an application under paragraph (1), the corporation shall review the demonstrations and assumptions submitted with the loan application under the Dutch Lewis Act of 2020 and provide guidance regarding such assumptions prior to approving or disapproving the application for financial assistance under this subsection. The corporation may deny any application if the assumptions and determinations are unreasonable, or inconsistent with rules issued by the corporation, and the application is unacceptable.

“(3) which participated in the plan for purposes of section 305, and has not been terminated, which is applying for a loan under the Dutch Lewis Act of 2020 may also apply to the corporation for financial assistance under this subsection, by jointly submitting such applications in accordance with the rules of such Act. The application for financial assistance under this subsection shall demonstrate, based on projections by the Secretary, that as of the date of the anticipated loan amount under such Act, the plan will still become (or remain) insolvent within the 30-year period beginning on the date of the loan.

“(4) In the case of a plan described in paragraph (1)(A) or (1)(B), the financial assistance provided pursuant to such application under this subsection shall be the amount (determined by the plan actuary and submitted on the application) equal to the sum of—

“(A) the percentage of benefits of participants and beneficiaries of the plan in pay status at the time of the application; and

“(B) the percentage of future benefits of participants who have separated from service but are not yet in pay status are entitled, which, if such percentage were paid by the corporation in combination with the loan, would allow the plan to avoid projected insolvency. Such amount shall not exceed the maximum guaranteed benefit with respect to participants and beneficiaries of the plan under sections 4022A and 4022B. For this purpose, the maximum guaranteed benefit amount shall be determined by disregarding any financial assistance available from the Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation in combination with the loan under sections 4022A and 4022B. The corporation shall take into account any financial assistance available from other sources and shall be determined as if the plan were insolvent on the
date of the application. Further, the present value of the maximum guaranteed benefit amount with respect to such participants and beneficiaries may be calculated in the aggregate, rather than by reference to the benefit of each such participant or beneficiary.

(4) In the case of a plan described in paragraph (1)(C), the financial assistance provided pursuant to such application under this subsection shall be the amount (determined by the plan actuary and submitted on the application) which, if such amount were paid by the corporation in combination with the loan and any other assistance being provided to the plan by the corporation at the time of the application, would enable the plan to emerge from the projected insolvency.

(5)(A) Except as provided in subparagraph (B), the corporation shall provide the financial assistance under this subsection only in such amounts as the corporation determines, at the time of approval and at the beginning of each plan year beginning thereafter during the period of assistance, are necessary for the plan to avoid insolvency during the 5 plan year period beginning with the current plan year.

(B) In the case of a plan described in paragraph (1)(C), the financial assistance under this subsection shall be provided in a lump sum if deemed necessary by the corporation, and in no case later than December 31, 2020.

(6) Subsections (b) and (c) shall apply to financial assistance under this subsection as if it were provided under subsection (a), except that the terms for repayment under subsection (b)(2) shall not require the financial assistance to be repaid before the date on which the loan under the Butch Lewis Act of 2020 is repaid in full.

(7) The corporation may forgo repayment of the financial assistance provided under this subsection if necessary to avoid any suspension of the accrued benefits of participants.

(b) APPROPRIATIONS.—There is appropriated to the Director of the Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation such sums as may be necessary for each fiscal year to provide the financial assistance described in section 4281(d) of the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 (29 U.S.C. 1431(d)) (as added by this section) (including necessary administrative and operating expenses relating to such assistance).

SA 1575. Mr. MORAN submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 748, to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to repeal the excise tax on high cost employer-sponsored health coverage; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. 5. PAID SICK AND FAMILY LEAVE PAY-ROLL CREDITS ALLOWED FOR STATE AND LOCAL AGENCIES PROVIDING HEALTH CARE.

(a) PAID SICK LEAVE.—Section 7001(e)(4) of the Families First Coronavirus Response Act is amended by adding at the end the following: “The preceding sentence shall not apply to any agency or instrumentality of a State or political subdivision thereof if such agency or instrumentality primarily employs health care providers (as defined in section 101 of the Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993 (29 U.S.C. 203)).”

(b) PAID FAMILY LEAVE.—Section 7003(e)(4) of such Act is amended by adding at the end the following: “The preceding sentence shall not apply to any agency or instrumentality of a State or political subdivision thereof if such agency or instrumentality primarily employs health care providers (as defined in section 101 of the Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993 (29 U.S.C. 203)).”

SA 1576. Mr. SASSE (for himself and Mrs. CAPITO) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 748, to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to repeal the excise tax on high cost employer-sponsored health coverage; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

Strike subparagraphs (C) and (D) of section 3215(a)(2) and insert the following:

(C) in the course of providing health care services that are within the scope of the license, registration, or certification of the volunteer, as defined by—

(i) the State in which the medical services are received or in which the act or omission occurs; or

(ii) in the case of medical services received in, or an act or omission that occurs in, a State other than the State in which the health care professional is licensed, registered, or certified, the State in which such professional is licensed, registered or certified; and

(D) in a good faith belief that the individual being treated is in need of health care services.

(b) OUT-OF-STATE PROVIDERS.—Notwithstanding any other provision of law, a health care provider may provide health care services in a State, even though the provider is not licensed in such State to provide such services, if—

(1) such services are offered and provided solely on a volunteer basis; and

(2) such provider is licensed, registered, or certified to practice in any other State, and such services are within the scope of practice of such provider (as defined by the State of licensure, registration, or certification).

ADJOURNMENT UNTIL TOMORROW

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, if there is no further business to come before the Senate, I ask unanimous consent that it stand adjourned under the previous order.

There being no objection, the Senate, at 1:46 a.m., adjourned until Wednesday, March 25, 2020, at 12 noon.