The House met at noon and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. CLAY).

DESIGNATION OF THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE
The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Speaker:


I hereby appoint the Honorable WILLIAM LACY CLAY to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

NANCY PELOSI,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

PRAYER
Reverend William Gurnee, St. Joseph's Catholic Church, Washington, D.C., offered the following prayer:

Almighty God, because our human weakness leads us sometimes to glamorize our elected leaders as symbols of power or status or wealth, we must rely on You more fervently in this moment of crisis in our Nation's healthcare, that we may all together arrive at the truth.

The Members of this body know that they have been tasked with a tremendous responsibility to care not for the trappings of this world, but for the real treasure of our Nation: her people.

You have given each public official gifts for the building up of Your kingdom. Guide them by Your holy spirit with wisdom and humility to make the compromises and choices that are necessary for the good of all.

Grant us this day Your blessings, and may we praise You always. We make this prayer in Your holy name. Amen.

THE JOURNAL
The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to section 7(a) of House Resolution 891, the Journal of the last day's proceedings is approved.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE
The SPEAKER pro tempore. Will the gentleman from Texas (Mr. GREEN) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance?

Mr. GREEN of Texas 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.

ADJOURNMENT
The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to section 7(b) of House Resolution 891, the House stands adjourned until 10 a.m. tomorrow.

Thereupon (at 12 o'clock and 2 minutes p.m.), under its previous order, the House adjourned until Wednesday, March 25, 2020, at 10 a.m.

EXECUTIVE COMMUNICATIONS, ETC.

Under clause 2 of rule XIV, executive communications were taken from the Speaker's table and referred as follows:

4165. A letter from the General Counsel, Federal Housing Finance Agency, transmitting the Agency's final rule — Stress Testing of Regulated Entities (RIN: 2590-A805) received March 17, 2020, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Financial Services.

4166. A letter from the Deputy Chief, Disability Rights Office, Federal Communications Commission, transmitting the Agency's final rule — Structure and Practices of the Video Relay Service Program; Telecommunications Relay Services and Speech-to-Speech Services for Individuals with Hearing and Speech Disabilities, Order on Reconsideration and Order Suspending Compliance Deadline, [CG Docket Nos.: 10-51 and 03-123] received March 12, 2020, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

4167. A letter from the Secretary, Department of the Treasury, transmitting a six-month periodic report on the national emergency with respect to the threat of foreign interference in United States elections that was declared in Executive Order 13848 of September 12, 2018, pursuant to 50 U.S.C. 1641(c); Public Law 94-412, Sec. 401(c); (90 Stat. 1257) and 50 U.S.C. 1703(c); Public Law 95-223, Sec. 204(c); (91 Stat. 1627); to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

PUBLIC BILLS AND RESOLUTIONS

Under clause 2 of rule XII, public bills and resolutions of the following titles were introduced and severally referred, as follows:

By Mr. GREEN of Texas (for himself, Ms. GARCIA of Texas, Mr. MEEKS, Mr. CLEAVER, and Mrs. BEATTY):

H.R. 6380. A bill to temporarily provide for Federal insurance of transaction accounts during the COVID-19 emergency; to the Committee on Financial Services.

By Mr. GREEN of Texas (for himself, Ms. GARCIA of Texas, Mr. MEEKS, Mr. CLEAVER, and Mrs. BEATTY):

H.R. 6381. A bill to require the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System to provide zero-interest loans to minority depository institutions and community development financial institutions to combat COVID-19, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Financial Services.

By Mr. GREEN of Texas (for himself, Mr. MEEKS, and Mr. CLAY):

H.R. 6382. A bill to provide assistance for fair housing enforcement activities associated with the COVID-19 pandemic, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Financial Services, and in addition to the Committee on the Judiciary, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Ms. CLARKE of New York (for herself, Ms. KELLY of Illinois, Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN, Mr. DAVID SCOTT of Georgia, Ms. LEE of California, Ms. PLASKETT, Ms. FUDGE, Ms. JOHNSON of Texas, Mr. RUSH, Mr. BROWN of Maryland, Ms. PRESSLEY, Mr. DANNY...
fairs.

minorities; to the Committee on Foreign Af-
malicious disregard for the health of ethnic
censorship of doctors and journalists, and
international health authorities, internal
risks of the virus, a refusal to cooperate with
spread of misinformation to downplay the
clude the Chinese Government’s intentional
the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, which in-
Congress has the power to enact this legis-
lation pursuant to the following:

Commerce Clause: Article 1, Section 8, clause 3—provides Congress with the power to regulate commerce with foreign nations and among the states, including the use of the channels of interstate commerce, the instrumentalities of interstate commerce, or persons or things in interstate commerce.

Necessary and Proper Clause: Article 1, Section 8, clause 18—allows Congress the power to make all laws that are necessary and proper for executing its enumerated powers and all other powers vested by the Constitution in the U.S. Government.

Taxing and Spending Clause: Article 1, Section 8, clause 1—provides Congress authority to, inter alia, enact spending legis-
By Ms. CLARKE of New York:
H.R. 6383.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:
Article 1 Section 8

By Ms. VELAZQUEZ:
H.R. 6384.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:
Article 1, Section 8, Clause 1
The Congress shall have Power to . . . pro-
provide for the . . . general Welfare of the
United States; . . .

ADDITIONAL SPONSORS
Under clause 7 of rule XII, sponsors were added to public bills and resolutions, as follows:
H.R. 6319: Ms. NORTON, Mr. WOODALL, Mr. CESNERS, Mr. LYNCH, Mr. SOTO, Mr. MCADAMS, MRS. AXNE, and Ms. SPEIER.
H.R. 6224: Mr. POCAN and Mr. LOWENTHAL.
H.R. 6398: Ms. VELAZQUEZ, Mr. EVANS, and Ms. NORTON.
H.R. 6375: Mr. TAKANO.
The Senate met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the President pro tempore (Mr. GRASSLEY).

**PRAYER**

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

Let us pray.

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

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

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

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

We pray in Your great Name. Amen.

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

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

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

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

Mr. GRASSLEY. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent to speak in my name.

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

**NATIONAL AG DAY**

Mr. GRASSLEY. Madam President, every American is facing a very uncertain future that the new virus has brought to our country and to the world. Our daily lives have become transformed for right now and maybe, to some extent, for a longer period of time.

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

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

I yield the floor.

**RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER**

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader is recognized.

**CORONAVIRUS**

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

As we convene this morning, roughly 40 percent of our population is under stay-at-home orders from State leaders. Employers across America are wondering how they will keep the lights on. Doctors, nurses, and healthcare professionals are literally crying out for support. We literally have Army field hospitals on the way to being set up in our major American cities.

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

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

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

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

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

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

*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 to our nation’s health care providers. We knew we needed a proposal to address our Nation’s pain at literally every level.

Now, in the past few days, somevoices have bent over backward to work with us Americans against other Americans. We need to 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. We can’t ignore that. 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 we are overdue to put some Americans 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 provisions 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 proposal 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 five-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 all our emission standards or tax credits for solar panels. We spoke of the House release an encyclopedia of unrelated demands as though it were a coronavirus proposal somehow. In spite of all this, 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 all 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 buzzer 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 are simply an attempt to block even getting on the bill, even getting on the bill. They voted to block even getting on the bill. 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.

I know 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.
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 small 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 mentioned: assistance to families 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 they get by $500 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 to pay 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 soon. 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, therapies, 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, needed in light of 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 trying to force 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 the politicians and ideological 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 will 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 all people who 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 of each election 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. But they want to take about what we 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. Let’s take 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 one of those fires is 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 that isn’t true. Their rank-and-file Members who have participated in the working groups all know that 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—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 payroll in the hands of American workers. That is what this bill does. That is what what this bill is about. 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 hard-working 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
remarks of the Republican whip. The time for political games is over. It is time to get this piece of legislation passed and signed into law. The American people need it. They want it, and they are watching.

Yesterday, the U.S. Surgeon General warned us. He said: “This week, it’s going to get bad.” He was talking about the healthcare aspects of it.

I was on the phone last night, along with Senator Enzi, in a telephone townhall meeting, talking to people all around Wyoming.

It is not just the healthcare side of it that is going to get bad. The economic side of it is going to get bad, as people who every day want to get up and go to work are now, for the first time in a long, long time, told they can’t do so, not by their employer but by the government.

I have been visiting with doctors. Our healthcare providers are expecting more patients today and tomorrow and through the week. Some healthcare systems are being overrun. We need to get this done today.

Americans are doing their part in preventing community spread of the virus, but the men and women on the frontline taking care of those patients need resources that would be included in this bill, and we need to get this passed today.

The private sector mobilized to provide more tests, more masks, more respirators, and more ventilators. They are doing their job. This Senate needs to do its job today. The administration has already indicated scientific breakthroughs and flexibility for our healthcare system.

The Senate has had a bipartisan process throughout this entire process, as the Senator from South Dakota has just outlined. Working groups have been coming up with bipartisan solutions. Together we have put together the largest economic and healthcare rescue package in the history of this country. We need to pass it today.

Today—at least at the end of last night—we were still at a standstill, being blocked and delayed by, basically, the Speaker of the House. We are blocked from providing relief for the American people by the Speaker of the House and the Democrats who are doing her bidding. They continue to play politics with the lives and livelihoods of the American people.

It is distressing because, just within the last hour, the Speaker of the House was on national television. She is talking about what her options are—her political options—with no sense of urgency at all. I did not hear a sense of urgency in her voice. I didn’t get the sense that she understood the gravity of the situation when I listened to her voice talking about this. She talked about a number of things on her wish list and talked about leveraging opportunities. This isn’t about political leverage; this is about the American people and the needs of our Nation at this time of healthcare crisis and economic crisis.

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 200 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 by the New York healthcare system.

This bill needs to pass today. When you will look back on this in a day, in a week, in a month, you will just ask: How many deaths could have been prevented if this bill had been passed yesterday instead of today? 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 the table and even the motion to proceed 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 cast by Democrats for communities all around the country. The votes to block the move to the motion to proceed daily delayed over $240 billion in emergency funding. That vote to block the motion to proceed blocked $100 billion for hospitals, $20 billion for veterans’ healthcare, $11 billion for vaccines and therapeutics. The list goes on and on.

Why?

It seems to me that the Speaker of the House has been working with 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. Yet, 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.

She told the American public and Governors and mayors and hospitals that we were doing everything we could, and over the weekend, I believed that as this bipartisan group worked together. Yet to have seen all of the Democratic colleagues come to the White House no has made me rethink that. We have an opportunity to do something the American public needs. We could have done it and should have done it yesterday.

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 party. That is what she has green-lighted scientific breakthroughs and flexibility for our healthcare system. The Senate has also blocked the expansion of physician-owned hospitals. 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 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 insist on having chosen to align themselves with Speaker Pelosi on this left list of all of their wants that 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 Big Labor; no corporate boards; an automatic extension for 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 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 the Speaker’s office 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 list. So they are delaying, and they seem to be blocking the bill for something that will never become law.

We know what is going on here. The media even understands what is going on here because one major outlet, CNN, said the Democrats are engaging in political gamesmanship. This is about the future of our country, the future of the people of our country. Yet we are seeing political gamesmanship being played by the other side of the aisle. The American people get it as well. They see through it. They know that valuable days are being lost here.

We need to pass this today with no more delays. The bill has been written in a bipartisan way in the Senate, and it should pass with overwhelming numbers. I see no reason we can’t vote today. I see no reason to delay. This is the time to get healthcare capacity online to deal with this healthcare crisis during a week that, as the Surgeon General said, is going to get much worse. We need today to prepare our hospitals and our healthcare systems for the surge of patients that is coming. They need to be ready.

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 our hometowns 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, we 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 Sergeant at Arms 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. LOEPPFLER). Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Madam President, as we are all facing this, we are hearing from hospitals; we are hearing from small businesses; and people are trying to hang on to every piece of information they can get.

It helps them to stay informed, and we encourage everyone: Stay informed. Stay up to the minute. Talk to us. Be on our websites and social media.

We all want to get to you the information you need as quickly as we get it because that is how we are going to defeat this—by realizing that we are all in this together, and it is going to take every single one of us doing our part to get past it.

In my family, we had this mantra that we grew up with, and it was kind of my mother’s way of saying: Don’t sit around and wait. Do things. And it was—there were two things she would always say: Leave things in better shape than you found them. In other words, always be helping to improve a situation. Leave things in better shape than you found them.

She would always say “Give back more than you take,” stressing to us the importance of being a giver to our community, to our family, to our society, and not being a taker, sitting around feeling like you are entitled and you want people to bring things to you.

So in our family, as we approached situations that may have been less than wonderful or if there had been a hurricane—I grew up in South Mississippi—or a terrible storm or some other event, we would always look at it and say “Leave things in better shape than you found them” and “Give back more than you take.”

It is important that action be a part of the solution, not only for our family and our community but right now. Taking the right actions, exercising good judgment, is something that is important for our entire Nation. Tennessee National Guard is helping to address this coronavirus—COVID–19—crisis that we are under.

Right now, there are 166 members of the Tennessee National Guard who are training to provide support to the Tennessee Department of Health. All together, the State currently plans to activate 250 guardsmen to help out at clinics across the State. They will be helping with assessments and screening.

To these National Guardsmen, Guardswomen, to these members and their families who are going to activate in this crisis, bless you—God bless you—and thank you for once again stepping up to help defend our Nation and meet our Nation’s needs.

The Tennessee Air National Guard assisted in transporting 1 million testing kits. They put these on the C-17s that are housed there in Memphis and flew them from Aviano Air Base in Italy to Memphis, and then those kits were divided out and sent to healthcare providers all across the Nation to get testing into communities where our citizens are fearing they may have contracted COVID–19.

In one solution, our scientists at Vanderbilt University Medical Center are working hard in participation with other labs to find a vaccine for this, the Denison Lab—and I had the opportunity to talk to Dr. Denison last week. We know that, in conjunction with other labs, they are expediting the testing that is necessary and finding therapies, anti-virals, vaccines. This is something they are focusing on, and they are working as hard as they possibly can, around the clock, to find these solutions.

Of course, we do know if China had been more forthcoming, if they had not tried to keep this a secret—imagine
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 up past models, we were able to put in a lot of information and distill down to 77 drugs that could be effective in this fight against COVID–19.

Indeed, the supercomputer at Oak Ridge and the team of scientists there, working with the supercomputer, the Summit, were able to put 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 every Tennessean 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 their dead of distilling whiskey, they are moving to sanitizers. And, yes, to those distillers, we know there is an excise tax problem, and we are on it, trying to resolve that for you.

I have to give a shout-out to our singers and our songwriters, our musicians. While they cannot go fill the audience at one of the clubs on Lower Broad or one of the concert venues in so many, they are working to put on in Pigeon Forge and Gatlinburg, what they are doing is hosting virtual concerts on their own Instagram and Facebook, and they are doing this every single day, trying to bring a bit of joy to lift our hearts during a time when we are quarantining and staying separate and apart. How wonderful that we have this technology that will allow us to walk through this entire process of this pandemic together.

Here we are doing our best to be as positive as we possibly can and to be productive because we know, as I said on this floor yesterday, that this is a very difficult time for small businesses, and it is why I have worked so very diligently to move forward through this process of negotiating our legislative solution to be sure that it includes a small business definition that is going to include the self-employed and the sole proprietors and the independent contractors so that they are not left in the lurch. We are continuing to do that. We are hearing from people every day.

I heard from the manager of a YMCA that is outside of Nashville, and they have 65 part-time employees who work in that facility. This manager is concerned about how nonprofits and small businesses are going to end up being treated in this legislation. He is certainly not anticipating people on the payroll. And do you know what? I agree with him. We want people to stay on the payroll. When we get past this 15-day period—we are about halfway through it right now, 15 days to slow the spread, and Vice President Pence and the President have put in place—we want people to be going back to work.

I heard from another business owner. It is a family-owned business, and they do maintenance services like plumbing and electrical work, and they have employees who have been with them since 1993. They have never had to lay off one single employee, and they are concerned about where uncertainty is.

We have retail—fabulous, homegrown retail—everything enterprises around 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 because he needs us to pass this bill, this rescue bill, so he can keep those employees on the payroll.

Then a company that has stood itself up in the last several years—and they are a valuable asset in working with the vulnerable population, moving people from poverty to work—is wanting to keep people working.

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, this $500 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 $500 plus-up, you are at $800 a week. These are all things to keep the economy going. There is an additional $75 billion for hospitals and our healthcare workers.

So 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 attempts 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 powers and 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—nothing—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 a place, there is a season, and right now, dealing with the crisis in front of us is precisely what should be the center of our attention.

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 anti-basis and a progressive wish list. 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 bipartisan SARM 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 some revenue. 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 beg of you to 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,
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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 PRESIDENT pro tempore. 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 presence. Yours 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 cooperation. 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 she asked 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 was 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.

Janice 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 they have 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 work to help the needy, 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 nothing is getting done. 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 Democratic leader, Senator 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. Considerable, and 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 is that we need opportunity 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 recall, was $2 billion, looks 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 enough votes.

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 huge.

When Senator SCHUMER was told by Senator MCCONNELL we were moving toward this third bill, his first response was the right one: Let’s do it as we did the first two. 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 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 46 hours, we were presented with the proposal from the Republican side. In fact, it were two 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 without further negotiation.

That came as a surprise because there were elements that the Democrats were asking for and insisting on that really were fundamental.
So a vote was taken this last Sunday afternoon, and we decided, as a caucus, to argue on the Democratic side that there were fundamental elements missing in the MCCONNELL proposal and we wanted to include them. So we voted no in going forward on the MCCONNELL proposal.

At that point, we didn’t stalk off and fold our arms and say: That is it; we are not part of the process. Senator SCHUMER and the leaders in our caucus did exactly 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.

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 beginning of the president’s history. Now, we think 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, in 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 you going back to that date 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 where the American people have a bipartisan agreement, and that would speed this up, as it should be. So we involved the House of Representatives in this conversation at the earliest stage, not after we have finished the Republican measure that Senator MCCONNELL wanted to bring to the floor, but after we have completed a bipartisan measure that is one that she may be able to take to the House of Representatives for consideration and maybe even a unanimous consent to put it to the floor.

So what are the items that we are now negotiating, and where do they stand? The first item—and we made it clear on the Democratic side—that is essential is that we deal with the public health crisis, which we are facing. We have confirmed that there was a complaint that we want to make certain that that is for the good of the American people. We have confirmed that we want to 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 the president, and certainly in the position 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 going out 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 workers that are furloughed or lost their jobs, would have access to the highest levels of unemployment insurance, which we are facing.

Is that restructuring? I think it is. Is it necessary? Certainly, it is, and it has been agreed to on a bipartisan basis. That is one of the things that we don’t believe the MCCONNELL bill, originally proposed to us on Sunday, really addressed in a fulsome and complete way. We have made it our kind of standard on the Democratic side to make certain that we measure every proposal for economic recovery against the needs and conditions of America—not what it does in the boardroom but what it does in the family room of individual families who still get those bills in the mail and still face the pressures of being out of work and wondering if there is enough money to get by.

We know that a majority of Americans do not have savings of $400 or more. Many of them live week to week, not 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 families that challenge these proposals.

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 does not change the face of work for the workers 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 they 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.

We support 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. We think 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 the 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 basic 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 voted in favor of 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 that we have to make sure at the back of 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 that is not part of the American 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 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 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 MCCRORY 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 poll workers.

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 electoral system can 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.

Finally, Senator SCHUMER and I left the President’s press conference last evening. I watched it, and I watched it because the news reports leading up to it raised a question as to whether the President was going to change America’s strategy when it comes to dealing with this coronavirus. The current strategy, of course, is social distance, to make sure that you are isolating yourself as much as possible, and when in the presence of others, you don’t stand too close to your hands and feet over and over. Those are the fundamentals. I mean we hear those recommendations, and I think they are sound.

But now there is a suggestion from the President that we may take a different course. I don’t know what he will finally decide, but I will stand with the public health experts—Dr. Fauci and others—who believe that the best way to slow the growth of this infection is to use some form of social distance and isolation of individuals and families. It is a great personal sacrifice and burden for many families to go through this, I know, but if, at the end of the day, we can reduce the number of people who suffer or die from this virus, it is worth the sacrifice, as far as I am concerned.

Presidents, in times of national crisis, are expected to be credible, with clarity and consistency. I hope the President will remember that as he makes his economic policy. Don’t follow somebody talking on cable TV and their recommendations. Follow the experts in public health who have dedicated their lives to saving the lives of others. Even though it may not be politically popular to continue with this current social distancing, it is an approach which I believe has been proven in many other countries around the world to work successfully.

The notion that we are doing damage to our economy, of course, is being heard. The number of unemployment claims may reach historic and record-breaking highs, but the fact is, if we don’t deal with the underlying cause of our economic chaos, and that is this virus, and deal with it effectively, sadly, we are going to see the economic situation in this country deteriorate even more in the future.

So my bottom line with this: We believe that the first two measures passed related to COVID–19 were done in a timely and bipartisan manner. They have been done in an effort to make sure the American people have the necessary resources to go about their business, and that we can continue with this coronavirus. The current strategy, of course, is social distance, to make sure that you are isolating yourself as much as possible, and when in the presence of others, you don’t stand too close to your hands and feet over and over. Those are the fundamentals. I mean we hear those recommendations, and I think they are sound.

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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.

RECESSION LEADER 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 a 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 I 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 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 is a list of 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 hospital industry, 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.

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, and you stay on that 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, 100% of salary, 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, they would look for other jobs, and when, God willing, this awful crisis is over, they all can come back together, and that small restaurant, that middle-size manufacturing facility, and the service business will be able to reassemble quickly, and we can get the economy going again. That is another thing we have been fighting for.

We have been fighting very hard that any bailout funds—money to industries that have trouble are put only in reassembling and transparency, that is vitally important. We cannot have the situation where, when a company is getting money from the Treasury, the Federal Reserve, we don’t know about it. And we have been pushing hard that for any contract the Federal Government makes with a company to give it loans, we know of that contract in a very short period of time so that we can examine it. And we, in the Senate, those of us who represent the American public will see if those things are on the level because we all know there was a load of dissatisfaction with TARP.

In addition, we are fighting for oversight, a new inspector general, to be able to look into these contracts. We would like very much, and believe we should have, a congressional oversight board as well. We are fighting for transparency, oversight, and disclosure when the Federal Government gives corporations money.

We also want to make sure that workers are put first in these situations so that when there are direct Federal grants and direct Federal loans to companies, these companies have incentive or mandate to keep their employees and their benefits. We are making very good progress in that direction.

Small business—we all ache for these small business owners, probably second to the people who have illness in their families. We ache for these folks. My father was a small businessman. He had a little exterminating business. It was never very successful. He would have been on the floor, wouldn’t he, why is he not here, because he hated going to work. So I know what people go through. You put your blood, sweat, and tears into your small business, and all of a sudden, it looks like it is blown away. Well, there is a very fine proposal, bipartisan, on small business that I believe will be in this package as well.

So there are lots of good things here. We all know that not everyone is going to want every provision. We all know that there are many things that so many of us want that are left out, but we all know we must do these things.

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. I quickly mentioned the large numbers the bipartisan bill that will help the American people, who so badly, badly, badly need our help.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from West Virginia.

Mrs. CAPITO. Madam President, I am glad to be on the floor right now to hear the Democratic whip and the
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 businesses, the principles of looking after the health of our citizens—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 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 can't get off the 5-yard line or the 4-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 have had conversations across the line; and, yes, we have worked on issues that we know are going to put workers and families across our Nation at risk.

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 4-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 the last few days.

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 colleagues, Virginia, they want us 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 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 the different ways people need to 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 us fight this deadly pandemic. 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 bureaucratic burdens 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 don't want, 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 new concept. 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 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 fighting that, which I 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 reduces some of the 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 us to assist 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 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 first thing we need is the political debate that we have had over the last 2 days over programs and the parameters that were just laid out by the Democratic leader that was 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 will join together and the day 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 we will come together and make 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 the same school.

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 most of the doors were closed. Up on the platform, I think two people were on the platform to catch the train that ultimately brought me down here. A lot of people whom I passed by on the walkway, some of them had slept out overnight—destitute, asking for money. Then, off the train station here, an hour and a half later, their doors were again destitute, and out of the station, came out Delaware Avenue to the Capitol, where people were, again, destitute and begging for money.

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 be in that 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 last year, 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 unemployment claims. And we are here.

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 their full salary but at least maybe enough to get by.

The Governors asked that we—we use the term "plus-up" the SNAP program. We used to have food stamps. We now have something 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 couple of days. We are 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 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 the efficient dollars to meet the demand for healthcare through Medicaid that certainly would not have been imagined a month or so ago.

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 we should head ahead of 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.

We 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. The Postal Service is in dire straits.

One of the ways we could help them is to expand vote by mail. Every State with counties and cities that have primaries and general elections would be a source of revenue for the Postal Service going forward. This address the concerns we have about the Russians interfering in our business.

In the last week or so—I know my colleagues did as well—I called really smart people I know who have been governors in this country—people like Leon Panetta, Sylvia Mathews Burwell, John Kasich, and any number of other people—Democrats and Republicans—just to pick their brains as to what they thought we should do. Some of the ideas I got from people like Leon Panetta, Mark Sanford, and several others used the three Ts.

I said: Well, what are the three Ts?

He said: When you are putting together this package, always remember the three Ts.

What are they?

He said: They are timely—whatever we do should be timely; targeted—it should be targeted; and it should be temporary.

I see that is what we are trying to do with this huge package—enormous package. I never imagined we would be dealing with one bill of this size and magnitude.

Timely, temporary, targeted—we have added one to that. I think Republicans suggested this, and I think the Republicans embraced this idea. It also should be transparent—transparent.

I have a bunch of quotes I carry around with me on my cell phone. I have added one to that. Democrats suggested this, and I think the Republican answer or the Democratic answer but the right answer”—the right answer.

Another quote I carry around on my phone is one by Churchill. Churchill used to say: The worst form of government devised by man is democracy. Democracy is the worst form of government, except for all the rest. What he was saying there is this is a hard way
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 slow, go alone. If you want to go fast, go together.

Think about that.

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

I think what we have coming together here is our Democrats and Republicans. We have 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.

It was said earlier today 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 against families, brothers against 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. We had the Cold War, the nuclear arms race. The Great Depression, the Dust Bowl, Hoover, FDR, 27 million people on Main Street lost their livelihood. We somehow made it through that.

If we can get through everything from the Civil War through the first day of January 1, 2001, here is where we were as a nation: We had the strongest economy on Earth. We had the most productive workforce on Earth. We had four balanced budgets in a row. We hadn’t balanced our budget since 1968, but we ended up in the last 4 years of the Clinton administration with four balanced budgets in a row, with a Republican-led Congress.

We are the mightiest force for justice and the most admired Nation on Earth. If we can get through everything from the Civil War through the first day of January 2001, we can get through this as well.

People are looking to us to lead. I hope and pray that later today that is exactly what we will do.

I want to thank everybody who is working very hard on our side, our leadership, our caucus, the Republicans. We have something really great in all of this happening right now. 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 workers 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 relief was almost 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 Iowa—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 on the other side to use this 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 in need of doing; we need to get things done.

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 2 important bills that will help American people.

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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 playing games 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 we need to find the right thing to do. Join us. Put the people ahead of party. Help us deliver additional relief to the men, the women, and the children of our great Nation. Let’s pass this phase 3 relief package today.

Please, God, and keep you to 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 jurisdiction that has passed 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 to do.

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, to minimize the economic harm, the time to act is now. The eyes of the Nation are upon us. They want to see 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 angry trying 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 put partisanship aside 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 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 speed up the delivery and 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.

Over the weekend, 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 have that legislation go to the Senate floor, to my friends on the other side of the aisle, I said, the minority leader wanted to take a sidehill and stay strong. God bless you all.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas.

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But with each hour—let alone day—that passes, the number of corona cases is rising. The number of people dead of this virus is rising. Our public health system is taking a beating. The minority leader’s home State of New York is among the hardest hit. They now have more than 200,000 cases, and the number of deaths doubles every 3 days. You would think the Democratic leader would have a sense of urgency about getting help to his own constituents in New York.

We were in doubt that our friends on the other side of the aisle prioritize politics over the health and safety of their constituents, let me tell you about some of the changes they were after. The minority leader wanted to include in this legislation an expansion of tax credits for wind and solar energy. They wanted to give unprecedented authority to organized labor and to address fuel emission standards for airplanes—none of which is relevant to the immediate crisis.

While these are normal topics that we would debate and vote on during normal times, they are not the sort of things that ought to occupy 1 minute of our time during this crisis. While we should not have the sidehows on their faces from wearing masks and goggles for 12-plus hours a day, this sidehows should not be part of the minority leader’s priorities.

Clearly, his goal was not to make the legislation better for healthcare professionals or the millions of workers who lost their jobs. He is trying to use this national emergency as an opportunity to enact dramatic liberal policy reforms that have nothing to do with this crisis. People are dying. Hospitals are overwhelmed. Small businesses have closed their doors, and workers have lost their jobs. The American people do not have time for his games. This virus is spreading at an exponential rate, and we cannot afford to waste time fighting one another over these sorts of irrelevant partisan sidehows.

I know under normal circumstances this kind of gamesmanship is part of 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 taken major steps to support our country during this crisis. It 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 most Americans. A family of four would have received up to $3,400 to help cover rent, groceries, electric bills, and other expenses in the
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interim between being laid off and being able to qualify for unemployment compensation. We would have provided them a lifetime, 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 who 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 we can tackle this virus, people 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 line.

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 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 fight against a bipartisan 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.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to 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 said that it is really amazing 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 businesses, to agriculture, and to our 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 overwhelming, 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 should pass at this critical 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—nothing to save lives 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 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 tough 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 what they are; and relief for all of 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 meet the 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.

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

Mr. BOOZMAN. Mr. President, I arrived in Washington in November of 2014, after winning a race 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. None of us expected legislation 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 the retirement security of millions of American in jeopardy. And it certainly is expected that our healthcare sector, strained to capacity right now by the coronavirus pandemic, will face substantial challenges moving forward.

Congress’s initial responses in the wake of the crisis were promising. We
came together to pass a comprehensive package to dramatically increase efforts to prevent the spread of the disease, treat Americans diagnosed with COVID-19, and support research to find a vaccine. President Trump signed this bipartisan emergency supplemental appropriations package that provided a surge in funding throughout the government—almost $8 billion—to meet the growing challenge that we face. It promotes a government-wide approach to building the collective energy, knowledge, and talents of Federal, State, and local public health officials and healthcare professionals to mitigate the spread of the coronavirus and treat those who have been affected.

After that, the House passed a bipartisan relief bill, the Families First Coronavirus Response Act, which includes paid emergency leave for workers, widespread coronavirus testing at no additional cost to patients, and enhancements to initiatives last week my colleagues in this Chamber worked together to approve the Families First Coronavirus Response Act and the President signed it into law. This was the first step in our efforts to provide economic relief. We called it phase 2.

There are several aspects of that bill that the Senate would like to have changed, but for the sake of urgency and building bipartisan momentum, we passed the bill without a single amendment. We put our differences aside and did what we believed was in the best interest of the American people.

Republicans and Democrats alike agree that more is needed to be done to help individual Americans negatively affected by this crisis and to stave off a massive economic disaster. That is what this bill does.

Phase 1 provided immediate funding to address the public health crisis. Phase 2, the Families First Coronavirus Response Act, marked the beginning of our efforts to address the coronavirus’s economic impact. It has a number of helpful provisions in it, but we have to build upon this effort and provide more relief to the American people in this time of crisis.

That is phase 3, the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act, or the CARES Act, the bill we have been trying to move forward over the past several days.

The CARES Act would send billions of dollars to hospital and healthcare providers and women on the frontlines of this fight. It would send direct checks to millions of American households to offset the economic impact of the crisis and allow for a much needed injection of liquidity into our economy. It would expand unemployment insurance while stabilizing industries to prevent mass layoffs, and it would provide dramatic relief to the livelihood of our economy—our small businesses—which have taken a massively hit as a result of this unprecedented public health crisis.

We have to create a path to economic 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 jobs 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 for us 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.

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 of 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 these 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 what they are doing—have been laying off parts of their family. Workplaces have become members of our community—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 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 American 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 takeaway 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 everybody 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 about. We were so close to a deal—so close that Senator SCHUMER himself said on TV that he was very pleased with the negotiations 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.

I was making real progress, and the bill text was even released, and then, for absolutely no reason, the Speaker’s passion for partisan hogwash 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. Workplaces have been members of our community, their mission, their duty, but it is their calling and their mission.

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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 the 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 but also I am deeply troubled by 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 gains.

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 in millions 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 90 bucks an hour or $60,000 a year—regardless of $1,250 a week—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 1099 or the person working for themselves. In the absence of this crisis, has caused you to lose your paycheck and you are self-employed, we, in a bipartisan fashion, wove together legislation that takes you into consideration. Instead of getting 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 a very controversial and very debatable, but here it is, a minimum of up to $75,000 in individual income, $150,000 in household income. With two parents working, 75,000 and 75,000, you can get up to 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 businesses are 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, you are given a grant rather 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 legislation 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.
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 health care 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.

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 who are looking 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—for like 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 need to deal 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 tell us 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, it will be possible 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 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, let’s 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 of people lose jobs.

This legislation says, if you are a small business, you can get a loan from your bank to keep the doors open. And the loan effectively converts to a grant, meaning that you don’t have to pay it back if you use the loan to make your payroll, to keep people, to pay your rent, or to pay your mortgage.

This is new. It is innovative. It is something that small businesses are excited about, but we have to pass the legislation to make it happen. This is $350 billion. And, again, there is total forgiveness of that loan if you use it for these purposes to keep your employees.

Please, let’s get this passed right away. It is going to take a little while for these programs to get to place. That is all the more reason for us not to wait another day or even another hour.

Second, for larger businesses, there is this new fund called the Exchange Stabilization Fund. That is to help companies that can’t get a loan from a bank, to be able to get help from the Treasury and the Fed to provide money for liquidity so they can stay in business. They may have cash flow, but they are looking for a loan to be able to stay afloat. These loans don’t have to be paid back. Should there be accountability for these loans? Of course. Republicans are for accountability. That is fine. But let’s get moving on this.

It is under this provision that there will be special help for certain industries: the national security industry and the airlines. Republicans are for that, but let’s make sure that this is a giveaway and make sure there is an opportunity for the shareholders, who are the taxpayers of our country, to be able to get their money back, just like shareholders would want to in another business kind of commercial loan. That is all we are asking for.

The final thing is that, under this legislation, there is significant help for these companies to be able to keep their doors open—small and large—through some tax incentives that provide more liquidity during this year, 2020.

One of the important points there is that, if you do have payroll—and most of these companies still do—you don’t have to pay your payroll taxes during 2020. So you defer your payroll taxes until next year or the year after.

Companies care a lot about that. They tell me that is very important to them. That lowers their expenses, lets them keep people, and lets them stay in business. Yet they have to pay them back over time. So for the taxpayers, it is a good deal.

Time have an opportunity here to help people directly. That is in this legislation. That is the second goal. The first goal is to keep the doors open and keep the employees at work. The second goal is to help people who, through no fault of their own, find themselves unemployed, some for the first time in their lives.

I have friends at home I know who have been let go. They work in the retail business or in the hospitality business. There is just no business. They have never been to an unemployment insurance office. They never had to. Now they have to.

So, yes, this legislation does include a little help for them in two ways. One, unemployment insurance is bumped up from the Federal Government. So every State in the country is going to have the ability to be sure that people who come and want to get on unemployment have the ability—maybe not to match their salary entirely, not total wage replacement, but for low-income workers, yes. And for others there will be at least enough money to be able to put food on the table, maybe to pay the rent, and maybe to make the car payment during this period.

It is a short-term proposal. It is 3 months, but it is really important. It is a safety net, the unemployment insurance.

And then, second, 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 $600 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 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 designed to help people. This bill is the way 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 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 do 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 $2 trillion that 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 sure we provide the personal PPE 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 there is going to be a way to minimize, to reduce the effects of this virus and the infection.

Then, really significantly, to not only increase the testing—and, today, LabCorp and Quest said that they can now do 300,000 tests a week. We need to use the cotton swabs. We need to get them the swabs. There needs to be a process there to get them, but now we are finally starting to come online. This legislation provides funding to help hospitals 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 provide 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 and there will be more and more people who will 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 constituents 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 to do 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. We are close. Help! A few more things 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 call me because the daycare center where her daughter works has closed down. She didn’t know that was 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 the bill right now.

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 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 in.

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 of 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 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 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 own fault because they have been 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 our State and probably in States all over the country right now. Nonprofits out there that I have talked to recently—homeless shelters, but they are at max capacity right now. They are actually not allowing additional residents in some of the facilities there.

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 into the bill. So it is ready—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.

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 take out that loan. But I can’t because the other side is still 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 a few 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 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 these 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 added 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 $5 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 who work at hospitals are in my State—and they probably are in your State as well—people are trying to pay their employees and figure out what is going to happen.

Let’s vote. I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Arizona.

Mr. 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 coronavirus pandemic. The Surgeon 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 store. I told her I was working 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 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 souls into 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 who shines 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, the same voice. “What am I supposed to do?” I told her relief was on the way soon. This morning, she is waking up to no relief bill and a news story that airlines have plans to shut down altogther. 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 was impacting her business. She told me that it was slowing down but that she wasn’t feeling well. I urged her to go home immediately and stay away from people. 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 the virus," he said. He went on to share that he was most impressed by the nurses and the support staff, like the housekeepers who were still at work, still smiling 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.

For our frontline warriors in this pandemic fight, our initial bipartisan 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 reputaion as a place where nothing happens fast, but with a sense of urgency, Republicans and Democrats came together to get 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. We strengthened public health measures like testing and contact tracing. We increased funding for medical research and 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 $550, 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 blocked 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 dying, people are 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.

The following day was the deadlast 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. It is unpatriotic. 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 American and Arizonans now.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Missouri.

MR. BLUNT. Madam President, I am tempted to talk about all the problems we have had in getting to 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 have never happened ever before in 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 on the 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 tell people 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 like for this issue. This is the 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.

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? The bill must expand 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, 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 would have to close. You would 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. Perhaps, you are a small business, and you have a virus that people are reacting to; you are going to have to do things in this bill that will support healthcare workers and healthcare providers. This bill will make sure, I think, 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, ‘‘Don’t go to the hospital 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 need to be able to protect 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
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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 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 Community Health Centers 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 expand the private sector.

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 those entities to exist, for which 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 2nd 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 out of this bill.

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 full sale 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 have not yet had the chance to bank on it 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 in some different time 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 fair back. You never get that country fair, that agricultural opportunity to look at agriculture and horticulture and local industry back once it is gone, whether it is the midpoint operations or the small-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 in part 3. How do we go back in and make sure as much as possible, we protected 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 there 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, 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 today who would not be 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 expected 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 $2 billion. Around here, that used to be a big number—$2 billion for healthcare.

Then we did package 2, and that beefed up the healthcare needs and our emergency planning. 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 disaster of unemployment—massive unemployment—caused by government caution. Government caution is saving lives, but it is putting people out of work.

The virus has closed businesses within a day, then, laid 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 of our 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 capital was not interested, and they think that is a good idea had 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 often 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, through no fault of their own or 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 stop gap 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 small business owner 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 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 business, 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 your bills. And they have to 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 SHAHEEN. 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. The owners 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. The owner keeps their jobs and their health insurance, even if the business is closed down.

That part of the bill alone generally takes care of employees of any business with 50 or fewer employees, even one 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 50 residents. We are a State made up of small towns, some of which have only one or two businesses. And in my State, hundreds are or could be laid off each day. Provisions to stop that are an important 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 that 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—$136 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 helping is heterogeneous 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 majority party has to find 60 votes from their side are necessary. Anyone who is sick from the virus and cannot be here counts as a no vote. If
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 objects to it. That’s why it 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 pass 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 in the final 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 in-habitants and communities. Protections for small businesses, their owners, and employees 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 were tested have tested positive for COVID-19. We have actually tested more than that, but that is the number who have tested positive, and 593 Americans have, unfortunately, 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. We are seeing this 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—help for our hospitals, help for our 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 to keep while they are treating 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 are not being laid off, especially if they are 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 BROWN and CARTERS, the chair and ranking member of the Small Business Committee, and Senator COLLINS. The four of us have
worked 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 to help 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 credit unions 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 front lines of this crisis and are not sure how to replace those dollars as they fight this crisis.

We need additional funding for hospitals because they are going to see a terrifying surge of patients in the coming days and weeks. They are going to have to make very difficult decisions about the kind of care they are able to provide, and we need to make sure they have the resources they need.

We need to make sure that big corporations continue to support their workers through this crisis. We need legislation to ensure that New Hampshire nonprofits and social service organizations like those in the rest of the country that are in dire financial straits can continue to receive assistance because their services are needed now more than ever. Once we get through the worst of this crisis, we are going to need those organizations to continue to serve people in our communities.

I think I and most of my colleagues here are working in a bipartisan way and with this administration to find common ground and to address the needs of those most impacted.

I have been disappointed at some of the partisan attacks on the floor of the Senate because I think everybody’s goal is the same. It is to respond to the needs of this Nation, to make it clear to people who are our constituents and people across this country that we are here to try and address the suffering they are experiencing.

Our country is hurting right now. People are looking to this body for leadership. That is why it is so important that we get this bill right. This is one of those times in history when Congress must set aside any political differences and where we must deliver a bill that meets the challenges we face because at the end of the day, we are all in this together.

One of the encouraging things that I have felt as I have watched the news and heard from people across the country and those people who are stepping up now at this time of difficulty. Just this morning, I heard about one of our small businesses in northern New Hampshire who knew that people were buying out toilet paper and that supermarkets and any stores that carried toilet paper were sold out.

They called down the road to Gorham Paper, which is one of our paper mills that is still operating that provides tissue for people across the country. They didn’t have any toilet paper they could provide for businesses in the community. We have a Federal prison in that community in Berlin. They found out, so they called them to provide toilet tissue for the prison. It seems like a small thing, but it is the kind of thing that has helped people and made it possible for people to continue to see past the worst of this crisis, to see beyond, and to see how we can all work together to cooperate to get through this.

Let’s show the American people that their elected leaders can address the needs of this country. Let’s get this bill done. We have no time to waste.

With that, I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

Mr. LEAHY. Today, the American people are making sacrifices to keep themselves, their family, and their communities safe. Healthcare providers, grocery store staff, State and local government workers, truckers, bank tellers, journalists and countless others are working to meet and necessary work on the front lines of this crisis. As a Senator from Vermont, and a Member of this Chamber for more than 40 years, I want to send my profound thanks.

Right now, we are close to expressing our understanding of the sacrifices of the American people in more than words. I believe we are very close to reaching a bipartisan agreement that will provide direct and immediate relief to working people and families in our country that meets the challenges we face because at the end of the day, we are all in this together.

As vice chairman of the Senate Appropriations Committee, I want to provide Senators with an update on the status of those negotiations in the Appropriations Committee between myself and Chairman Shelby. There is much we have already agreed upon, and I am confident that we can reach a deal that will help millions of Americans in need.

Hospitals, community health centers, and the health care institutions we will rely on in the coming weeks and months need to be ready for a potential surge of patients. In our agreement, we are seeing hundreds of billions of dollars in direct assistance for these vital institutions.

Across the country, we are hearing reports of medical care providers and first responders running out of masks. First responders resorting to covering their faces with bandanas for protection. It is unacceptable. Increasing their potential risk of exposure to the coronavirus because they do not have the resources they need to do their job will only put further strain on our healthcare system to say nothing of the danger to those men and women. So we fought hard to include the resources to make sure health care, providers, first responders, National Guard members, scientists and more have access to the personal protective equipment they need.

In times of crisis, it is critical that we support the most vulnerable among us. That is why I fought to include significant new resources for programs that provide food to those in need, including child nutrition programs, SNAP, and senior meals. Sadly, as this health care crisis worsens the demand for nutrition programs will only grow in the coming months. I also fought to secure resources for the homeless, who without a clean, safe place to go are at a much higher risk of contracting the coronavirus among themselves and spreading it in their communities.

Every Member in this Chamber represents a rural community, and we will ensure that they are not left behind by securing rural broadband funding help for rural hospitals, who unfortunately will not be spared for the impact of this pandemic, and resources to support broadband access, which will be critically important for keeping people connected as we are encouraging them to stay at home.

We are securing funds to support child care. We cannot ask communities to close down their schools and still rely upon their medical providers, and those on the front lines without providing their children with a safe place to go.

We are providing direct appropriation to support a science-first approach to this pandemic. We are providing an infusion of funding to back research in therapeutics, vaccines, and treatments. It is our communities—State and local government—who are on the front lines of this crisis, and it is our job to support their efforts. We will be including billions of dollars to support the services these communities are providing during this crisis.
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 fought 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.

If I were in business, 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.

Mr. CASSIDY. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum 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 ought to be called—call—don’t 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 “sometimes” 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 folks employed. Some have already laid folks off, 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, beginning in the small business that I met with, the restaurant owner and I borrowed $100,000 and I used $75,000 of it to keep my employees employed, that business is now boarded up. I am having busi-

I have thought deeply about that political goal. In fact, I have noticed whenever something is said by the minority leader—the 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, and I must 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 a science-based way for those kids to learn how to read, and if they have to be dismissed because of fear about spreading disease, then those children are not being exposed to that science-based curriculum, and those children are, therefore, losing the opportunity both to learn and to have their issue of dyslexia addressed. That is just one school. There are very many more.

So, to address that, last week, the Senate majority leader put together a proposal where he would have Senators from the Republican Party draft some initial concepts—clearly not written in stone and clearly open to negotiation—and then meet with Democratic counterparts to come up with a bipartisan solution that would reflect the perspectives of all 100 Senators, knowing that each Senator represents a different constituency elected by people with a different viewpoint, but the amalgamation of those constituencies would come up with a wide public policy that would help to address both the medical crisis and the economic crisis. It was bipartisan. And I was struck when one of our Democratic colleagues was a school teacher and was asked about the process and he said that it actually worked well.

I met with the small businesspeople. I met with this Senator from the Democratic side and this Senator from the Republican side, and we had a process. Somehow it worked very well on the Member level. It is in the leadership that it broke down. Oh, that is interesting. In the leadership, the bipartisan process, with a product that both sides had agreed upon, broke down.

Now, let’s contrast this bipartisan process, which led to a series of policies, with the opposite-day rhetoric that has been used by the Senate minority leader. The bipartisan product came up with an economic stabilization fund in which dollars would be transferred to the Treasury Department, which would then be transferred to the Federal Reserve to set up guaranteed loans so that an industry, not a corporation, but a business, we think tourist industry, think healthcare, somebody particularly affected by the coronavirus epidemic—as a class, would be able to come and get guaranteed loans to keep their people employed and to keep their business going so that 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 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 not a bailout. 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 decry whatever process that worked as the Senate is supposed to work—instead, it was legislatively created. I kept asking myself why? Why? We were to do that 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 these 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 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—forgiven. 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
forgiven, and I only owe back—I only have to pay back $25,000. That is a bipartisan policy put together specifically to keep Americans employed with their benefits.

By the way, if you were a waitress or a waiter, your tips were included in your salary, so even though you might be a waiter, your tips were included in your salary. My stakeholders are the American people, something which is not true? I am not sure about that. I am not sure about that.

So I kept thinking: Why would they want that when American people are hurting, and just like in a military emergency, in a medical emergency, it demands rapid action? I was just presiding before you, and as I was about to come on, I heard on the TV somebody speaking, the senior Senator from Illinois, and I got a clue.

He was not speaking of the Senate working, where Republicans and Democrats come together and respecting 100 different constituencies, 100 different viewpoints on a bipartisan basis, establishing policy that works for all, taken into account that Louisiana is different than Maine, and Maine is different than Washington State.

We are all Americans, but we have different industries, and so part of this bipartisan process, involving as many Senators as possible, was to totally reflect that which was going on.

But I finally had my clue as to why the Senate majority leader wants this process to break down. It is not to be representative of us as a whole but, rather, it is a way in which he and the Speaker of the House can negotiate.

The Democratic whip from Illinois spoke of the four corners process. Now, some of those who are watching may not know what the four corners are. The four corners are when nothing else can work, you get the Senate majority leader, the Senate minority leader, the Speaker of the House, and the minority leader of the House meeting with the White House. And then, they start to work on a plan to come up with something. Is there no transparency? They will come out with a 2,000-page bill with all kinds of sweet-heart bills tucked into it, totally leaving out $80 other Senators but not leaving out those Senators who are being compromised.

If you are a stakeholder and you have someone on your speed dial as one of those four corners, you can get what you want. So in this opposite-day type reality, where someone speaks of bailouts, I am thinking: Ah, somebody wants a particular industry bailed out and doesn’t want the scrutiny of 100 Senators looking at it with enough time to consider it. No, they want to release the bill tonight to vote on it tomorrow, no emergency kicked in. They say: Oh, it is something we can think about—until that deal is baked, and then we have no time to consider it, and then we must vote.

That is how the four corners process works.

Suddenly, it dawned on me. Remember the process that I spoke of in which Senators from both parties came together on a bipartisan basis to come up with something that would provide a little bit of support—for the economy? Let’s talk about the airlines. In the deal that came together with all the Senators represented in one way or another, where the airlines would get a loan but would not get free money, that is what Republicans, frankly, wanted. That is what the White House wanted. That was agreed to in the bipartisan arrangement before it got blown up by the Speaker of the House and the Senate majority leader.

Do you know what I am going to be curious to see? I am going to be curious to see if the airlines get free money—not just a loan to bridge over the rough spots to keep people employed—the attendants, the pilots, the administrators, the ground crews, et cetera—but free money, and then I will understand opposite day. I will understand that the reason people have been talking about corporate bailouts is because they have particular industries which they wish to bail. Now, the different views are unique, 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 reform 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 fix-it outfits to universities, scientific 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 the value those in agriculture work to provide poultry, peanuts, pecans, cotton, cattle, and blueberries. The risks they take each
day and the exposure with global mar- 
ket changes and regulation, tech-
ology, consumer pressures, and eco-
nomic pressures—our ag industry rises 
to all of these challenges.

This is especially true right now as 
our country recovers from the coronavirus out-
break. 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 
ships 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 every 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 hearing the 
call to protect themselves from the 
coronavirus. At the same time, agri-
business is continually managing their 
production, processing, and manufac-
turing. It is not just planting and har-
est.

While some businesses are being 
faced with the need to slow their 
operations, others are being forced to 
keep their workers on the payroll.

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

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

I want to thank President Trump for 
his strong support of American agri-
culture and for recognizing the con-
tributions of the American Farm Bu-
reau, the FFA, 4-H, and so many oth-
ers.

Last week, my colleague from Geor-
gia, Senator David Perdue, and I urged 
the administration to support our 
farmers and small businesses—providing 
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 sup-
port rural America by expanding tele-
health, increasing funding for rural health care programs that are so needed in our rural communities. This comes in the form of economic aid for agri-
business and farmers, whether through 
small business loans or other facilities, and support things like tele-
communications and broadband.

Agriculture is perhaps the world’s 
most important industry, and it is im-
portant to mark their contributions 
every year. But on this year’s National Ag Day, I call on my colleagues to re-
fect 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 col-
loquy 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 money in this bill that 
will help you. We just need to pass the damn bill.

What is going on here? Endless nego-
tiations.

Mr. President, in case you are watch-
ing, tell Steven Mnuchin to come back 
to the White House and end negotia-
tions. 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 
moneny.

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 inter-
est group in town is trying to get a lit-
tle bit more—nickel-and-diming—at a 
time when people are dying—literally 
dying. Businesses are having to make a 
decision: Do I send my employees on 
dying. Businesses are having to make a 
decision: Do I send my employees on 
unemployment or do I hope that Con-
gress can act so that I can keep them 
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 
band together can fix it, but we need to 
vote tonight.

The reason I am on the floor is be-
cause I have been called by two Demo-
cratic colleagues in the last 5 or 6 
hours wanting more money. The store 
is closed.

Mr. President, end negotiations. Re-
quire us to vote. Draft the bill. Do it 
tonight.

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

Senator Daines, do you agree we are 
at war with this virus?

Mr. DAINES. We are at war.

Mr. GRAHAM. How do you win a 
war? I 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 
see the virus because it needs human transmission to survive. Con-
tainment policies well-practiced will 
starve the virus. Therapies, bomb the
Mr. DAINES. In this bill, Senator GRAHAM, 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, as he will tell you, theSBA loan 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?

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

OK. 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 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 Senate 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 them.

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 dollars 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 these things are 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 voluntarily give up 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 then, in the next Congress, be constitu- tional 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 pay- checks 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 is the world is going on back in Washington, D.C.? 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 there that is going to be a rescue. First, 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 business 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 proposal passed—the President is describing it as a rescue package—then we will start donating his pay to a charity that is currently on the fristline 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 and I know there are very good people there. It is too bad 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 benefit? In South Carolina, the maximum benefit is $326. This bill will take it up $600. Doesn't the Senator think that will matter to the people in Montana?

Mr. DAINES. It more than doubles what they would otherwise receive in the State of Montana in unemployment benefits.

By the way, this unemployment insurance backstop that is part of this rescue package is not what Montanans are after. They want their jobs. Mr. GRAHAM. Yes.

Mr. DAINES. So their first choice is, Would you please help me keep my job.

For whatever reason, if we can't do that, there will be the unemployment insurance changes will tell you that Montanans don't want a handout, but it is there if they need it because it is really a hand-up—bridge—until we get this economy back on its regular course.

Mr. GRAHAM. If I may, we keep talking about being at war. I have a couple of Senators here from South Carolina, and we need to destroy this virus before it destroys our economy and kills thousands of Americans.

The Senator's legislation—his proposal—of $10 billion to accelerate our finding an antibody or a vaccine is the ultimate medical weapon, and that is the best $10 billion in this entire package to kill this virus.

Yet the people in Montana, South Carolina, and South Dakota are out of work today because of containment. Policies. We have had to make a decision to stop the spread of the virus. It is probably one of the most draconian decisions we have made since World War II, when we rationed goods and couldn't have the lights on at night. Everybody says we are going to get through it, and they are right, but I want you to know it will not be easy. It is going to take a while until we find the therapies and the vaccines to kill this virus. Until then, we need to act in Congress to get help to those who need it. They are the people the Senator has just described—the business owner and the unemployed person. There is a lot of help.

You can call this bill whatever you would like, but the two Senators who are here with me tonight are out for justice. 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 there tonight.

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 think we get out of this war?

Mr. DAINES. We have a package. As you can see, 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.

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Mr. GRAHAM. Yes.

Mr. DAINES. LINDSEY, you could probably testify to that.
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 on 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 South Korea than Italy—we have talked about, so that we look at 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.

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 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.

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 phone calls over the last several hours from people who want to add more money. It is not that it is a bad idea as much as it is we need to get this bill done. It will not be the last time we get to address this problem. It rattles me to no end to know that people are still asking for billions of dollars at 8:30 at night or 8 o’clock at night. That tells me that we haven’t sent the right signal, which is that this is a good bill. It is time to write it, and it is time to vote on it. It is time to end the negotiations.

Mr. President, you have done a very good job today. That news conference with you and Dr. Fauci was the most encouraging I have seen. We are going to listen to good science, and we are going to turn on the economy in a smart way with conditions being faced. You have encouraged Congress. You have been very nice to Congress.

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 have 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. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate adjourn until 9:30 p.m., recessed until 9:30 p.m. and reassembled when called to order by the President pro tempore.

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 President 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 had come together in good faith 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 an agreement. We are nowhere close, apparently.

Tonight, I was 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 a 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 tweeted 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 democratic minority 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 who 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 this is the beginning. 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 withheld 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 requiring airlines to do this or that or in some way, that could just be extracted from the American 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 Senate and 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: to provide financial assistance to Americans through direct checks to households from the middle class on 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 Speaker, 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 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 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—what 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 revenues 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. 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 adjourns until 12 noon, Wednesday, March 25; further, that following the prayer and pledge, the morning hour be deemed expired, the Journal of proceedings be referred to, 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. 735.

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 B. Kohler, 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” (RIN0694-AH97) received in the Office of the President of the Senate 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 Enterprise 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, a report of a rule entitled “Safety Zone; Monongahela River Mile 28.0 to Mile 30.0, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania” (RIN1625-AA00) (DoCKET No. USCG–2020–0086) 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, a report of a rule entitled “Safety Zone; Hurricanes, Tropical Storms and Other Disasters in South Florida” (RIN1625-AA00) (DoCKET No. USCG–2016–1057) 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; Hurricane Ida, Little Egg Harbor, Fire Island, New York” (RIN1625–AA00) (DoCKET No. USCG–2020–0149) 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; Hudson River, New York” (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–4370. 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; Delaware River, 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–4371. A communication from the Attorney, 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, 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–AA00) (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” (RIN1625–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.

ARTICLES OF CONFERENCE

The following articles of conference were entered into, signed, and sent, and referred as indicated:

S. 3571. A bill to delay the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2021; to the Committee on Armed Services.

S. 3572. A bill to require the removal of United States Armed Forces from Saudi Arabia; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

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.

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

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.

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 disaster results in abnormal disruptions of the market, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

S. 3577. 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.

S. 3578. A bill to authorize the Federal Trade Commission Act prohibits excessive and unjustified price increases in the sale of certain products and services when an emergency disaster results in abnormal disruptions of the market, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

S. 3579. A bill to authorize the Federal Trade Commission Act prohibits excessive and unjustified price increases in the sale of certain products and services when an emergency disaster results in abnormal disruptions of the market, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

S. 3580. 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.

S. 3581. A resolution providing that the salaries 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.

S. 3582. 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 in that manner on the people of the United States and other nations; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

S. 3583. A resolution expressing the sense of the Senate that the Government of the United States has provided an insufficient response to the COVID–19 pandemic; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.
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 health officials, and a malicious disregard for the health of ethnic minorities; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

ADDITIONAL COSPONSORS

S. 1071
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. 3508
At the request of Mr. Schatz, the name of the Senator from Alabama (Mr. Jones) was added as a cosponsor of S. 3508, a bill to amend the Fair Credit Reporting Act to provide for disaster protection for workers’ credit.

S. 3559
At the request of Mr. Wyden, the name of the Senator from Virginia (Mr. Warner) was added as a cosponsor of S. 3549, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide advance tax refunds to small businesses, and for other purposes.

S. 3599
At the request of Mr. Bennet, 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. 3559, 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. Klobuchar, 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 Minnesota (Mr. Bentsen) 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 New Jersey (Mr. Booker), 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 so 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 my colleagues to support this language 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 and collaborative 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 include inspector general oversight of those activities 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. I’ve 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 deferment of eligible small businesses, under section 310(a) of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 636(a));

extend grants or other forms of financial assistance to businesses in response to the COVID–19 outbreak;

make resources available, through the Medicaid and Medicare programs, to hospitals and long-term care facilities for the elderly, in response 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 review the policies implemented through the Treasury Department’s Exchange Stabilization Fund as—
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 effectiveness 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;

(4) the Secretary of Commerce;

(5) the Secretary of Health and Human Services; and

(6) 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 exist.

 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 for 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 are applied to this COVID–19 relief from providing incentives for senior executive officers of a private entity to take unnecessary and excessive risks that jeopardize the success of the entity. Also bars the entity from 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.

Defines the term “senior executive officer” as an individual who is one of the top 5 highly paid executives 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, and the Government Accountability Office (“GAO”), to have access, upon request, to any information, records, books, or other property needed to carry out this oversight function.

Calls for 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 take steps to provide access to the audits, as appropriate or certify to appropriate committees of Congress that no action is necessary or appropriate. Specifies that the Special Inspector General of the Exchange Stabilization Fund has oversight authority under the national emergency declared by the President to perform oversight activities.

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 2020. 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 “on the basis of integrity and demonstrated ability in accounting, auditing, financial analysis, law, management analysis, public administration, or investigations.”

Sets the rate of pay for such individual and specifies that his or her duties are “to conduct, supervise, and coordinate audits and investigations of Federal assistance and relief programs established in response to the COVID–19 outbreak.” Clarifies that, in addition to the duties specified in this Act, the Special OIG shall also have the duties and responsibilities of inspectors general under the Inspector General Act of 1978.

Requires that the Special OIG report to Congress within 90 days of his or her Senate confirmation, and every calendar quarter thereafter, on activities. Each report must include, for the period covered by such report, a detailed statement of all purchases, obligations, expenditures, and revenues associated with the Exchange Stabilization Fund and the COVID–19 Relief Program, including the expenditure of more than $5 million.

Specifies that this section does not authorize the public disclosure of information that is specifically prohibited from disclosure by any other provision of law.

Also specifies that the Executive order to be protected from disclosure in the interest of national defense or national security or in the conduct of foreign affairs; or a part of an ongoing criminal investigation.

Also specifies a termination date for the OIG’s authority.

SEC. 9. CONGRESSIONAL OVERSIGHT PANEL

Creates a Congressional Oversight Panel (“Oversight Panel”) within the legislative branch, comprised of five members appointed by the Speaker of the House and the Majority Leader of the Senate, that includes 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 of the effect of such policies and initiatives on the commercial paper market; the impact of the COVID–19 Relief Program on the commercial paper market; the effectiveness of the program from the standpoint of ensuring the stability of the financial markets.

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

The use of such funds to support business concerns in response to the COVID–19 outbreak.

The use by Federal officials of authority to implement COVID–19 Relief Programs in accordance with the purposes of this Act.

Calls for the Oversight Panel to report to the Speaker of the House and the Majority Leader of the Senate at least 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 from providing consumers, and providing recommendations for improvement.

Requires the rate of pay, allowances, or benefits by reason of their service on the Oversight Panel. Specifies 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.

Requires 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 hearing 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.

SEC. 10. COOPERATION WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE AND THE FBI

Provides that any witness who appears before any Federal regulatory agency shall cooperate with the Department of Justice and the Federal Bureau
of Investigation and other law enforcement agencies investigating fraud, misrepresentation, and malfeasance with respect to development, advertising, and sale of financial or other instruments of fraud.

SEC. 11. INFORMATION FOR CONGRESSIONAL SUPPORT AGENCIES.

Provides that all information used by Federal officials in connection with activities authorized under 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 Appropriations, so that these agencies can assist with congressional oversight monitoring, and analysis of the COVID-19 relief assistance activities.

SEC. 12. TRANSPARENCY.

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 private 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 for working Americans and maximizes overall returns to 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 “appropriate committees of Congress” means—

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

(B) the Committee on Appropriations, the Committee on the Budget, the Committee on Energy and Commerce, the Committee on Finance, the Committee on Ways and Means 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 Coronavirus Preparedness and Response Supplemental Appropriations Act (Public Law 116-123);

(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 guarantees 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 that the benefits of the COVID-19 Relief Program are extended to private entities in response to the outbreak of COVID-19;—

(3) providing public accountability for the exercise 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 26, 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;

(5) the Secretary of Health and Human Services; and

(6) the Administrator of the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

(c) CHAIRPERSON.—The chairperson of the COVID-19 Relief Oversight Board shall be appointed by the Secretary of the Treasury, in consultation with the Comptroller General of the United States, consistent with section 535(b) of title 26, United States Code.

(d) MEETINGS.—The COVID-19 Relief Oversight Board shall meet 2 weeks after 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; and

(e) DUTIES.—The COVID-19 Relief Oversight Board may not be created; and any agents of the executive branch in connection with the administration and execution of the authorities provided under the COVID-19 Relief Program.

(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 health of the entity during the period in which the entity receives financial assistance in response to the COVID-19 outbreak; and

(2) prohibiting an 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.

SEC. 7. OVERSIGHT AND AUDITS.

(a) COMPTROLLER GENERAL OVERSIGHT.—Any private entity that receives loans, loan guarantees, or other assistance through the Exchange Stabilization Fund of the Department of the Treasury shall submit to 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 invoking Federal authority or rendering assistance to private entities in response to the COVID-19 outbreak.

(b) CONDUCT AND ADMINISTRATION OF OVERSIGHT.—
(A) GAO ACCESS TO RECORDS.—To the extent otherwise consistent with law, 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 exercise authority to provide assistance 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 deemed appropriate.

(B) REIMBURSEMENT OF COSTS.—The Treasury shall reimburse the Government Accountability Office for the full cost of any such oversight activities as billed therefor by the Comptroller General of the United States. Such reimbursements shall be credited to the appropriation account “Salaries and Expenses, Government Accountability Office” current when the payment is received and remain available until expended.

(2) REPORTING.—The Comptroller General—
(A) shall submit reports of findings under this section, regularly and not less frequently than once every 60 days, to the appropriate committees of Congress; and
(B) may submit special reports under this subsection as warranted by the findings of its oversight activities.

(b) COMPTROLLER GENERAL AUTHORITY FOR AUDITS AND ANALYSES.—The Comptroller General may audit the programs, activities, receipts, expenditures, and financial transactions of Federal entities involved in extending authority or in the conduct of foreign affairs; or
(A) take action to address deficiencies identified by the Comptroller General, as appropriate; or
(B) certify to appropriate committees of Congress that no action is necessary or appropriate.

(c) SHARING OF INFORMATION.—Any report or audit required under this section shall also be submitted to the Congressional Oversight Panel established under section 9.

(d) TERMINATION.—Any oversight, reporting, or audit requirement under this section shall terminate 180 days after the termination date described in section 4(h).

SEC. 9. CONGRESSIONAL OVERSIGHT PANEL.

(a) ESTABLISHMENT.—There is hereby established the Congressional Oversight Panel (hereafter in this section referred to as the “Oversight Panel”) as an establishment in the legislative branch.

(b) POWERS AND AUTHORITIES.—
(1) IN GENERAL.—In carrying out the duties described in subsection (c), the Special Inspector General shall have the authorities provided in section 6 of the Inspector General Act of 1978.

(2) REQUIREMENT.—The Special Inspector General shall carry out the duties specified in subsection (c)(1) in accordance with section 6(b)(1) of the Inspector General Act of 1978 (5 U.S.C. App.).

(e) PERSONNEL, FACILITIES, AND OTHER RESOURCES.—
(1) PERSONNEL.—The Special Inspector General may select, appoint, and employ such officers and employees as may be necessary for carrying out the duties of the Special Inspector General, without regard to the provisions of title 5, United States Code, governing appointments in the competitive service, and the provisions of chapter 71 and subchapter III of chapter 83 of title 5, relating to classification and General Schedule pay rates.

(2) EXPERTS AND CONSULTANTS.—The Special Inspector General may obtain services as authorized by section 3109 of title 5, United States Code, at daily rates not to exceed the equivalent rate prescribed for grade GS–15 under the General Schedule by section 5302 of such title 5.

(3) AUDITS AND ANALYSES.—The Special Inspector General may enter into contracts and other arrangements for the purpose of acquiring services, studies, analyses, and other services with public agencies and with private persons, and make such payments as may be necessary to carry out the duties of the Inspector General.

(4) ASSISTANCE FROM OTHER DEPARTMENTS.—
(A) IN GENERAL.—Upon request of the Special Inspector General, any department, agency, or other entity of the Federal Government, the head of such entity shall, so far as is practicable, furnish such information or assistance to the Special Inspector General, or an authorized designee, for the purpose of carrying out an oversight function.

(B) NOTIFICATION TO CONGRESS.—Whenever information or assistance requested by the Special Inspector General is, in the judgment of the Special Inspector General, unreasonable refusal or not provided, the Special Inspector General shall report the circumstances to the appropriate committees of Congress without delay.

(f) REPORTS.—
(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 60 days after the confirmation of the Special Inspector General, and every 30 days thereafter.

(2) CONTENTS.—Each report required under this section shall include—
(A) a description of all purchases, obligations, expenditures, costs, and amounts associated with the Privileged and Related Bill and COVID-19 Relief Programs involving the expenditure of more than $5,000,000.

(b) TERMINATION.—Any oversight, reporting, or audit requirement under this section shall terminate on the date that is 1 year after the confirmation date described in section 4(h).

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

(v) The impact of the COVID-19 Relief Program on the financial markets, air carriers, and medical providers.

(vi) The extent to which the information made available on transactions under the Exchange Stabilization Fund has contributed to market transparency.

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

(vi) The impact of the COVID-19 Relief Program on the financial markets, air carriers, and medical providers.

(vi) The extent to which the information made available on transactions under the Exchange Stabilization Fund has contributed to market transparency.

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(vi) The impact of the COVID-19 Relief Program on the financial markets, air carriers, and medical providers.

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

(vi) The impact of the COVID-19 Relief Program on the financial markets, air carriers, and medical providers.

(vi) The extent to which the information made available on transactions under the Exchange Stabilization Fund has contributed to market transparency.

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

(vi) The impact of the COVID-19 Relief Program on the financial markets, air carriers, and medical providers.

(vi) The extent to which the information made available on transactions under the Exchange Stabilization Fund has contributed to market transparency.
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, and whether there are any gaps in existing consumer protections.

(c) Membership.—(1) 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 be paid at a rate equal to the daily equivalent of the annual rate of basic pay for level I of the Executive Schedule for the appropriate service under section 3109(b) of title 5, United States Code.

(3) Prohibition of Compensation of Federal Employers.—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 57 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) In General.—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.

(4) 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.

(b) 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 Secretary of the Treasury under this Act to the applicable fund of the House of Representatives and the contingent fund of the Senate, as reimbursable for amounts expended from such account and fund under paragraph (1).

SEC. 10. COOPERATION WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE AND THE FBI.

Any Federal financial regulatory agency shall cooperate with the Department of Justice and the Federal Bureau of Investigation and other law enforcement agencies investigating fraud and malfeasance with respect to, and sale of financial or other investment products and activities authorized under this Act.

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 552—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 in That Manner on the People of the United States and Other Nations

Mr. HAWLEY (for himself, Ms. MCSALLY, Mr. CORNYN, and Mr. CORZINE) submitted the following resolution: which was referred to the Committee on Rules and Administration:—

S. Res. 552

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 Sixteenth 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 employee 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, the Senate shall, on the last day 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) WITHOLDING AND REMITTANCE OF AMOUNTS FROM PAYMENTS HELD IN ESCROW.—The Secretary of the Senate shall provide for the same witholding and remittance with respect to a payment deposited in an escrow account under paragraph (1) to the Senator only upon the expiration of the end of the covered period.

(3) RELEASE OF AMOUNTS AT END OF THE COVERED PERIOD.—In order to carry out this section is carried out in a manner that shall not vary the compensation of Senators in violation of the twenty-seventh article of amendment to the Constitution of the United States, the Secretary of the Senate shall release for payments to Senators any amounts remaining in any escrow account under this section on the last day of the One Hundred Sixteenth Congress.

(4) ROLE OF SECRETARY OF THE TREASURY.—The Secretary of the Treasury shall provide the Secretary of the Senate with such assistance as may be necessary to enable the Secretary of the Senate to carry out this section.

(c) Notification.—The Majority Leader of the Senate shall—

(1) upon the date of enactment of this resolution, inform the Secretary of the Senate that the provisions of subsection (b) are in effect; and

(2) notify the Secretary of the Senate when the Senate has passed COVID-19 relief legislation and the covered period has ended.

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 victim to COVID–19; and

Whereas, on December 30, Wuhan, China health authorities identified, interrogated,
and remanded multiple doctors in response to their decisions to warn other Chinese citizens of the danger posed by that 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 1, 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 13, 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 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;

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 geographical 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) recognizes 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 how the handling by the Government of the People’s Republic of China of the COVID-19 outbreak prior to March 11, 2020, contributed to the emergence of the COVID-19 global pandemic; and

(4) calls for an international investigation led by public health officials from the United States and other affected nations to determine how the Government of the People’s Republic of China from entering the country until mid-February;

(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;

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

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, as reported by the Uyghur Human Rights Project, and corroborated by video evidence and Radio Free Asia, an announced and strictly enforced quarantine of more than a million 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” camps 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 announced 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 reported that the Government of the People’s Republic of China from entering the country until mid-February;

Whereas, on January 31, 2019, Wuhan Central Hospital authorities formally reprimanded Ai Fen for “spreading rumors” about the virus;

Whereas, on January 30, 2020, the Public Security Bureau of Wuhan detained, questioned, and forced Dr. Li Wenliang and 7 other doctors to sign a letter confessing that Dr. Li Wenliang had made “false comments” that severely disturbed the social order;

Whereas, on January 30, 2020, the leading public health authority in China, the National Health Commission, directed all relevant institutions in China to cease publicly publishing any information related to a then unknown SARS-like virus and ordered them to destroy existing samples of the virus or transfer them to approved testing sites;

Whereas, on January 1, 2020, the Wuhan Institute of Virology published the genome of COVID-19 virus on WeChat;

Whereas, on December 27, 2019, Zhang Jixian, a doctor from the Hubei Provincial Hospital of Chinese and Western Medicine, warned his medical school class and colleagues that a SARS-like virus had killed genetic information on COVID-19 until January 9;

Whereas, on January 1, 2020, an official at the Hubei Provincial Health Commission ordered at least 1 private genomics testing company to cease testing samples of a mysterious virus from Wuhan in order to destroy all existing samples of the virus;

WHEREAS, 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 13, 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 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;

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 geographical 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) recognizes 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;

(4) calls for an international investigation led by public health officials from the United States and other affected nations to determine how the handling by the Government of the People’s Republic of China of the COVID–19 outbreak prior to March 11, 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;
 Whereas the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the premier infectious disease research institute in the world, was well situated at the beginning of the COVID–19 outbreak to both assist the responses of 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; 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; 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; 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, Ma Zhaoxu, claimed that COVID–19 originated in the United States and that the United States government was attempting to lie on the table; whereas the Government of the People’s Republic of China, have claimed that there is no evidence that COVID–19 originated in China; whereas, on March 4, 2020, Xinhua News Agency, the mouthpiece of the Government of the People’s Republic of China, published an article threatening to cut off medical supply exports to the United States and “(the United States) into the mighty sea of coronavirus”;

 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 the 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 95 percent globally: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) calls on the Government of the People’s Republic of China to—

(A) for the purpose 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 Uyghur Muslims and other persecuted ethnic minorities; and

(E) end all forced labor programs;

(2) condemns—

(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; and

(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 duplicitive denial of the National Health Commission of China of the person-to-person transmission of COVID–19; and

(3) calls for the Director-General of the World Health Organization, Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, to retract highly misleading statements regarding the response of the Government 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 propose 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 1576. Mr. SASSE (for himself and Mrs. CAPITO) submitted an amendment intended to propose 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 propose 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 — BUCH LEWIS ACT OF 2020

SEC. 1. SHORT TITLE. This title may be cited as the “Buch 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.—

(1) appointment of Director.—There shall be appointed a Director, who shall be at the head of the Pension Rehabilitation Administration established under this section and section 9602(b).

(2) term of office.—The term of office of the Director shall be 5 years.

(c) service until appointment of successor.—An individual serving as Director shall be 5 years.

(d) 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 chapter 98 of title 5, United States Code.

(e) contracting.—

(i) contracts for procurement.—The Director may procure, and enter into contracts for the procurement of, personal property and services (including those related to budget and accounting, financial reporting, personnel, and procurement) with the General Services Administration, as principal on the loans under such Act.

(ii) for administrative costs.—The Director may, in the exercise of the authority vested in him by this Act, make payments in any fiscal year only to the extent that appropriations are available for that purpose.

(f) 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 administering expenses of the Pension Rehabilitation Administration.

SEC. 3. 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 this section.

(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 pursued to such Act.

(B) interest.—For purposes of subparagraph (A), the term ‘‘interest’’ includes points and other similar amounts.

(c) transfers from secretaty.—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.

(4) availability of funds.—Amounts credited to or deposited in the Fund shall remain available until expended.

(d) 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.

(2) for the purpose of making the loans described in the Butch Lewis Act of 2020.

(2) loans for administrative and operating expenses pursuant to such Act.

(4) funds for administrative and operating expenses of such Administration.

(C) amendments to section 432(b)(6) of such Code—

(ii) as of such date of enactment, are in critical and declining status (within the meaning of section 432(b)(6) of such Code) and which—

(2) for purposes of amendments to section 432(b)(6) of such Code and section 303(b)(6) of such Act as of such date of enactment, 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-
meet such other requirements as the Direc-
tive Corporation and the Department of Labor, and the Director of the Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation, before making any loan under paragraph (1), and shall share information with the plan sponsor to the extent necessary to determine the eligibility of the plan for a loan under this section. The terms of any loan authorized under this section shall be established not later than September 30, 2019, with guidance regarding such information. The terms of any loan authorized under this section shall be based on appropriate terms for such loans.

(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 information. The terms of any loan authorized under this section shall be based on appropriate terms for such loans.

(B) LOANS AUTHORIZED BEFORE PROGRAM DATE.—Without regard to whether the program under subsection (a) has been established, any loan may be made for a loan under this section before either date described in such subparagraph, and the Pension Rehabilitation Administration shall approve the application and make the loan before establishment of the program if necessary to avoid any suspension of the accrued benefits of a participant.

(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 interest on the loan for a period of 29 years beginning on the date of the loan (or 19 years in the case of a plan making the election under subsection (c)(5));
(B) final payment of interest and principal shall be due in the 39th year after the date of the loan (or the plan sponsor may elect to extend the period of repayment in an election under subsection (c)(5)); and
(C) as a condition of the loan, the plan sponsor stipulates that—
(i) the plan sponsor is not insolvent, and the Secretary of the Treasury, and the Director of the Pension Rehabilitation Administration, in consultation with the Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation and the Department of Labor, shall determine whether any changes or adjustments to the loan application are necessary to avoid insolvency and to pay benefits, or is already insolvent, to emerge from insolvency within and avoid insolvency for the remainder of such period; and
(ii) the plan is reasonably expected to be able to pay benefits and the interest on the loan during such period and to accumulate sufficient funds to repay the principal when due;

(B) provide the plan’s most recently filed Form 5500 as of the date of application and any other information necessary to determine whether the plan meets the requirements of a plan for making a loan;

(C) stipulate whether the plan is also applying for financial assistance under section 421(d) of the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 (29 U.S.C. 1341)(d) in combination with the loan to enable the plan to avoid insolvency and to pay benefits, or is already insolvent, to emerge from insolvency within and avoid insolvency for the remainder of such period and to accumulate sufficient funds to repay the principal when due;

(D) state in what manner the loan proceeds will be invested pursuant to subsection (d), the proceeds of any contracts or to implement a program described in paragraph (3)(C) (or a combination of the two) sufficient to provide benefits of participants and beneficiaries of the plan in pay status, and terminated vested benefits, at the time the loan is made.

(B) LIMITATION BASED ON ABILITY TO PAY .—If at the time of the application under subsection (c) the plan sponsor determines that, based on a repayment schedule that would provide for repayment of the full amount determined under subparagraph (A) or (C)(ii) within the 30-year period described in subsection (b)(1), making payments would cause the plan to be within 18 months of becoming insolvent at any point during such period, the loan amount shall be such lesser amount as the plan sponsor determines the plan may be able to repay without becoming insolvent within 18 months of insolvency.

(C) PLANS WITH SUSPENDED BENEFITS.—In the case of a 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 (29 U.S.C. 1085(e)(9)) or under section 418E of such Code—

(i) the suspension of benefits shall not be taken into account in applying subparagraph (A) or (B); and

(ii) except as provided in subparagraph (B), the loan amount shall be such lesser amount sufficient to provide benefits of participants and beneficiaries who are participants in the plan in pay status and terminated vested benefits at the time the loan is made, determined without regard to the suspension, including retroactive payment of benefits which would otherwise have been payable during the period of the suspension.

(2) LOAN AMOUNT AND USE.—

(1) AMOUNT OF LOAN.—
(A) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided in subparagraph (B), the amount of any loan under subsection (a) shall be, as demonstrated by the plan sponsor on the application under subsection (c), the amount needed to implement a plan to avoid insolvency and to pay benefits, or is already insolvent, to emerge from insolvency within and avoid insolvency for the remainder of such period and to accumulate sufficient funds to repay the principal when due.

(B) LIMITATION BASED ON ABILITY TO PAY.—If at the time of the application under subsection (c) the plan sponsor determines that, based on a repayment schedule that would provide for repayment of the full amount determined under subparagraph (A) or (C)(ii) within the 30-year period described in subsection (b)(1), making payments would cause the plan to be within 18 months of becoming insolvent at any point during such period, the loan amount shall be such lesser amount as the plan sponsor determines the plan may be able to repay without becoming insolvent within 18 months of insolvency.

(C) PLANS WITH SUSPENDED BENEFITS.—In the case of a 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 (29 U.S.C. 1085(e)(9)) or under section 418E of such Code—

(i) the suspension of benefits shall not be taken into account in applying subparagraph (A) and (B);

(ii) except as provided in subparagraph (B), the loan amount shall be such lesser amount sufficient to provide benefits of participants and beneficiaries who are participants in the plan in pay status and terminated vested benefits at the time the loan is made, determined without regard to the suspension, including retroactive payment of benefits which would otherwise have been payable during the period of the suspension.

(3) REQUIRED ACTIONS; DEEMED APPROVAL.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—In the case of a plan which is also applying for financial assistance under section 421(d) of the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 (29 U.S.C. 1341(d))—

(i) the plan sponsor shall submit the loan application and the application for financial assistance jointly to the Pension Rehabilitation Administration and the Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation with the information...
necessary to determine the eligibility for and amount of the loan under this section and the financial assistance under section 4281(d) of such Act; and
(ii) in General.—Any portfolio implemented under this paragraph shall be subject to an actuarial triennial review by the Pension Rehabilitation Administration, including a mandatory triennial review of the adequacy of the portfolio to provide the benefits described in paragraph (1) if the benefits provided in such portfolio (or provided within a reasonable period of time) of any decision by the plan sponsor to change the investment manager of the portfolio.

(II) REMEDIAL ACTS.—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 six months.

(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 4371 of title 29, United States Code.

(g) AUTHORITY TO ISSUE RULES, ETC.—The Pension Rehabilitation Administration, in consultation with the Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation and the Department of Labor, is authorized to issue such regulations and rules, and to prescribe such forms, as it deems necessary to implement this section.

(h) AUTHORITY TO ISSUE RULES, ETC.—The Pension Rehabilitation Administration, in consultation with the Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation and the Department of Labor, is authorized to issue such regulations and rules, and to prescribe such forms, as it deems necessary to implement this section.

(i) USE OF LOAN FUNDS.—
(A) IN GENERAL.—The loan received under subsection (a) shall not exceed an amount equal to the amount of the loan under subsection (a) plus the amount of any contributions under section 412, section 4971, or section 502(f), to the plan.

(B) ANNUITY CONTRACT REQUIREMENTS.—The annuity contracts purchased under subparagraph (A) or to implement a portfolio described in subparagraph (C) (or a combination thereof) to provide the benefits described in paragraph (1).

(C) PORTFOLIO.—
(i) IN GENERAL.—A portfolio described in this subparagraph—
(1) 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 Government, or (ii) any other portfolio prescribed by the Secretary of the Treasury in regulations which has a similar risk profile to the portfolio described in clause (I) and is equally protective of the interests of participants and beneficiaries.

Once implemented, such a portfolio shall be maintained until all liabilities to participants and beneficiaries are in pay status at the time of the loan are satisfied.

(ii) FIDUCIARY DUTY.—Any investment manager of a portfolio under this subparagraph shall have knowledge in writing that such person is a fiduciary under the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 with respect to the plan.

(iii) TREATMENT OF PARTICIPANTS AND BENEFICIARIES.—Participants and beneficiaries covered by a portfolio under this subparagraph shall continue to be treated as participants and beneficiaries of the plans in which they are participants and beneficiaries for purposes of title IV of the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974.

(D) ACCOUNTING.—
(i) IN GENERAL.—Annuity contracts purchased and portfolios implemented under this paragraph shall be used solely to provide the benefits described in paragraph (1) until all such contracts are paid and the amount of all such contracts is accounted for separately from the other assets of the plan.

(ii) OVERRIDE OF NON-ANNUITY INVESTMENTS.—
(I) IN GENERAL.—Any portfolio implemented under this paragraph shall be subject to an actuarial triennial review by the Pension Rehabilitation Administration, including a mandatory triennial review of the adequacy of the portfolio to provide the benefits described in paragraph (1) if the benefits provided in such portfolio (or provided within a reasonable period of time) of any decision by the plan sponsor to change the investment manager of the portfolio.

(II) REMEDIAL ACTS.—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 six months.

(F) 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.

(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 taken into account.

(j) OVERRIDE OF NON-ANNUITY PORTFOLIOS PURCHASED WITH LOAN FUNDS.—
(1) OVERRIDE BY PLAN SPONSOR.—Annuity contracts purchased and portfolios implemented under this Act shall be taken into account in determining the withdrawal liability of any employer under subpart (A) (i), but the amount equal to the greater of—
(i) the benefits provided under such contracts or portfolios to participants and beneficiaries,

(j) OVERRIDE OF NON-ANNUITY PORTFOLIOS PURCHASED WITH LOAN FUNDS.—
(1) OVERRIDE BY INVESTMENT PORTFOLIOS PURCHASED WITH LOAN FUNDS.—
(II) any other portfolio prescribed by the Pension Rehabilitation Administration 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.

(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 received 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 4044 of the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974, as prescribed in the regulations under section 4211 of the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 in the case of such a mass withdrawal.

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 subpart (A), but the amount equal to the greater of—

(i) the benefits provided under such contracts or portfolios to participants and beneficiaries,

"(ii) the benefits provided under such contracts or portfolios to participants and beneficiaries,

"(iii) indebtedness with respect to a multiemployer plan under a loan made by the Pension Rehabilitation Administration pursuant to the Butch Lewis Act of 2020 shall not be taken into account as liabilities for purposes of such section.

"(C) If such a 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.

"(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. 1055) 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 received 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 4044, as prescribed in the regulations under section 4211 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 subpart (A), but the amount equal to the greater of—

"(i) the benefits provided under such contracts or portfolios to participants and beneficiaries,
“(i) the remaining payments due on the loan under such Act, shall be so taken into account.

“(2) COORDINATION WITH FUNDING REQUIREMENTS.—Section 6059A of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as amended by section 6059A of such Act, and section 1302 of such Title, and other provisions of law, shall be applied consistent with this subsection.

“(3) The Secretary shall include in the report required under subsection (a) any significant reduction in the number of active participants during the plan year preceding such plan year, and the reasons for such reduction.

“(4) any significant reduction in the number of active participants during the plan year preceding such plan year, and the reasons for such reduction.

“(5) A list identifying all beneficiaries who withdrew from the plan in the plan year preceding such plan year, and the resulting reduction in contributions.

“(6) 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, the annual payment amount, and the number of years remaining in the payment schedule with respect to such withdrawal liability.

“(7) Any material 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.

“(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) Any list identifying all beneficiaries who 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, the annual payment amount, and the number of years remaining in the payment schedule with respect to such withdrawal liability.

“(11) Any material 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 the current 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 101(f) of the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974.

“(16) The information contained on the most recent annual return under section 6059 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 benefits.

“(c) INFORMATION SHARING.—The report required under subsection (a) shall be submitted electronically.

“(d) REPORT TO PARTICIPANTS, BENEFICIARIES, AND EMPLOYERS.—Each plan sponsor shall share the information in the report under subsection (a) with the Secretary of Labor and the Director of the Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation.

“(e) PENALTY.—Subsection (e) of section 6052 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 failure to file a report under subsection (a)’, 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.’’.

“(f) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The title of section 4261 for subpart E of part III of chapter A of chapter 61 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 is amended by adding at the end the following new subsection:

“(3) by adding at the end the following new subsection:

“(d) The plan sponsor of a multiemployer plan shall—

“(A) within 60 days after the end of the plan year for which a report is submitted under section 4261(b)(6) of the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 (29 U.S.C. 1431) and provide guidance under section 6059A, the amount imposed under this subsection, by jointly submitting such reports to the plan and the Secretary.

“(B) by adding at the end the following new subsection:

“(B) which is insolvent for purposes of section 6062, 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 demonstration and assumptions submitted with the loan application under the Butch Lewis Act of 2020 and provide guidance regarding such assumptions prior to approving such application for financial assistance under this subsection.

“(3) The corporation for financial assistance under this subsection shall not be limited to the rules of such Act. The corporation may deny any application if the assumptions and determinations are unreasonable, or inconsistent with such rules or regulations, and the corporation and the corporation are unable to reach agreement on such assumptions and determinations.

“(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 such plan under sections 4022A and 4022B. For this purpose, the maximum guaranteed benefit amount shall be determined by disregarding the maximum guaranteed benefit amount (as determined under section 4022A) of the Pension Rehabilitation Administration 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. 1381(d)) (as added by this section) (including necessary administrative and operating expenses relating to such assistance).

SA 1575. Mr. MORGAN 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. 7003(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 7001(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. SASS (for himself and Mrs. CAPITO) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 748, to amend the Federal Trade Commission Act (15 U.S.C. 41 et seq.) 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 1215(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

By unanimous consent, 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.
Tuesday, March 24, 2020

Daily Digest

Senate

Chamber Action

Routine Proceedings, pages S1975–S2019

Measures Introduced: Seven bills and three resolutions were introduced, as follows: S. 3572–3578, and S. Res. 551–553.

Measures Considered:

Middle Class Health Benefits Tax Repeal Act—Agreement: Senate continued consideration of the motion to proceed to consideration of H.R. 748, to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to repeal the excise tax on high cost employer-sponsored health coverage. A unanimous-consent agreement was reached providing for further consideration of the motion to proceed to consideration of the bill at approximately 12 noon, on Wednesday, March 25, 2020.

Executive Communications:

Additional Cosponsors:

Statements on Introduced Bills/Resolutions:

Amendments Submitted:

Adjournment: Senate convened at 10 a.m. on Tuesday, March 24, 2020 and adjourned at 1:46 a.m. on Wednesday, March 25, 2020, until 12 noon on the same day. (For Senate’s program, see the remarks of the Majority Leader in today’s Record on page S2008.)

Committee Meetings

(Committees not listed did not meet)

No committee meetings were held.

House of Representatives

Chamber Action

Public Bills and Resolutions Introduced: 5 public bills, H.R. 6380–6384; and 1 resolution, H. Res. 907 were introduced.

Additional Cosponsors:

Reports Filed: There were no reports filed today.

Speaker: Read a letter from the Speaker wherein she appointed Representative Clay to act as Speaker pro tempore for today.

Guest Chaplain: The prayer was offered by the Guest Chaplain, Rev. William Gurnee, St. Joseph’s Catholic Church, Washington, DC.

Quorum Calls Votes: There were no Yea and Nay votes, and there were no Recorded votes. There were no quorum calls.

Adjournment: The House met at 12 noon and adjourned at 12:02 p.m.

Committee Meetings

No hearings were held.

Joint Meetings

No joint committee meetings were held.

NEW PUBLIC LAWS

(For last listing of Public Laws, see DAILY DIGEST, p. D305)

S. 3503, to authorize the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to treat certain programs of education converted to distance learning by reason of emergencies and health-related situations in the same manner as programs of education pursued at educational institutions. Signed on March 21, 2020. (Public Law 116–128)

S.893, to require the President to develop a strategy to ensure the security of next generation mobile
telecommunications systems and infrastructure in the United States and to assist allies and strategic partners in maximizing the security of next generation mobile telecommunications systems, infrastructure, and software. Signed on March 23, 2020. (Public Law 116–129)

S.1822, to require the Federal Communications Commission to issue rules relating to the collection of data with respect to the availability of broadband services. Signed on March 23, 2020. (Public Law 116–130)

COMMITTEE MEETINGS FOR WEDNESDAY, MARCH 25, 2020

(Committee meetings are open unless otherwise indicated)

Senate
No meetings/hearings scheduled.

House
No hearings are scheduled.
Next Meeting of the SENATE
12 noon, Wednesday, March 25

Senate Chamber
Program for Wednesday: Senate will continue consideration of the motion to proceed to consideration of H.R. 748, Middle Class Health Benefits Tax Repeal Act (The legislative vehicle for COVID III).

Next Meeting of the HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
10 a.m., Wednesday, March 25

House Chamber
Program for Wednesday: House will meet in Pro Forma session at 10 a.m.