

Madam Speaker, we have the capacity to address the ongoing threats to our security even as we address this unprecedented public health crisis amidst an economic downturn. The bicameral group of legislators who serve on the U.S. Helsinki Commission do so in a bipartisan way, and when we participate in the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, we do so with our European friends and allies in this effort.

I concluded from my discussions last week that more difficult times may lie ahead, but by working together, we will persevere.

Madam Speaker, please join me today recognizing the importance of these discussions with our European allies and friends.

TRIBUTE TO SERGEANT MAJOR
RALPH SARGENT

HON. SETH MOULTON

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 7, 2020

Mr. MOULTON. Madam Speaker, I rise to commemorate the service of an American patriot and decorated Marine, Sergeant Major Ralph Sargent. Sargent took part in some of the most intense fighting of the Vietnam War, including the Battle of Khe Sanh, when the hilltop outpost of 6,000 Marines was surrounded by 34,000 North Vietnamese troops. Despite heavy artillery bombardment and the constant threat of being overrun, the Marines, of course, held their ground. Later while on patrol, his company got into an extended firefight that would claim the lives of 35 Marines, but it would have been far worse if not for Sergeant Major Sargent's actions that earned him the Bronze Star with a "Combat V" for extraordinary heroism, in addition to his Navy Commendation Medal.

But one of the greatest stories of his service was when he saved the life of another Marine decades after Vietnam. That Marine is his grandson, whom I was privileged to serve with in Iraq. The salty Marine sergeant major recognized what was wrong with his grandson when this great Marine returned from the war and, like so many of us, had trouble finding meaning in life back home. So one day the sergeant major asked his grandson to drive him to the VA for an appointment, but when they arrived, he told his grandson that the appointment was actually for him. His grandson, my friend, followed the sergeant major's orders and started going regularly to the VA. I'm not sure he would be alive today if he hadn't. And months later, after Sergeant Major Sargent saw what a difference the VA had made in his grandson's life, he decided, for the first time, to go himself.

Madam Speaker, Sergeant Major Sargent lived a life of service. Many Marines made it through Vietnam thanks to their sergeant major, and one of my great Marine friends is alive today because of his grandfather. What an American hero.

THANK YOU TO WASHINGTON
STATE'S FIRST RESPONDERS

HON. RICK LARSEN

OF WASHINGTON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 7, 2020

Mr. LARSEN of Washington. Madam Speaker, I rise to recognize the valuable service of grocery workers.

Nearly three million grocery workers punch the clock in communities across the United States. In Northwest Washington, these women and men put themselves at risk to make sure their neighbors are fed.

Since the COVID-19 outbreak began, I have heard from families of grocery employees who worry every time their loved ones go to work.

Congress must support grocery workers the same way they support their communities. This means providing paid family and medical leave, guaranteeing workers' rights are protected and listening when they tell employers and Congress what they need to stay safe on the job.

I would like to thank and recognize grocery workers for their commitment to keeping Washington healthy and fed during this unprecedented crisis. I encourage my colleagues to support these essential workers in any future relief package.

INTRODUCTION OF THE IMPROVING
ACCESS TO SERVICES ACT

HON. JESÚS G. "CHUY" GARCÍA

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 7, 2020

Mr. GARCÍA of Illinois. Madam Speaker, I rise to introduce the Improving Access to Services Act along with my colleagues Congresswoman AYANNA PRESSLEY and Congressman MARK TAKANO.

Our transportation system is failing Americans who are stuck in congestion, traveling on roads and transit systems in disrepair, and forced to travel further and further to reach essential services.

The Improving Access to Services Act would require that 'safe and convenient access to services' is an added condition for States' minimum standards for public roads—for both new construction and roadway improvement projects. These services include health care facilities, child care, education and workforce training, affordable housing, food sources, banking and financial institutions, and other retail shopping establishments.

States and metropolitan planning organizations will assess how the transportation system connects people to services by auto, transit, bike, and pedestrian investments, and ensures new investments do not degrade transit, bike, and pedestrian access.

The Improving Access to Services Act will also adjust the definition of access to incorporate a measurement of travel times, travel stress for active travel (bike and pedestrian), and cost for low-income travelers.

I am glad that the Improving Access to Services Act is endorsed by Transportation for America (T4A), Sierra Club, National Resources Defense Council (NRDC), National

Association of City Transportation Officials (NACTO), Environmental Law and Policy Center (ELPC), Rails-to-Trails Conservancy.

The Improving Access to Services Act will reconnect our communities, enabling people to take shorter, more convenient trips, reducing congestion and emissions, and improving access to services for all.

I urge this body to swiftly pass this legislation.

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS ABOUT
THE CARES ACT

HON. ANDY BIGGS

OF ARIZONA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 7, 2020

Mr. BIGGS. Madam Speaker, The vote we took on March 27, 2020, may be the most monumental vote during our tenure in Congress. The amount of money we committed our nation to is, in itself, epic. The causes of this legislation—the coronavirus and government reaction to the threat, which has placed our economy into a recession—are equally momentous.

The President has wisely acted to limit the spread of the outbreak, and he and Senate Majority Leader MCCONNELL tried to negotiate in good faith with House Democrats. Unfortunately, Speaker PELOSI and Minority Leader SCHUMER chose instead to derail the process. As a result, we have a bill before us that is loaded down with more negative provisions than positive ones.

I have spent the past few days imagining what could have been, had the Democrats decided to act as honest brokers.

Could we have provided the liquidity and necessary interim relief for the families and businesses of Main Street USA for less than \$2 trillion?

Most certainly. And we should have found ways to help them because these businesses needed our support, because state and local governments have shuttered them and placed many Americans in economic peril.

Could we have acted more swiftly?

Without a doubt.

Could we have taken the time to repair the unemployment compensation portion of the bill that Senators SCOTT, SASSE, and GRAHAM noted will incentivize people not to work, because the compensation for unemployment will be superior to their wages?

Might we have produced a bill that didn't spend millions of dollars for non-essential, non-emergency-related funding to institutions such as the Kennedy Center, NPR, Smithsonian, Institute of Museum and Library Services, and the National Endowments for the Arts and Humanities?

Could we have done this without strengthening the hands of unions in the private sector?

These are all painful hypotheticals to think about as we look at the enormous sums of unnecessary spending in this bill.

To offer merely a few examples, we gave \$88 million to the Peace Corps, which fired over seven thousand volunteers in March. We spent millions more for refugee assistance, election security, and the Department of Education. Some of these efforts may be worth funding, but they certainly have no place in an economic relief package.