The Senate met at 10:04 and 13 seconds a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable ROY BLUNT, a Senator from the State of Missouri.

APPOINTMENT OF ACTING PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will please read a communication to the Senate from the President pro tempore (Mr. GRASSLEY).

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
President pro tempore,
Washington, DC, April 9, 2020.

To the Senate:
Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby appoint the Honorable ROY BLUNT, a Senator from the State of Missouri, to perform the duties of the Chair.

CHUCK GRASSLEY,
President pro tempore.

Mr. BLUNT thereupon assumed the Chair as Acting President pro tempore. The majority leader.

Mr. MCCONNELL. I ask unanimous consent to increase the funding for the Paycheck Protection Program to a new total of $600 billion. I am not talking about changing any policy language that both sides have already negotiated together several weeks ago. I am literally talking about deleting the number 350 and writing 600 in its place. Let me say that again: We are not talking about making any policy changes; we are literally changing the number 350 to 600. That is all we are suggesting here today. That, by definition, is a clean bill.

I want to add more money to the only part of our bipartisan bill that is currently at risk of running out of money, so I was surprised to see this simple proposal met uneasily by the Democratic leadership. The distinguished Democratic leader and the Speaker of the House sought to use this crucial program to open broader negotiations on other topics, including parts of the CARES Act where literally—listen to this, Mr. President—literally no money has gone out the door yet—no money has gone out the door yet. The Democratic leadership has suggested they may hold Americans’ paychecks hostage unless we passed another sweeping bill that spends a half trillion dollars, doubling down on a number of parts of the...
CARES Act, including parts that have not even started to work yet. The country cannot afford unnecessary wrangling or political maneuvering. Treating this as a normal kind of partisan negotiation could literally cost us tens of billions of dollars in our jobs. We are in a situation right now where passing a bill means either unanimous consent or a voice vote. Everyone knows—everyone—there is zero chance that the sprawling, nominal that our Democratic friends have gestured towards could pass either Chamber by unanimous consent this week—no chance. The President has already indicated he would not sign it. The country needs us to be nimble—nimble—to fix urgent problems as fast as we can, to be able to have focused discussions on urgent subjects without turning every conversation into a conversation about everything. We need to patch holes as we see them and keep moving forward together.

Everybody in the Senate voted to send historic funding to hospitals and healthcare providers. Everyone supports funding hospitals. I am in favor of every proposal for hospitals in this package. If we can get a grant from the Small Business Administration, is out of funds. They need money today in order to keep working very well. It is a good program that is included in the CARES Act. We are going to support them. The majority leader knows that. So we could get this done, so it won't get stuck. The SBA will have committed. It hasn't been yet released. tomorrow. There is only one part of the CARES Act that is already—already—at risk of exhausting its funding right now—only one part of the CARES Act is at risk of exhausting its funding right now: the Paycheck Protection Program.

We are asking small business owners across America to place their faith in us. We are asking them to keep working on payroll because Congress, the Treasury, and the SBA will have their says. The small businesses are concerned? So let me go over those. One, the emergency grant program—this is a program where grants are offered by the Small Business Administration. You don't have to have a banking relationship with a commercial bank in order to get these loans. It is very, very popular—$8 billion of loans have come in, in regards to these loans—8 billion, representing $372 billion of loans. But here is the problem: We have only authorized $7.3 billion of loans under the program. That is why we are suggesting, if you add another $50 billion, you can authorize another $300 billion of loans under the emergency disaster relief program. Today, if you have requested that loan today and you requested the average amount that is being requested—and you have to show need in this program—you have got to document the need that the disaster has affected your viability as a business. The average loan is $200,000. That is what they are requesting.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST
Mr. McCONNELL. Now, Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of the bill at the desk. I further ask that the bill be considered read a third time and passed and the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table. The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Is there objection? Mr. CARDIN. Reserving the right to object.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Maryland.

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, let me just clarify some of the issues the majority leader pointed out. I am afraid that this unanimous consent is basically a political stunt because it will not address the immediate need of small businesses in the legislation that we have passed, and let me clarify that.

The majority leader indicated that the PPP, the Paycheck Protection Plan, is running out of money. It hasn't. Thirty percent hasn't been committed. It hasn't been yet released. But there are programs under the CARES Act that have run out of money. The EIDL program, the emergency disaster relief loan program which provides funds for businesses—we have allowed businesses that have been affected by the coronavirus to file those claims—that has run out of money, and I will give you the numbers in a few moments. The grant program that is included in the CARES at up to $10,000, where a small business can get a grant from the Small Business Administration, is out of funds. They need money today in order to process applications.

The SBA didn't need money today to process the Paycheck Protection Program. The Paycheck Protection Program was negotiated in good faith by Senator RUBIO, Senator COLLINS, Senator SHAHEEN, and myself, and we are very proud of that program. It is working very well. It is a good program. We strongly support it. It is bipartisan.

But this unanimous consent request was not negotiated. There was no effort made to follow the process that we could get this done, so it won't get done. It is not going to be enacted, and the majority leader knows that. So what Democrats are prepared to make sure that every small business that is eligible to receive the Paycheck Protection Plan, we are going to support their applications being received, processed, and fully funded. We will put as much money as needed to make sure that every small business can participate in this program. And the UC leaves out is where small businesses are concerned? So let me go over those. One, the emergency grant program—this is a program where grants are offered by the Small Business Administration. You don't have to have a banking relationship with a commercial bank in order to get these loans. It is very, very popular—$8 billion of loans have come in, in regards to these loans—8 billion, representing $372 billion of loans.

How much money did we appropriate? $10 billion. SBA cannot release those funds in 3 days because they don't have the money to do it. The UC by the majority leader does not provide that money so that those small businesses can get that cash. That is not provided.