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Senate

The Senate met at 4 p.m. and was called to order by the Honorable DAN SULLIVAN, a Senator from the State of Alaska.

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 legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, April 21, 2020.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby appoint the Honorable DAN SULLIVAN, a Senator from the State of Alaska, to perform the duties of the Chair.

CHUCK GRASSLEY,
President pro tempore.

Mr. SULLIVAN thereupon assumed the Chair as Acting President pro tempore.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

Mr. McCONNELL. I ask unanimous consent to be recognized, notwithstanding the order for a pro forma session today.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT AGREEMENT—H.R. 6322

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that it be in order to receive H.R. 6322 from the House.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

PAYCHECK PROTECTION PROGRAM

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, earlier today, leaders in both Chambers and the administration reached a bipartisan agreement to supplement the historic CARES Act. At the core of our agreement is \$320 billion more for the Paycheck Protection Program, which is already saving millions of small business jobs and helping Americans get paychecks instead of pink slips. This is even more money than we had first requested a while back. In the intervening time and at our request, this new money puts a special focus on community banks and credit unions.

Separately, thanks to the hard work of Senator COLLINS and Senator RUBIO, the bill supplies \$60 billion for additional economic injury disaster loans; and because of Senator ROBERTS, Senator DAINES, and our other colleagues from rural States, it will be clear that farmers and ranchers will be eligible as well.

Senate Republicans wanted more funding for Americans' paychecks nearly 2 weeks ago before the program even shut down, but in the days that our Democratic colleagues delayed these urgent funds, additional Federal help for hospitals, healthcare providers, and testing became timely as well. Republicans have always supported more medical funding as soon as it was necessary, so I am proud this package will provide roughly \$75 billion more to fund hospitals and healthcare providers in this crisis.

Thanks to Chairman ALEXANDER and Chairman BLUNT, there is an additional \$25 billion for State-led—State-led—COVID-19 testing plans and for research, development, and other testing support for key Federal agencies, such as the CDC, the NIH, and BARDA.

This is a significant package. It does just what I outlined the evening we passed the CARES Act back in March. The Senate is continuing to stand by the American people, watching the CARES Act go into effect, and adding

funding when necessary to key programs that are working well. It is unfortunate that it took our Democratic colleagues 12 days to agree to a deal that contains essentially nothing that Republicans ever opposed. In my view, it is indefensible that Main Street small businesses and their workers had their assistance cut off for partisan leverage. That was the word of choice for one leading House Democrat: "Leverage." The American people cannot be political leverage.

I am glad we are now poised to move ahead. Senate Republicans are prepared to pass the bill. It is my hope the entire Senate will be able to pass it as soon as possible, potentially as soon as just a few minutes from now.

Before I conclude, I want to share my gratitude for the people whose efforts allow us to produce these vital pieces of legislation on a crash timeline in these most unusual circumstances. A lot of talented people worked day and night to produce this bill: in the administration, Secretary Mnuchin and his staff at the Treasury Department and White House Chief of Staff Mark Meadows; here in the Senate, our Members on both sides, our committee and leadership staff on both sides, and the incredible team players in the Office of the Legislative Counsel—these are non-partisan staff who serve the institution and our country. As usual, we literally would not have this legislative text without their extraordinary help. These are unprecedented times for the entire Nation, and the Senate is no exception. So I want to thank everyone—those who worked remotely from their kitchen tables, those of you here in the Chamber right now, the Capitol police officers who protect the place day and night—I thank you all, and more importantly, your country thanks you.

Now, let's just get this done. Let's move ahead and get it done for the American people.

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



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