

The first thing we want to do on the Small Business and Entrepreneurship Committee on a bipartisan basis is do our oversight to make sure that, if there is abuse, that we put a spotlight on it and correct it to make sure that the moneys go to the small businesses that we intended to receive help.

We need now to work on the next stimulus package. I was glad to hear the President talk about this. Senator SCHUMER talked about it. Yes, our first priority should be the health and welfare of the American people in dealing with the coronavirus itself, and we need to do more. We clearly need to do more with State and local governments. That is going to be a critical part of the next package. But we also need to look at improvements in the small business package. We know that, through this 8-week period for repayment, many of us have heard that they need additional flexibility. After all, how do they predict when they can reopen if government has told them they have to stay closed? We need to give some degree of flexibility in the 8-week period.

We have different small businesses that want us to consider their eligibility. What happens after 8 weeks? If we are still seeing our economy not up to full speed, we need to talk about how we transition after 8 weeks to make sure these small businesses can succeed.

The lessons learned on the CARES Act, the lesson learned on this legislation we are taking up this afternoon is, when we work together, when we negotiate together, when we do a bipartisan package which the American people expect us to do during this national emergency, we get a better product, and we can do it quicker. I urge us all, as we move on to the fourth stimulus package, let's start from the beginning in a bipartisan way so that we can get the very best product for the American people and deal with this national crisis.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. LEE).
The Senator from Kentucky.

REOPENING THE ECONOMY

Mr. PAUL. Mr. President, no amount of money—not all the money in China—will save us from ourselves. Our only hope of rescuing this great country is to reopen the economy. If you print up billions of dollars and give it to people, they are unlikely to spend it until you end the quarantine.

The good news, though, is that the scientific community finally has facts instead of conjecture. The models that used 3.4 percent mortality were, fortunately, very wrong. Random samples of thousands of people have now been tested for antibodies or immunity to coronavirus. Two large randomized studies in California show similar results. The number of people who already developed antibodies to the coronavirus is 25 to 50 times higher

than the number that is being reported as infected. This is great news. This study means that the mortality rate may well be 25 to 50 times less deadly than previously thought.

The virus is still dangerous, and we shouldn't ignore the risks, but we should put those risks in perspective. These randomized tests indicate that, instead of a 3.4 percent mortality, that the rate could be as much as only 0.1 percent or 0.2 percent. We now have scientific evidence from randomized studies that we can manage this disease without continuing the draconian lockdown of the economy.

The question before us isn't to do nothing or to print endless amounts of bailout cash. The debate should now include the one choice that will get our economy growing again: reopening American commerce.

Today, I rise in opposition to spending \$500 billion more. The virus bailouts have already cost over \$2 trillion. Our annual deficit this year will approach \$4 trillion. We can't continue on this course. No amount of bailout dollars will stimulate an economy that is being strangled by quarantine.

It is not a lack of money that plagues us but a lack of commerce. This economic calamity only resolves when we begin to reopen the economy. Opening the economy will require Americans to rise above partisanship, to understand that deaths from infectious disease will continue, but that we cannot indefinitely quarantine.

Make no mistake about it, this has been a difficult month for our country. For many of us, we have not seen a greater challenge. I am encouraged to see how our communities are responding. In Kentucky, we have seen tremendous collaboration. People from all walks of life have come together to help each other. We have worked to identify and supply additional protective gear, masks, and gloves to protect our doctors and nurses who risk their lives on a daily basis.

UPS has set up an airlift operation out of Louisville that includes a healthcare facility for FEMA. This lets FEMA make overnight deliveries from anywhere in the country. Over 3 million pounds of masks, gloves, and other equipment have been shipped to the Louisville airport by UPS.

We have worked with some of our bourbon distillers to assist them in transitioning to producing hand sanitizer. We helped repatriate Americans trapped overseas. We also have seen how our communities have banded together to support neighbors, businesses, and those in need.

When protective equipment was in short supply, we discovered a way to use industrial masks, and we supported legislation to allow us to bring approximately 30 million masks into the medical community. When the FDA wouldn't approve COVID-19 tests other than the CDC's—a test that initially failed—we introduced legislation that circumvented the FDA and cir-

cumvented the redtape to get testing done quicker.

Over the years, the U.S. has accumulated more than \$23 trillion in debt, spending money that we do not have and borrowing from our kids' and our grandkids' future. The gargantuan Federal bailout that just passed over \$2 trillion brings us closer and closer to a point of no return, a point in which the world loses confidence in the dollar and a point in which our debt becomes an existential threat to our security. The United States is already having to borrow simply to pay our promises to senior citizens.

The U.S. is borrowing about \$1 trillion a year just to pay for everyday obligations. This is before the pandemic bailout. The U.S. is already borrowing nearly \$2 million every minute. With the recent \$2 trillion bailout, we are borrowing faster than we have ever borrowed before.

Had we practiced sound budgeting in the past, we would have been in a significantly better position to weather this storm. Congress' failures of the past, coupled with the pandemic prices of the present, could seriously jeopardize our economic future. In this moment, we need to think carefully about what we do next.

To stop the spread of this virus, commerce has been disrupted, businesses have closed, and millions have lost their jobs. Right now, the number is 20 million unemployed. The job losses will continue no matter how much money you throw at it until you reopen the economy.

Our government has intervened with unprecedented scale to prop up our economy. We have injected \$2 trillion. I do believe it makes sense for the government to provide support to businesses and families who can't make it through this. I supported expanding unemployment benefits for workers displaced by government quarantine, including self-employed individuals that have lost their businesses. But make no mistake, the massive economic calamity we are experiencing right now was caused by government.

Passing out \$1,200 checks indiscriminately to people who haven't lost their jobs will do nothing to rescue the country. If we were going to make discrete direct payments, the criteria should have been sending checks to people who needed it, people who lost their jobs, people furloughed, people who had wage cuts. Instead of directing help to the unemployed, though, some of these bailout checks will go to couples who earn nearly \$200,000 a year. But you could give everybody in the country \$12,000, and it wouldn't end this recession. Our recovery only comes when the quarantine has ended.

Experts will disagree on the exact date that we should reopen the economy, but sane, rational counsel should continue to push for the quickest end possible. Opining about never shaking hands again is a recipe for keeping the economy closed until no one dies from

infectious disease. While the infectious disease experts should be queried, so, too, should economists. We should seek counsel about balancing the harm to health caused by disease with the harm to health caused by enforcing dysfunction on the economy—not easy decisions.

Most importantly, leaders in each State must weigh in on the problem. New York City's opening date will be different from Fargo, ND. We need to get past a one-size-fits-all approach to infectious disease.

Realize that most of this money that is being loaned to small business is not a loan. Most of this money will not be repaid. It will ultimately be considered grants that will be added to our national debt.

Let's be honest about this. Applications for the program opened to overwhelming initial demand. The current data indicates that the money is gone, so now, here we are again, with leadership from both parties saying, Let's do another \$300 billion, what is another couple hundred billion dollars? But realize the money desired is not money we have saved for a rainy day. This money doesn't exist anywhere. It will be created or borrowed. Even more alarming than the money is the idea that one Senator can stand on the floor and pass legislation spending a half-trillion dollars and have no recorded vote and no debate.

Look, I understand the hardships of Senators returning from around the country, so I have not invoked the Senate rules to demand a recorded vote. I did return today, though, so that history will record that not everyone gave in to the massive debt Congress is creating. My hope is that, across the country, there will remain a vibrant voice for limited government for our constitutional Republic. I don't want to see this massive accumulation of debt destroy this great country. My advice to the Senate and to the American people is let's be aware of what we are doing by creating all this new debt, and let's think before we jump to a terrible, terrible conclusion.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alaska.

CORONAVIRUS

Mr. SULLIVAN. Mr. President, we are going to vote here in a minute on the next package that is going to try to help our Nation address these unprecedented challenges. I want to thank the majority leader, the White House, and the Democrats who have come forward to do this.

It is very important that we are doing this. In my view, as the leader said, we should have done this 12 days ago. We are facing unprecedented challenges. When we passed the CARES Act 4 weeks ago—and I think Leader MCCONNELL did an incredible job bringing the U.S. Senate together on a vote of 96-0, as Minority Leader SCHUMER mentioned with regard to this legisla-

tion that our Nation needed so desperately and that we are trying to provide more resources because the resources needed had already been spent.

After that vote, I came to the floor, and I made a statement that, although I was proud to have voted for that and proud to have been a part of the negotiations for that because our Nation was going to need it—did need it, desperately—that we knew there would be mistakes. We knew there would be areas that weren't covered that should have been. We knew elements of that bill would run out of money, as they have.

I made a plea that we should be here working on behalf of the people we represent. Our Governors are back home working hard, doing a good job; but as I mentioned, the evening that we passed the CARES Act, from the perspective of Congress—House and Senate—this should be our duty station as we address these unprecedented challenges, and I still believe that. We have heard about the difficulties that could come with voting and having Members of Congress catch COVID-19, but we can do this safely. We can vote safely.

As Senator LEE mentioned earlier, Americans all over the country are on the frontlines—truck drivers, healthcare workers, grocery store attendants—helping their fellow Americans. If they can be doing that, I think we should be here working on behalf of them.

There is so much more to do. We need to be nimble. Let me give you an example. The energy sector right now—hugely important to my State—is being decimated because of what is happening globally with regard to energy prices. Great workers are being laid off. Small businesses in many sectors in Alaska like tourism are at a huge risk. Had we been here—you know, there is a lot of talk right now about the delay—the minority leader, Speaker PELOSI, wouldn't have had an excuse to delay the funding for the PPP for 12 days. How many small businesses and jobs were lost because of that delay? We will never know, but I am sure it was in the thousands.

I am reading a book right now, "1776," by David McCullough. It is about the incredible challenges that our Nation went through at the birth of our Nation. It is mostly about George Washington and the tough battles he led and fought. He lost a lot of them in New York.

One remarkable thing about that book is, for almost the entire year in 1776, the Continental Congress was actually in session directing General Washington. They were in Philadelphia at enormous risk as the British were closing in on them. But as the war was raging for most of that year—that remarkable year of 1776—they were working.

We have so much more work to do for our Nation in these unprecedented times, whether it is confirming judges or phase four of an infrastructure pack-

age that we should be working on or even confirming key members of the executive branch. I am hopeful that, just in a couple of minutes, we are going to be able to move forward with Rear Admiral Michael Weahkee's nomination to be the Director of Indian Health Service at the Department of Health and Human Services. As our Native communities are being threatened by COVID-19, having this admiral, who has got broad support throughout our Tribal governments, including in Alaska, be able to be confirmed right now is just one example of the work that I am hopeful we can be doing.

So this should be our duty station, working around the clock for people we represent, getting through these unprecedented times, being able to address challenges as they arise—and they are arising every hour, every minute.

I want to end on a positive note—speaking of duty station—a good news story that involves the people of interior Alaska and our wonderful U.S. military. Right now, literally as we speak, there are two F-35s that have left Texas—brand new—coming to Eielson Air Force Base in Alaska. Fifteen years ago, Eielson Air Force Base was on the verge of being shut down. The interior Alaska communities of Fairbanks, North Pole, and so many leaders fought that. They said, No, this is a strategic location for our military, we shouldn't shut this down.

Now, these communities today will be receiving the first of 54 F-35s, two squadrons. I want to commend, not just my fellow Alaskans for their grit and determination to make this day happen—a huge day in my State—but the U.S. military. The U.S. military, a year and a half ago, said the F-35s will start coming to Alaska in April 2020. Despite this pandemic, that is what is happening today—remarkable grit and determination of my fellow Alaskans but also remarkable service to our Nation by the U.S. Air Force delivering these F-35s on time. That will make my State have over 100 fifth generation fighters protecting our country. So this is an inspiring story, as we are hearing all kinds of inspiring stories throughout our Nation, throughout these challenging times.

But in my view, we should be ready to help these great people that we lead and that we serve to get them through these unprecedented times.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader.

MAKING APPROPRIATIONS FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR, ENVIRONMENT, AND RELATED AGENCIES FOR THE FISCAL YEAR ENDING SEPTEMBER 30, 2019

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to immediate consideration of Calendar No. 12, H.R. 266.