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House of Representatives

The House met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Ms. CASTOR of Florida).

DESIGNATION OF THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Speaker:

WASHINGTON, DC,
April 23, 2020.

I hereby appoint the Honorable KATHY CASTOR to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

NANCY PELOSI,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, the Reverend Patrick J. Conroy, offered the following prayer:

Merciful God, thank You for giving us another day. Send Your spirit of peace and comity among the Members of the people's House. These are days of great political, social, and economic stress in our Nation, and those whose work is to legislate through this pandemic are naturally under considerable pressure. Give us all patience, especially with one another.

May all our citizens, in the midst of great turmoil, be filled with gratitude for those in our Nation whose work must go on when it would be so easy not to assume their responsibility to do so. Continue to bless those whose life's work is in service to public safety, be it police, medical professionals, or those producing and delivering our daily necessities.

May everything done this day be for Your greater honor and glory.
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. The Chair will lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

The SPEAKER 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.

REPORT ON RESOLUTION PROVIDING FOR ADOPTION OF H. RES. 935, ESTABLISHING A SELECT SUBCOMMITTEE ON THE CORONAVIRUS CRISIS

Mr. MCGOVERN, from the Committee on Rules, submitted a privileged report (Rept. No. 116-419) on the resolution (H. Res. 938) providing for the adoption of the resolution (H. Res. 935) establishing a Select Subcommittee on the Coronavirus Crisis as a select investigative subcommittee of the Committee on Oversight and Reform, which was referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed.

PROVIDING FOR ADOPTION OF H. RES. 935, ESTABLISHING A SELECT SUBCOMMITTEE ON THE CORONAVIRUS CRISIS

Mr. MCGOVERN. Madam Speaker, by direction of the Committee on Rules, I call up House Resolution 938 and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 938

Resolved, That House Resolution 935 is hereby adopted.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Massachusetts is recognized for 1 hour.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Madam Speaker, for the purpose of debate only, I yield the customary 30 minutes to the gentleman from Oklahoma (Mr. COLE), the

distinguished ranking member of the Rules Committee, pending which I yield myself such time as I may consume. During consideration of this resolution, all time yielded is for the purpose of debate only.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. MCGOVERN. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members be given 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Massachusetts?

There was no objection.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Madam Speaker, before we get into the resolution before us, I want to speak to my colleagues about an important issue.

Over the last several weeks, I have heard from Democrats and Republicans, who have expressed concern that we, as a House, are not adequately prepared to do our business during a pandemic. They are right.

Over a month ago, I prepared a report that I sent to everyone in the House—Democrats and Republicans—about possible ways that we could operate remotely. I received constructive feedback from both sides of the aisle, and this week I released text of a proposal that I hoped could have been voted on today.

The Republican leader had some objections to that proposal, and our Speaker has agreed to continue the conversation for 2 more weeks. I have always believed that, whenever possible, any changes to our rules should be bipartisan, and I still believe that.

However, the status quo, in my opinion, is unacceptable and dangerous. I am not talking about to Members of Congress; more importantly, it is dangerous to everyone we come in contact with.

The year is 2020. Technology has advanced and improved considerably over the last 231 years. And, yes, there are problems with some of the technology

□ This symbol represents the time of day during the House proceedings, e.g., □ 1407 is 2:07 p.m.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.



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that exists out there, but there are low-tech approaches to dealing with remote participation by our Members, and there are higher-tech ways to deal with it. And we can work that out. There are smart people in this Congress who can figure all of this out. But I believe both sides of the aisle need to have some urgency in addressing this issue, especially in light of the statements by the head of the CDC and other medical experts, that things could be very problematic come the fall. I hope and I pray that that is not the case. But we need to be prepared so that we can do the people's business.

I also want to publicly acknowledge my ranking member, the gentleman from Oklahoma (Mr. COLE). We don't see eye-to-eye on this issue yet, but over our years-long working relationship and friendship, we have found common ground many, many times. A task force is going to be convened today that includes myself, Mr. COLE, the chair and ranking member of the House Administration Committee, Ms. LOFGREN, and Mr. DAVIS, as well as Democratic Leader HOYER and Republican Leader MCCARTHY to discuss these matters.

I have been saying this for a month, and I am going to say it again here today: If you are a Member of Congress and you care about this issue, call me. I want to hear from Members what they think about this critically important matter.

Now, back to the measure before us.

Madam Speaker, on Wednesday, the Rules Committee met and reported a rule, House Resolution 938, providing that upon passage of the rule, H. Res. 935, which establishes a Select Subcommittee on the Coronavirus Crisis as a select investigative subcommittee of the Committee on Oversight and Reform is hereby adopted.

Madam Speaker, we are here today as Congress continues responding to the biggest public health and economic emergency this Nation has seen in 100 years: The coronavirus pandemic.

What started just weeks ago half a world away is having a devastating impact across our country. No community has been spared:

More than 855,000 cases have been confirmed;

Nearly 48,000 lives lost as of the time we are meeting right now;

And more than 22 million initial unemployment claims filed in the past month.

Some regions of our country have now lost as many jobs over the last month as they did during the worst year of the Great Recession.

These statistics are not just numbers on a page, Madam Speaker. These are our neighbors. They are our family. They are our friends. Their health is at risk, and their economic reality has changed overnight. Since the start of this pandemic, Congress has provided more than \$2 trillion in emergency relief to get small businesses the financial help that they need to survive, to

help hospitals and healthcare workers on the front lines, to expand testing, to provide every American access to an affordable vaccine when it is developed. And I could go on and on and on.

We need to make sure these resources are going where Congress intended, that they are helping struggling Americans and small businesses without any rampant fraud or abuse, and that companies aren't taking part in price-gouging or profiteering.

That is what this Select Subcommittee on the Coronavirus is all about. This proactive approach is what then-Senator Harry Truman spearheaded at the dawn of World War II to ensure Federal dollars spent then saved lives on the battlefield.

Well, today the battle is much different. It is against a worldwide pandemic currently without a vaccine or preventative treatment. But our aggressive oversight should be the same. Democratic governors and Republican governors all over the country are pleading for more tests, despite the billions we have allocated to provide them.

The Republican governor of Maryland has said the lack of available testing is the number one stumbling block in America. He is absolutely right.

The President talks about reopening America, but Madam Speaker, how about first testing America? Without that, we can't fully track and contain this virus. We need to make sure that the money we provided for testing is actually going to testing. We need to make sure that our hospitals have all the PPE equipment that they need.

In my home city of Worcester in Massachusetts, we recently opened up a field hospital in our convention center. The day before we opened, there was considerable anxiety because they had enough PPE maybe to last for a couple of days. Now working together with the governor and others, we were able to remedy that situation, but for so many of our healthcare institutions, for our first responders, trying to find PPE is like something out of the movie *The Hunger Games*. States competing with States, competing with the Federal Government, people receiving calls—I know somebody who knows somebody in China who might have lifesaving masks. Can you maybe follow up that lead? That is not the way this is supposed to work.

In the United States of America, the wealthiest Nation on the face of the Earth, officials are making cold calls to try to get enough equipment to survive the next surge of patients. Relying on the goodwill of people and businesses when they should be able to count on Federal agencies. Congress provided money for this equipment. We need to make sure it is going where it is badly needed.

Madam Speaker, as we talk today about what Congress has done, I want to take a moment to talk about what it has not done, and that is provide enough for hungry families during this pandemic.

You know, the President and so many of his allies in the Senate continue to block efforts to increase SNAP benefits for hungry people trying to put food on the table for their families. The demand for food banks right now wraps around city blocks in some places. We have seen it on TV. The lines go for miles. This is a crisis of food insecurity that we haven't seen in this country since the Great Depression.

Madam Speaker, whatever happened to taking care of the neediest among us? Maybe the President doesn't have to worry about where his next meal is going to come from, but millions and millions and millions of Americans do. They are terrified.

We should be suspending this administration's SNAP cuts. We should be strengthening nutrition assistance for those impacted by this pandemic. And we should be showing the American people that ending hunger is not a partisan issue. But some on the other side of Pennsylvania Avenue have chosen instead to take meals away from families.

Just yesterday the Secretary of Agriculture tried to paper over their disgraceful record by taking credit for the bill that we passed in a bipartisan way in Congress. The USDA didn't increase SNAP benefits by 40 percent; the House Democrats led that charge and, thankfully, many of my Republican colleagues supported that in the Families First bill.

And by the way, while we are at it, USDA was in court trying to kick millions of people off of SNAP through their disastrous regulatory scheme.

The only thing this administration has done is to try to push people off of nutrition assistance. I think it is cold-hearted and I think it is cruel for the Senate majority leader and others to turn their backs on struggling families. That needs to be fixed, and it has to be fixed in our next bill. And I hope in this Chamber, we can come together—Democrats and Republicans—and deal with it.

I know that it is unrelated to the underlying measure here, but hungry families are being ignored in this country. Sadly, even in the best of times, poor people oftentimes get ignored by this Chamber. I worry that in the worst of times, what we are going through right now, that these people, these individuals, these families become invisible. We cannot let that happen. I want them to know that this House is listening to them, and we will continue to fight to strengthen the programs they rely on.

Now, I don't know what is radical about that. Just as I don't understand why some on the other side are against a subcommittee that is designed to make sure that Federal dollars are spent well.

□ 1015

I mean, that is what this is about. That is it.

This is an extraordinary time. We have sent trillions of dollars into our communities. They should be going to small businesses and not to big corporations—our workers, not the wealthy and those already well-off. Our workers are the ones who should be our priority. We need to make sure that that is what is happening here.

If you believe this administration has done things perfectly, then you have nothing to fear. But the American people have a lot of questions and they deserve answers, and they expect us to live up to our constitutional responsibilities with regard to oversight, and they deserve to know that their tax dollars are being well spent.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. COLE. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I want to thank my good friend, Mr. MCGOVERN, the distinguished chairman of the House Rules Committee, for yielding me the customary 30 minutes.

Madam Speaker, let me quickly respond to my friend's mention about the group that will work on reopening Congress. I look forward to working with my friend and our colleagues on that particular issue.

I do want to point out, it is important to note, last night we actually did function as a committee under the chairman's leadership, and we got our work done. We are on the floor right now getting our work done. The executive branch is in Washington, D.C., right now getting its work done.

The President and the Vice President aren't hunkered down in Cheyenne Mountain. They are in the West Wing working every day. The Joint Chiefs of Staff are in the Pentagon, working every day. Every Cabinet member is working every day.

I just say that to note that other people are able to get their jobs done with appropriate changes and appropriate precautions, so I rule nothing in or out.

I look forward to listening to my colleague, but I do think we are capable of working in the House of Representatives, and I will be extraordinarily cautious about giving up procedures and precedents that are 230-plus years old.

Madam Speaker, we are here today to consider a rule that creates Speaker PELOSI's proposed select committee on the coronavirus pandemic. Earlier this month, Speaker PELOSI announced that she would create this select committee, conveniently ignoring that any such select committee must be established through the Rules Committee and, ultimately, through a vote on the House floor.

Yesterday, the Rules Committee met on extremely short notice to, essentially, rubberstamp the Speaker's action. This was particularly egregious considering that, up until right before we met, we had absolutely no details on the proposal.

In the last month, the Speaker gave the minority no notice of her plans, no indication of her rationale or vision,

and was radio silent since her announcement, except for the occasional media mention. In fact, we did not even know we were meeting on this item until the afternoon of the hearing. That is hardly the way to operate on something the Speaker purportedly wants to do in a bipartisan fashion.

Perhaps even more problematic, Madam Speaker, is that I am not sure what the end goal of such committee will be. Speaker PELOSI claims that the proposed select committee will examine all aspects of the Federal response to the coronavirus pandemic and will provide oversight for Federal dollars being spent in response.

But Congress already has significant oversight tools at our disposal. The CARES Act itself established a five-member Congressional Oversight Commission specifically for that problem. That Commission is in addition to Congress' other oversight tools, which include the House Committee on Oversight and Reform and the oversight subcommittees that exist on most other permanent House committees.

If we already have a separate Oversight Commission specifically for the CARES Act and we already have a separate Oversight and Reform Committee and each committee already has separate oversight committees, what, then, is the actual purpose of the proposed select committee?

It is entirely plausible for one to conclude that this new select committee will simply turn into yet another partisan witch hunt aimed at damaging the President.

There may be a time in the future when it makes sense to establish a commission, like the 9/11 Commission, to review the COVID-19 pandemic and the government response. I actually support doing that at an appropriate time. But such a commission needs to be truly bipartisan and devoted to what happened and what we can learn from it to improve government responses for the future. This select committee doesn't meet that test.

Before I reserve my time, later today, the House will be voting on the Paycheck Protection Program and Health Care Enhancement Act. This bipartisan bill is the next step and follow-up to the CARES Act, which Congress passed a few weeks ago.

Today's bill includes \$310 billion for the Paycheck Protection Program, a critical program for protecting small businesses and their employees. It also includes \$75 billion for hospitals on the front line of the coronavirus pandemic and a further \$25 billion for coronavirus testing.

Refilling the Paycheck Protection Program account will help countless small businesses and their employees across the country, including hundreds in my district. Frankly, refilling this important account could not come soon enough. It should have happened a week ago. But I am fully supportive of this important bill, and I look forward to voting in favor of it later today.

I urge opposition to the rule, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Madam Speaker, I include in the RECORD an article, entitled, "Democrats Pushed for Robust Oversight of the \$2.2 Trillion Coronavirus Aid Package. It Hasn't Happened Yet," detailing the need for oversight. The article explains that rapidly approved funds are being spent quickly with little monitoring or oversight.

[From TIME, April 17, 2020]

DEMOCRATS PUSHED FOR ROBUST OVERSIGHT OF THE \$2.2 TRILLION CORONAVIRUS AID PACKAGE. IT HASN'T HAPPENED YET

(By Alana Abramson)

Some of the most heated negotiations between Democrats and Republicans over last month's \$2.2 trillion coronavirus relief package were over who should watch how that money gets spent. It is the largest emergency relief fund the U.S. government has ever approved, and concerns over fraud and abuse were rife. In particular, Democrats were outraged that Republicans and the White House wanted to let the Treasury Department distribute \$500 billion to industry and states without anyone overseeing the process, and vowed to block any bill without that safeguard in place.

"There was this idea that they put forth that there would be a \$500 billion slush fund for the Secretary of the Treasury with no accountability whatsoever. Are you kidding?" House Speaker Nancy Pelosi said last month after the bill passed the Senate. "For all respect in the world for the Treasury Secretary, that was a complete nonstarter."

Ultimately, the bill signed into law by President Donald Trump mandates the massive tranche of aid will be overseen through three key mechanisms: an inspector general at the Treasury Department to oversee that \$500 billion Treasury fund, and Congress and executive branch panels, which will also monitor the Treasury fund and broadly oversee the law's implementation, respectively.

But more than two weeks later, after hundreds of billions of dollars have already flown out the door through the Paycheck Protection Program, the Treasury's Inspector General post has not yet been confirmed by the Senate and the two panels are not fully staffed. Congress is preoccupied with the unprecedented task of managing dueling public health and economic crises remotely, and Trump, whose administration has blocked Congressional oversight for years, has already threatened to scuttle the process. When he signed the bill into law in March, he said he would not allow the Inspector General overseeing the executive branch's committee to submit reports to Congress without his supervision, arguing it was unconstitutional.

"It's incredibly problematic . . . those oversight mechanisms don't do us much good if they aren't functioning," Liz Hempowicz, Director of Public Policy at the Project on Government Oversight, wrote in an e-mail to TIME. "This money is being spent incredibly quickly. The (Small Business Administration) has already spent the \$349 billion dollars allocated to the Paycheck Protection Program. It's imperative that these oversight mechanisms are fully functional so we can have confidence that this money won't be lost to waste, fraud, or abuse."

The group with the broadest oversight jurisdiction in the \$2.2 trillion CARES Act is the executive branch panel, called the Pandemic Response Accountability Committee. Glenn Fine, who was acting Inspector General at the Pentagon, was quickly appointed

to lead the committee at the end of last month but was removed by Trump just a week later. The President did not provide a specific reason, but Fine's ouster was part of a broader re-shuffling of watchdogs.

Although the committee is composed of nearly two dozen inspectors general who have been appointed, the top spot remains vacant. The law mandates that Michael Horowitz, the Inspector General for the Department of Justice who heads the Council of the Inspectors General on Integrity and Efficiency, appoint a new head, but he has not yet announced Fine's replacement. A spokesperson for Horowitz did not respond to a query about when a new replacement would be named.

On April 4, Trump announced that he had appointed Brian Miller to serve as the Inspector General for the Treasury department. Miller has over 15 years of federal experience; he spent nine years as the Inspector General for the General Services Administration, working under former Presidents George W. Bush and Barack Obama. But since 2018, he has worked as a Special Assistant to the President and Senior Associate Counsel in the White House counsel's office. His tenure there coincided with some of the White House counsel's most high profile feuds with House Democrats in their oversight probes, including Trump's impeachment last December.

Democrats lambasted Miller's appointment, arguing that a Trump staffer would be unable to exercise the kind of independence the job requires. "To nominate a member of the President's own staff is exactly the wrong type of person to choose for this position," Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer said in a statement after Trump's announcement. Since confirmations of presidential appointees now only require a simple majority in the Senate, it's likely that Miller will be confirmed despite Democrats' objections. But since he cannot be confirmed by unanimous consent, lawmakers have to physically be in Washington for that to happen—and they are not expected to return until May 4th at the earliest.

The final component of the oversight framework, the Congressional commission, is also incomplete. The bill mandates that the top four leaders in Congress—Schumer, Pelosi, Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, and House Minority Leader Kevin McCarthy—each select a member for the panel. The fifth member will chair the committee and be jointly selected by Pelosi and McConnell.

Schumer has appointed Bharat Ramamurti, who previously worked for Elizabeth Warren as an economic adviser, on the panel. On Friday, McCarthy announced he had selected Rep. French Hill, McConnell announced he had chosen Pennsylvania Sen. Pat Toomey, and Pelosi selected Florida Rep. Donna Shalala. But as of Friday evening, the chair has not been selected, so the panel can't fully function. Pelosi told reporters in her weekly press conference on Thursday that she and McConnell had agreed to submit names to each other for their joint pick.

There are signs that additional oversight of the massive relief package not set up expressly in the law is also moving forward. Pelosi has appointed House Majority Whip Jim Clyburn to lead the House Select Committee on the coronavirus crisis, which she says will be a bipartisan committee dedicated to oversight of all of the funds. And McConnell announced Friday that Idaho Senator Mike Crapo will lead the Senate's efforts.

In a New York Times op-ed earlier this week, Ramamurti urged Congress to act swiftly so his specific panel can get to work.

"Our watching eyes can help ensure that the money broadly benefits American families," he wrote. "There isn't time to waste."

Mr. MCGOVERN. Madam Speaker, I include for the RECORD an article, entitled, "Congressional Oversight of the CARES Act Could Prove Troublesome," detailing the need for oversight. The article says oversight will help limit fraud and accelerate effective use of appropriated funds.

[From Brookings, April 15, 2020]

CONGRESSIONAL OVERSIGHT OF THE CARES ACT COULD PROVE TROUBLESOME
(By Jackson Gode)

On March 27th, President Trump signed the CARES Act providing for more than \$2 Trillion in federal spending in response to the COVID-19 crisis. Overseeing the outlay of relief funding from the bill will be no easy task, given its size, complexity and the back-drop of the 2020 election.

However, this is not the first time that a major government rescue package has included oversight measures. The 2008 Emergency Economic Stabilization Act created the office of the Special Inspector General for the Targeted Asset Relief Program the powers of which were strengthened by the SIGTARP Act of 2009. In just over a decade, SIGTARP has recovered \$11 Billion in misstent funds and successfully convicted 380 fraudulent actors, leading many to consider it a success.

Members of Congress sought to mimic this success by including three major mechanisms to oversee spending within the CARES Act. The Pandemic Response Accountability Committee will be made up of Inspectors General from, at minimum, nine federal agencies, and be responsible for oversight of outlays for the entire bill. A new office within the Department of the Treasury, the Special Inspector General for Pandemic Recovery, will oversee the \$500 billion Treasury fund for targeted loans to large businesses. Brian Miller, a White House lawyer and former GSA Inspector General, has already been selected for this role. Finally, a Congressional Oversight Commission will include four members appointed by party leadership in each chamber and a chairperson agreed to by the speaker of the House and the Senate majority leader. The Commission will oversee economic stability efforts by the Treasury Department and the Federal Reserve Board.

The CARES Act also includes funding increases for several preexisting oversight bodies providing more than \$140 million for Inspectors General offices to investigate various aspects of the bill and \$20 million in funds for the Government Accountability Office.

Even with these mechanisms and funding increases, Congress will face several unique challenges while conducting substantive oversight of pandemic relief.

First, the Trump Administration has indicated reluctance to cooperate with oversight inquiries. Immediately after President Trump signed the CARES Act, the White House released a statement outlining his constitutional concerns with the newly created Pandemic Response Accountability Committee and Special Inspector General for Pandemic Recovery.

This is not the first time that Trump has questioned the legitimacy of oversight efforts. The administration is currently tied up in several court battles regarding the executive branch's ability to withhold information from Congress. On March 16th, nearly a year after the original request, the Supreme Court postponed oral arguments in a case re-

garding the House Ways and Means Committee's efforts to obtain President Trump's tax returns. The administration has also withheld information related to White House security clearances, natural disaster relief efforts, and other areas of potential misconduct.

Second, both the House and Senate are on recess and it remains unclear when they will return. Once members come back to Washington, the number of committee hearings they hold will likely be lower than normal with social distancing recommendations remaining in effect.

Hearings are an essential part of Congress's oversight mandate as they provide lawmakers with a public platform to question administration officials that many rank-and-file members do not receive on a day-to-day basis. In place of hearings, members will have to rely more heavily on written correspondence. While letters have the potential to be more effective than hearings at obtaining detailed information, recipients are only legally required to respond to inquiries from committee chairs.

The current administration has made a habit of ignoring written information requests and it remains too soon to tell whether COVID-19 oversight will be met with similar resistance. Documents released by the House Oversight and Reform Committee on the availability of medical supplies from the federal government's stockpile suggest that the administration is responding to at least some inquiries. Partial or private responses however, can make it difficult for committees to signal a lack of cooperation to the public.

Third, as their efforts to oversee the Trump administration response ramp up, House Democrats may find themselves confronting intra-party cooperation challenges. Due to the political visibility of the pandemic, committee chairs will likely compete to demonstrate their willingness to hold the administration accountable. Coordination among Democrats will be necessary to ensure that panels' efforts are complementary, rather than competitive.

Conflict between the parties will also create challenges. The creation of a Select Committee on the Coronavirus Pandemic already seems to be increasing tensions between Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.) and Minority Leader Kevin McCarthy (R-Calif.) who indicated that Republicans will object to a unanimous consent request creating the panel. Speaker Pelosi has signaled the profile she expects the committee's work to have by naming Majority Whip Jim Clyburn (D-S.C.) as chair. The committee will have subpoena power, but the House's experience so far this Congress with having to go to court to try to enforce subpoenas illustrates the limits of that tool.

Finally, the Trump administration has become famous for vacancies and "acting" officials in the highest positions of government. By tolerating a large number of acting positions, the Senate has given up one of its most important tools for influencing executive branch conduct. On April 3rd, the President nominated five individuals to Inspector General positions. However, while the Senate remains on recess, those roles will continue to be served by officials in an acting capacity.

Four of the IG offices receiving funding increases from the CARES Act are currently headed by acting officials. Notably, Glenn Fine, the Department of Defense Inspector General who was originally appointed as the Chairman of PRAC, only served in an acting capacity. On April 7th, President Trump removed him from the DOD IG role and appointed EPA Inspector General Sean O'Donnell, making Fine ineligible to be PRAC Chairman.

Congress will face many challenges protecting against fraud and helping an economy stalled by the pandemic, which may require members to find unique solutions for ensuring effective implementation of the CARES Act. With \$2 trillion of taxpayer money on the line, nothing is more important than effective oversight.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Madam Speaker, I include for the RECORD an April 4 ABC News article, entitled, "Experts Warn About Big Dollar Fraud in \$2.2 Trillion Coronavirus Relief Package."

[From ABC News, April 4, 2020]

EXPERTS WARN ABOUT BIG DOLLAR FRAUD IN \$2.2 TRILLION CORONAVIRUS RELIEF PACKAGE
(By Benjamin Siegel)

The U.S. government's historic \$2.2 trillion coronavirus aid relief package recently approved by Congress is highly vulnerable to fraud and abuse, oversight experts and veteran watchdogs who investigated abuse of the government's financial system bailout more than a decade ago told ABC News.

The size of the unprecedented relief package—in the scale of spending and the number of businesses eligible for funds—will make it difficult to verify the information from each applicant, and how they plan to use their money.

With roughly 10 million Americans filing jobless claims over the last two weeks, and millions of small businesses seeking government aid to stay afloat, the need for the government to immediately push out money to Americans and into the staggering economy could hinder efforts to filter out efforts from potential fraudsters to seek relief funds.

Tune into ABC at 1 p.m. ET and ABC News Live at 4 p.m. ET every weekday for special coverage of the novel coronavirus with the full ABC News team, including the latest news, context and analysis.

"Everybody's acceptance of some or a lot of fraud is going to have to be high, because it's going to happen," said Earl Devaney, who served as the top watchdog of the Recovery Accountability and Transparency Board, which tracked the stimulus spending following the Great Recession in the late 2000s.

Though the legislation mandates multiple oversight bodies, if even a small percentage of the funds are misused, it could mean fraud on the scale of potentially millions, if not billions, before there are any efforts to recoup losses, according to experts.

They see the \$350 billion in funding earmarked for small businesses in the form of forgivable loans as particularly susceptible to abuse. Millions of small business owners began applying to banks for the loans on Friday, though many applicants and lenders experienced problems with the program's rollout.

While the Treasury Department has said money will begin flowing immediately, some institutions, including JP Morgan Chase, said Thursday they would not be ready to receive applications by Friday.

Other veteran investigators are concerned that the review process, which leaves it up to banks to vet potential borrowers and applicants to attest to their eligibility, doesn't give authorities enough time to effectively weed out potential fraud.

"If you have fewer entities that has a lot of implications for oversight. It's fewer entities to worry about. But it also means that the processes for application can be a little more thoughtful," Neil Barofsky, the former special inspector general of the \$700 billion Troubled Asset Relief Program (TARP), told ABC News.

"In contrast here, the very purpose of these programs is not to impact a relatively

small number of institutions but to reach as far and wide as possible," he said.

The small business loan initiative, known as the Paycheck Protection Program, will be "an extraordinarily easy program to defraud, and it will be defrauded in massive ways," he added.

The \$2.2 trillion, 880-page CARES ACT approved by Congress last week included oversight provisions, modeled after some of the safeguards implemented to track the financial system bailout and stimulus money after the Great Recession.

It formed three major groups to lead oversight efforts: A new special inspector general, who will be nominated by Trump and confirmed by the Senate, will be responsible for oversight of the \$500 billion fund administered by the Treasury Department and Secretary Steven Mnuchin.

Trump plans to nominate Brian Miller, a special assistant to the president and senior associate counsel in the Office of White House Counsel, to serve as inspector general, the White House announced Friday night.

A five-member panel appointed by a bipartisan group of lawmakers will monitor the Treasury Department program and Federal Reserve's implementation of the stimulus package.

The third group, the Pandemic Response Accountability Committee, have the broadest mandate, aimed at rooting out waste and fraud throughout programs in the entire \$2.2 trillion relief package.

Led by Glenn Fine, the acting inspector general of the Department of Defense who was part of the panel's precursor following the financial crisis, the group will be able to conduct audits, subpoena individuals and information, and refer matters to the Justice Department for investigation.

"Every time there's kind of an emergency surge in spending like this it's even more important that there's additional layers of oversight to make sure that everything is on the up and up," Liz Hempowicz, the director of public policy at the Project on Government Oversight, told ABC News.

House and Senate Democrats, who were particularly worried about how the \$500 billion supervised by Mnuchin will be awarded, also pushed Republicans to add additional language into the legislation preventing President Trump, his family, top government officials and lawmakers from receiving loans or investments from the Treasury programs.

Already, there are signs that President Trump and Democrats could tangle over oversight of the massive stimulus programs as money begins to flow from the federal government to workers and businesses.

Trump's plans to nominate Miller, a former inspector general for the General Services Administration, will likely be met with criticism by Democrats. Inspectors General are typically independent and apolitical appointees; Miller played a role in rebuffing investigations into the withheld military aid to Ukraine that led to Trump's impeachment.

In a signing statement last week, Trump said he wouldn't allow the inspector general to share information with Congress without "presidential supervision," objecting to the provisions of the law that require the watchdog to notify Congress when they are "unreasonably" denied information about the stimulus program.

Democrats criticized the comments, and on Thursday House Speaker Nancy Pelosi announced the formation of a special select committee to provide additional oversight of the recovery funds and the administration's management of the coronavirus crisis, a move Republicans and the White House quickly condemned as redundant.

Mnuchin on Thursday said he didn't think the panel was necessary.

"Both parties wanted us to have oversight, wanted us to have transparency. We have full transparency," he said at the daily White House coronavirus briefing.

"It's witch hunt after witch hunt after witch hunt," Trump said of the select committee at the same briefing.

Senate Finance Committee Ranking Member Ron Wyden, D-Ore., on Saturday, issued the following statement on the nomination of Brian Miller to be special inspector general for pandemic recovery:

"The special inspector general needs to be independent above all. Someone who currently works in the White House counsel's office, serving a president who has tried to silence other inspector generals and announced his intention to silence this one, is not independent. It's no wonder President Trump announced this nomination late on a Friday evening."

"While Mr. Miller has requisite experience for this position, he must clear a high bar to show the Senate he would protect the interests of the American people over the political interests of this administration."

While it's not uncommon for both parties to snipe over the use—and potential abuse—of stimulus funds, the level of partisanship in Washington and the immediate need for the funds to be delivered to businesses and Americans make this situation much more difficult than the oversight efforts following the last recession, Devaney told ABC News.

"The atmosphere on the Hill, I thought it was acrimonious when I was there. It's a lot worse today and I suspect that whoever takes this job is going to be testifying once a week," he said of the eventual special inspector general.

Former Rep. Tom Davis, R-Virginia, who served as chair of the House Oversight Committee, defended the stimulus package, given the time constraints put on lawmakers and the Trump administration.

"It's unlike anything I've ever seen in the last 50 years," he told ABC News. "Emergency situations call for emergency measures. You can't sit and write layers and layers of oversight."

"There's always going to be money going to people who shouldn't have gotten it," Davis said. "The question is, what were the alternatives?"

Lawmakers and coronavirus stimulus watchdogs won't just have this historic \$2.2 trillion coronavirus package to police. Conversations have already started on Capitol Hill around a fourth phase of relief funding, including more money for small businesses.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Madam Speaker, this emergency surge in spending to confront the coronavirus is unprecedented, but the idea of what we are establishing is not. As I said, then-Senator Truman proposed it at the dawn of World War II. It worked then, and it will work now as well.

So if you believe that this administration has nothing to hide, then nobody should oppose this and let the American people see how their money is being spent.

Madam Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentlewoman from California (Ms. PELOSI), the distinguished Speaker of the House, who has been an incredible leader during this pandemic.

Ms. PELOSI. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding, and I thank him for his leadership as chair of the Rules Committee for bringing this important legislation to the floor today.

I also acknowledge the bipartisan cooperation of the Republicans in this House and pay tribute to Mr. COLE, who is highly respected on both sides of the aisle. I am sorry that he doesn't see a pattern in this, as the Republicans have had these kinds of committees time and again. I never heard him question them then, but I do hear him questioning them today.

But I am very pleased that the two of them will be working together with the distinguished majority leader, Mr. HOYER, and the distinguished Republican leader, Mr. MCCARTHY, as well as with the leadership of Chairwoman LOFGREN and Ranking Member DAVIS in the days ahead to consider the proposal that we have for how we can act as a Congress when everybody cannot be present.

I see in the paper that I pulled it. No, I didn't pull it. I said all along I wanted this to be bipartisan. As Speaker of the whole House, as we changed how we participate, I wanted it to be bipartisan. When we saw that that opportunity existed, in my conversation with the distinguished Republican leader, Mr. MCCARTHY, I then said we have to give this a chance.

I do think that there are many options that may be available. We want to give all the options to our Members, but consistent with the Constitution of the United States, the rules of the House of Representatives, the security of this body's information, as well as, again, the technology to make sure it works when we are depending on it.

So I yield to the wisdom that they will bring to all of this to give Members as many options as possible and to do so in a way that, again, is respectful of this being the coronavirus—and not just for how we do business generally, but in this specific time—as, also, a template for any other kind of emergency that might arise.

So I thank the chairman and I thank Ranking Member COLE for their comments about willingness to discuss that, and hopefully by the time we return, if that is May 4, we will have an opportunity to vote in a bipartisan way on how we can do that.

By the way, when we are talking about proxy voting, we have to be sure that it is consistent with the wishes of the Member of Congress who is yielding a proxy, consistent with his or her representation of their district. It is not just a license to the proxy holder to work his or her well or the leadership to have a handful of proxies. It is about the actual representation of that person whose district, his or her district, wishes to vote on a matter, with not that much latitude except as spelled out by the granter of the proxy.

As a new Member of Congress—some of you may have identified with this—I would go into a committee room and think I had the best argument in the world for my new, fresh idea as a Member of Congress, and the chairman would have a pocketful of proxies and there was no need to even have a dis-

cussion if he or she were not in agreement. So I have been a victim of that, and I don't want there to be any doubt in mind that it is a complete, accurate, guardrailed reflection of the wish of the person granting the proxy.

Having said that, I want to salute our distinguished chairman for his championship. He has gone on starvation, this, that, and the other on behalf of solving the hunger crisis, the food insecurity crisis in our country, and his enthusiasm on SNAP and what we are doing as we go forward, the recognition that people are hungry in our country and that we have to do something about it.

But hearing him as chair of the Rules Committee talk about that, recognizing his history, chair of the task force on hunger, so many times going on starvation diets and I would say, "Why are you doing that? I am not sure the other side even cares if you are on a starvation diet," but, nonetheless, I salute the gentleman again and again for his leadership on that.

So, Madam Speaker, here we are, and I thank Mr. MCGOVERN, our distinguished chairman, for bringing this resolution to the floor, again for his great leadership trying to move us forward in a bipartisan way to continue the operations of Congress during this extraordinary time. I again acknowledge Mr. COLE's interest in doing that as well.

Our Nation faces a deadly virus, a battered economy with tens of thousands of sick, some died, millions of work. This is really a very, very sad day.

We come to the floor with nearly 50,000 deaths, a huge number of people impacted, and the uncertainty of it all. We have to be very prayerful, and we have to be as bipartisan as we can possibly be, as united, working together.

The bill we will vote on later today, which I will speak about later today, is the fourth bipartisan bill that we will be passing in the Congress of the United States. Starting March 4, we had our first bill: testing, testing, testing; shortly thereafter, the 14th: masks, masks, masks, in terms of the personal protective equipment that people needed; and, again, our big CARES Act, which was bipartisan, as is this bill today. That is why I hope, as we continue to talk about how Congress conducts itself, we can do so in a bipartisan way.

Congress, again, has taken important steps in addressing this crisis, as I mentioned, by passing three bills, over \$2 trillion in desperately needed emergency relief. We started: emergency, emergency, mitigation for the impact on the health and the economy of our country. We hope to soon get to a recovery phase. But right now, we are still in mitigation.

Again, later today, as we pass this, the fourth bill and urgently needed interim bill, I am very pleased that it was transformed from a bill 2 weeks ago on the floor where the leader in the

Senate said: This is it, 250. We are not doing anything else.

That failed to get unanimous consent. At the same time, that other proposal was put forth. But I will talk about that later.

Again, why we are here for this particular initiative is we need to ensure that the historic advancement of dollars in these bills and in future packages are spent carefully and effectively to save lives and rebuild our economy.

□ 1030

As the distinguished chairman mentioned, at the dawn of World War II, then-Senator Harry Truman spearheaded the creation of a special committee to ensure that the dollars spent on the war effort had oversight and accountability.

Now, there was a democratic President in the White House, President Roosevelt, so this was not partisan in any way, nor should this be considered partisan. The purpose was to prevent waste, fraud, and abuse, profiteering, price-gouging, and the rest.

As Truman said later, when he was President, he was interviewed about this and he said: I knew that after World War I there had been 116 committees set up to investigate the money spent in World War I. 116 committees, after the fact. He said: First of all, there had been 116 investigating committees after the fact, and I felt one committee before the fact would prevent a lot of waste and maybe even save some lives. And that, he said, is the way it worked out.

The Truman committee turned into a tremendous investment for taxpayers. The total cost at the time was less than \$1 million, and it saved lives and nearly \$15 billion by preventing waste, fraud, and abuse. That is the equivalent of like \$750 billion today.

What made sense then makes even more sense now. That is why the House is forming a special bipartisan oversight panel, the House Select Committee on the Coronavirus Crisis.

And by the way, Mr. COLE, I did inform the distinguished leader of my intention to announce such a thing before I did.

The committee won't root out waste, fraud, and abuse. We keep saying it. It will be laser focused on ensuring that taxpayer money goes to workers' paychecks and benefits, and it will ensure that the Federal response is based on the best possible science and guided by health experts and that the money invested is not being exploited by profiteers and price-gougers.

We already have been hearing of families facing scams. There are people out there creating scams to steal the direct payment checks. The Secretary of HHS told me of a scam, one entity was selling masks they didn't even have. That is why this is so important, and that timing is important, so people know we will be watching how these tax dollars are spent.

I agree with Mr. COLE. There is plenty of time later for an after-action review of what went before. What we are

talking about is how this money is spent as we go forward, to make sure, as President Truman—Senator Truman at the time—did, to put a spotlight on the factories that were doing the work that they were supposed to be doing.

We have a tall order in terms of vaccines and therapies and the rest, and we want to be sure that if there is, God willing, a vaccine soon or a cure, even sooner than that, that we will be able to have the resources available in places where they need to be in real time, to be able to advance that.

Led by Majority Whip CLYBURN—and I am very proud of him, Mr. CLYBURN. I had the privilege of naming him then to oversee what was happening in response to Katrina, and he just was magnificent in his precision of thought and objectivity.

And again, this isn't about assigning blame. This is about taking responsibility and to be able to answer for what we have put forth, that it really did work.

And so, the committee will exercise oversight to ensure that the historic investment of taxpayers' dollars, which is enormous, are being used wisely and efficiently and that nobody is ripping us off. Because where there is big money—we know this—people will come up with a scam of some kind.

Mr. CLYBURN's leadership, again, is essential to the work. His review of the response to Hurricane Katrina, which I mentioned, and so many issues critical to working families, I am proud that he has accepted the opportunity to serve our country in this role now.

We urge our Republican colleagues and the administration to join us in respecting this oversight, that we can save lives, deliver relief, and protect our economy. And I say this with all the hope that I can muster, that we can do this in a very bipartisan way.

So anyone who is thinking of a scam or a delay in terms of how the product we are looking out for is produced and how available it is to everyone in our country, they will know that we, again, are watching from both sides of the aisle how taxpayers' dollars are being spent.

With that, I once again thank the distinguished chairman for bringing this important legislation to the floor. I hope that we may—on a different side of this vote, when the committee is formed—have much in common in how we put a very bright light on how the money is spent to make people healthier, to make our economy stronger, and to do so in a way that brings us all together.

Mr. COLE, Madam Speaker, I want to thank the Speaker for her kind and thoughtful remarks.

I also want to acknowledge—I am going to follow her example. I think we should keep our mask on when we are doing our normal business but take them off when we are speaking. And thank you for setting that example, Madam Speaker.

With that, I would like to yield 3 minutes to the gentlewoman from Arizona (Mrs. LESKO).

Mrs. LESKO, Madam Speaker, first, I want to say that I am praying for comfort for all of the families that have lost someone to COVID-19. I also want to pray for the families and those people that are in the hospitals now sick from COVID-19, that they have total and complete healing.

And I want to thank the healthcare workers, the grocery store workers, the truckers, everybody that every day is putting their health at risk and their family's health at risk to keep the economy going and to help Americans.

And it is really good to be back here today in Congress working and continuing to do our job during this crisis.

You know, two weeks ago, in the Senate—it was two weeks ago now—the Senate Republicans put up a bill to help continue funding for small businesses so they could pay their workers. Two weeks—two weeks—we have been waiting around while Democrats have been delaying it. And why? I don't understand why.

I have had businesses, just like all of my fellow Members of Congress, that have called me and said: I need the money; I need the money from this program, or my business is going to go under.

Two weeks ago this could have happened. But, no, in those two weeks, millions and millions more people filed for unemployment insurance. And why? We could have done this funding for small businesses so they could pay their workers two weeks ago. I am thankful that we are finally—finally—getting it done.

Now, the rule talks about Speaker PELOSI's oversight committee. Maybe that is the reason that Democrats delayed funding for small businesses and their workers for two weeks.

Why do we need another oversight committee? Speaker PELOSI said, oh, it is going to be all bipartisan. I am sorry; I don't believe it. And the reason I don't believe it is because since the beginning of 2019, I have served on three committees, including Judiciary Committee, and in every single committee, the entire goal has been non-stop to criticize President Trump and try to influence the 2020 election.

And now you are going to tell me that you are going to have another oversight committee, even though every standing committee has oversight on this, and we have inspector generals and the CARES Act has oversight. Now we need a ninth committee to do oversight, and it is supposedly going to be bipartisan? I am sorry. I call BS.

And the reason I know this is because of past history. While Democrats were focusing on impeachment, the President was working on coronavirus.

Mr. MCGOVERN, Madam Speaker, the reason why we are doing this is because the President is undercutting oversight.

Madam Speaker, I want to insert in the RECORD "Trump Ousts Pandemic Spending Watchdog Known for Independence."

[From The New York Times, April 7, 2020]

TRUMP OUSTS PANDEMIC SPENDING WATCHDOG KNOWN FOR INDEPENDENCE

(By Ben Protess, Steve Eder, and David Enrich)

WASHINGTON—President Trump moved on Tuesday to oust the leader of a new watchdog panel charged with overseeing how his administration spends trillions of taxpayer dollars in coronavirus pandemic relief, the latest step in an abruptly unfolding White House power play against semi-independent inspectors general across the government.

The official, Glenn A. Fine, has been the acting inspector general for the Defense Department since before Mr. Trump took office and was set to become the chairman of a new Pandemic Response Accountability Committee to police how the government carries out the \$2.2 trillion coronavirus relief bill. But Mr. Trump replaced Mr. Fine in his Pentagon job, disqualifying him from serving on the new oversight panel.

The move came at a time when the president has been reasserting authority over the executive branch and signaling impatience with independent voices within the government that he considers disloyal. In recent days, he fired an inspector general who reviewed the whistle-blower complaint that led to his impeachment, nominated a White House aide to another key inspector general post, declared that he would ignore certain oversight provisions in the new relief law and attacked another inspector general who criticized virus testing shortages.

Mr. Trump even cheered the firing of the captain of an aircraft carrier for sending a letter to fellow Navy officers pleading for help for his virus-stricken crew, castigating the officer for airing unfavorable information. Only after a loud backlash over the firing and the acting Navy secretary's speech calling the captain "stupid" did the president partly reverse himself and say he would look into it. The acting Navy secretary, who said he had ordered the firing because he assumed Mr. Trump might have done it himself otherwise, took the hint and resigned on Tuesday.

The questions of accountability and loyalty within the government have been persistent themes in the past three years as Mr. Trump has repeatedly waged war with what he calls "the deep state." He has rejected the conventional views that figures like the director of the F.B.I., the attorney general, intelligence directors, uniformed military commanders, ethics officers and now inspectors general should have a degree of autonomy.

At his daily coronavirus briefing, Mr. Trump offered no particular explanation for sidelining Mr. Fine but characterized it as part of a larger shuffle of inspectors general, some of them left over from past administrations, and cited unspecified "reports of bias."

Critics said on Tuesday that it sent a message to government watchdogs to tread softly. "I cannot see how any inspector general will feel in any way safe to do a good job," said Danielle Brian, the executive director of the Project on Government Oversight, a non-profit group. "They are all at the mercy at what the president feels."

But Mr. Trump's allies said he felt burned by the investigations of his campaign and associates and therefore distrusts figures he perceives to be partisan foes within government, particularly former F.B.I. officials who obtained warrants under the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act, or FISA, to investigate a campaign aide's ties to Russia.

"I've never heard the president express frustrations about independent oversight," said Cliff Sims, a former White House aide.

“But he doesn’t think he should be subjected to his political enemies in supposedly apolitical oversight roles. This has been deeply ingrained in his psyche since the moment he learned that FISA had been abused to spy on his campaign.”

In removing Mr. Fine from his role overseeing pandemic spending, Mr. Trump targeted a former Justice Department inspector general who earned a reputation for aggressive independence in scrutinizing the F.B.I.’s use of surveillance and other law enforcement powers in the years after the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks.

Replacing Mr. Fine as the Pentagon’s acting inspector general will be Sean O’Donnell, who serves as the inspector general at the Environmental Protection Agency and will do double duty for the time being. A group of inspectors general led by Michael E. Horowitz, the Justice Department inspector general, will determine who will replace Mr. Fine as chairman of the new pandemic oversight committee.

Created as part of the coronavirus relief bill, the committee consists of nine inspectors general from across the executive branch and will have an \$80 million budget to hunt for waste, fraud, abuse and illegality in the disbursement of the \$2.2 trillion approved by Congress to provide relief to Americans affected by the pandemic.

In announcing Mr. Fine’s short-lived role last week, Mr. Horowitz had praised him as “uniquely qualified” to run oversight of “large organizations,” citing his 11 years as the top Justice Department watchdog and his four years serving as the top Pentagon one.

“The inspector general community recognizes the need for transparency surrounding, and strong and effective independent oversight of, the federal government’s spending in response to this public health crisis,” Mr. Horowitz said at the time.

Democrats immediately condemned Mr. Fine’s sudden ouster as “corrupt,” in the words of Senator Chuck Schumer of New York, the minority leader. “President Trump is abusing the coronavirus pandemic to eliminate honest and independent public servants because they are willing to speak truth to power and because he is so clearly afraid of strong oversight,” Mr. Schumer said.

Representative Carolyn B. Maloney, Democrat of New York and the chairwoman of the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee, called Mr. Trump’s actions “a direct insult to the American taxpayers—of all political stripes—who want to make sure that their tax dollars are not squandered on wasteful boondoggles, incompetence or political favors.”

Still, it is not a given that Mr. O’Donnell will toe the line at the Pentagon. At the E.P.A., he has issued reports that are critical of Mr. Trump’s appointed administrator, Andrew R. Wheeler, who has sought to limit Mr. O’Donnell’s authority and oversight.

Only last week, after Mr. O’Donnell’s office released a report concluding that the E.P.A. failed to adequately warn communities living in proximity to certain carcinogenic chemicals of their health risks, Mr. Wheeler publicly rebuked the inspector general’s report for its “tone and substance” and demanded that he rescind it. Mr. O’Donnell refused.

Privately, some people within the government’s inspector general community suggested that the appointment of Mr. O’Donnell to the Pentagon post would divert his oversight from the E.P.A., which has continued to move forward with Mr. Trump’s agenda of reducing or eliminating public health and environmental regulations, even as the coronavirus rages.

Before being appointed as the E.P.A. watchdog, Mr. O’Donnell clerked for two federal judges and worked since 2005 as a career lawyer at the Justice Department, most recently in the criminal division working on cases involving fraud, corruption and national security.

At the Pentagon, Mr. O’Donnell will serve in an acting capacity pending Senate action on Jason Abend, a Customs and Border Protection official, who was nominated by Mr. Trump last week to take on the post permanently. Mr. Fine remains the No. 2 official at the Pentagon’s watchdog office.

Late last month, several hours after Mr. Trump signed the \$2 trillion coronavirus relief and stimulus bill with fanfare on television, he issued a signing statement challenging a key safeguard congressional Democrats insisted upon as a condition of approving \$500 billion in corporate bailout funds: that a special inspector general be empowered to demand information about how the Treasury Department spends the money and who would be required to tell Congress if executive branch officials unreasonably balk.

In his signing statement, Mr. Trump effectively declared that he could control what information goes to Congress about any disputes over access to information about how and why the money is spent. On Friday, he nominated Brian D. Miller, a White House aide, to serve as the special inspector general overseeing the corporate relief.

Then late that night, Mr. Trump fired the inspector general for the intelligence community, Michael K. Atkinson, whose insistence on telling Congress about the whistleblower complaint about Mr. Trump’s dealings with Ukraine prompted impeachment proceedings last fall.

At the same time, Mr. Trump also announced a slew of other inspector general nominees, including Mr. Abend as the new Defense Department inspector general, and three current and former Justice Department officials to be the new inspectors general at the C.I.A., the Education Department and the Tennessee Valley Authority.

Mr. Trump redoubled his attacks on the acting inspector general for the Department of Health and Human Services, Christi A. Grimm, in a statement on Twitter on Tuesday, a day after she released a report about hospitals facing severe shortages in tests as they battle the pandemic:

Why didn’t the I.G., who spent 8 years with the Obama Administration (Did she Report on the failed H1N1 Swine Flu debacle where 17,000 people died?), want to talk to the Admirals, Generals, V.P. & others in charge, before doing her report. Another Fake Dossier!—Trump Tweet

On Monday, Mr. Trump had suggested that Ms. Grimm’s report was politically biased against him. Ms. Grimm is a career official who began work at the inspector general office late in the Clinton administration and stayed there throughout the Bush and Obama administrations, taking over the role of acting inspector general in an interim capacity this year.

Mr. Trump’s interest in inspectors general has grown more intense lately. Until his most recent nominations, he had failed to pick anyone for about one-third of the 37 inspector general positions that are presidentially appointed, according to the Project on Government Oversight. Those roles were temporarily assumed by other officials whose lack of job security and status typically makes them more cautious than a permanent appointee, government experts say.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Madam Speaker, I also insert into the RECORD the President’s signing statement, which is crystal clear that he is trying to under-

cut oversight. So we need to do our job here.

STATEMENTS & RELEASES

STATEMENT BY THE PRESIDENT

(Issued on: March 27, 2020)

HEALTHCARE

Today, I have signed into law H.R. 748, the “Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act” or the “CARES” Act (the “Act”). The Act makes emergency supplemental appropriations and other changes to law to help the Nation respond to the coronavirus outbreak. I note, however, that the Act includes several provisions that raise constitutional concerns.

Section 1501(c)(3)(B) of Division B of the Act purports to require the Chairperson of the Council of the Inspectors General on Integrity and Efficiency to consult with members of the Congress regarding the selection of the Executive Director and Deputy Executive Director for the newly formed Pandemic Response Accountability Committee. The Committee is an executive branch entity charged with conducting and coordinating oversight of the Federal Government’s response to the coronavirus outbreak. I anticipate that the Chairperson will be able to consult with members of the Congress with respect to these hiring decisions and will welcome their input. But a requirement to consult with the Congress regarding executive decision-making, including with respect to the President’s Article II authority to oversee executive branch operations, violates the separation of powers by intruding upon the President’s power and duty to supervise the staffing of the executive branch under Article II, section 1 (vesting the President with the “executive Power”) and Article II, section 3 (instructing the President to “take Care” that the laws are faithfully executed). Accordingly, my Administration will treat this provision as hortatory but not mandatory.

Section 4018 of Division A of the Act establishes a new Special Inspector General for Pandemic Recovery (SIGPR) within the Department of the Treasury to manage audits and investigations of loans and investments made by the Secretary of the Treasury under the Act. Section 4018(e)(4)(B) of the Act authorizes the SIGPR to request information from other government agencies and requires the SIGPR to report to the Congress “without delay” any refusal of such a request that “in the judgment of the Special Inspector General” is unreasonable. I do not understand, and my Administration will not treat, this provision as permitting the SIGPR to issue reports to the Congress without the presidential supervision required by the Take Care Clause, Article II, section 3.

Certain other provisions (such as sections 20001, 21007, and 21010 of Division B of the Act) purport to condition the authority of officers to spend or reallocate funds upon consultation with, or the approval of, one or more congressional committees. These provisions are impermissible forms of congressional aggrandizement with respect to the execution of the laws. The Congress may affect the execution of the laws only by enacting a new statute in accordance with the requirements of bicameralism and presentment prescribed in Article I, section 7. My Administration will make appropriate efforts to notify the relevant committees before taking the specified actions and will accord the recommendations of such committees all appropriate and serious consideration, but it will not treat spending decisions as dependent on prior consultation with or the approval of congressional committees.

Finally, several provisions (such as sections 3511(d)(4) and 3862 (creating section

744N(d)(1) of the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act) of Division A of the Act) purport to require recommendations regarding legislation to the Congress. Because Article II, section 3 gives the President the authority to recommend only "such Measures as he shall judge necessary and expedient," my Administration will continue the practice of treating provisions like these as advisory and non-binding.

DONALD J. TRUMP.

THE WHITE HOUSE, March 27, 2020.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Madam Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from New York (Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY), the distinguished chair of the Committee on Oversight and Reform.

Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY of New York. Madam Speaker, I rise in strong support of this resolution which establishes a new select subcommittee on the coronavirus within the Committee on Oversight and Reform.

I look forward to working closely with the distinguished majority whip from South Carolina, Mr. CLYBURN, on this very important effort.

As the Speaker has explained, this new subcommittee is modeled directly after the Truman committee which saved billions of taxpayer dollars during World War II and helped mobilize our Nation, our industries, and our entire population for war.

Harry Truman explained at the time that it was critical during this effort to conduct oversight, to prevent the waste of taxpayer funds, rather than waiting until after they were spent.

Catching problems early and correcting them immediately saved not only money but lives. Today our Nation, our economy, and our people, face a similar mobilization effort as we engage in this war against the coronavirus. Microbes are killing more people than missiles.

And let me be clear. Right now, we are only in the first battle. This week the director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention warned that we could face a second, more deadly wave of coronavirus this fall. He warned that it could, "Actually be even more difficult than the one we just went through."

But our national stockpile is nearly depleted. We need protective equipment, we need critical medical supplies, we need tests, and we need new vaccines and treatments. We need all the supplies and materials necessary not only to safeguard our current medical workers but to restore our stockpiles and to build them up, so we are ready for the next battle and the one after that and whatever comes next.

This is something we all should be able to agree on. This should be a bipartisan effort, and I encourage all of my colleagues to come together, to protect the interests of the American taxpayers, and to promote the most efficient, effective, equitable, and transparent mobilization in history in response to this deadly crisis.

Mr. COLE. Madam Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Texas

(Mr. BURGESS), my good friend and distinguished member of both the Rules Committee and the Energy and Commerce Committee.

Mr. BURGESS. Madam Speaker, of course, we are all observing the Attending Physician's request that we stay at least 6 feet apart. And I appreciate the Democratic Speaker's acknowledgment that it is perhaps better to address the American people without a mask.

Mr. COLE, I also want to extend my sympathies to you. I know your district suffered greatly last night in the storm, and certainly our hearts are with our near neighbors in Oklahoma.

So our actions today represent a lost opportunity. I am grateful that we are going to finally pass legislation that will provide more funding for our small businesses and for our healthcare providers.

We should have been preparing for the needs of the American people since the first of this year. Instead, the House considered 15 pieces of non-crucial legislation and five resolutions that do not now, nor ever will, have the force of law.

Six months before this crisis started in January, President Trump signed into law the Pandemic and All-Hazards Preparedness Act, the product of our health subcommittee, last Congress and this Congress.

But after this fire broke out across the globe, did we do any real-time oversight as to whether or not the bill that we had passed, the bill that we had labored over, was, in fact, performing as indicated?

The Speaker talked about real-time oversight. We had an opportunity, but we didn't take it.

The Energy and Commerce Committee held hearings on flavored tobacco, we looked into horse racing, we looked into ticket scalping. And these issues have a place in our legislative agenda, but not in the middle of a pandemic when we should have been doing real-time oversight of a bill we had signed into law a mere 6 months before.

So as the leader of the Health Subcommittee on Energy and Commerce, I began calling for action in January. It was not until February 26, as an add-on to a budget hearing for Health and Human Services where there was a brief panel assembled, and only 10 Members were allowed to ask questions of this expert panel on the emerging novel coronavirus.

□ 1045

It was a full 2 weeks later before Congress considered its first comprehensive bill. During consideration in the Rules Committee, I requested, because one hadn't been done, a survey of ventilators. We didn't know how many we had available.

Now, thanks to vital steps taken by the Trump administration, to this date, no patient has been denied a ventilator that needed one. This is a testament to the administration's response.

It is a testament to the private sector in this country that responded so well. And it certainly puts to shame the Democratic majority's response during January and February.

We are in the middle of working to ensure patient survival and keeping our economy afloat. Now is not the time to authorize yet another partisan committee to conduct oversight in a manner that we know will only be good for the next new cycle.

Early in this crisis, we forewent an opportunity to prepare. Let us not make the same mistake again. Let us not continue to waste time. Let us do the work of the American people and get to business as usual. If we had been better authorizers, less oversight would be necessary.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Madam Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentlewoman from Georgia (Mrs. MCBATH).

Mrs. MCBATH. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding.

I rise to support the rule and underlying legislation to establish the select committee, and I also support this bill that we will be voting on later today.

Small businesses are the heart of a thriving community and vital to the American economy, and there isn't one in Georgia or across the country that has not been impacted by the pandemic.

This crisis demands we all continue our work together to ensure that our American families are kept safe, American small businesses are supported, and American workers receive the relief that they need. This funding is one more step on the long journey toward recovery.

I want to take this time to offer my condolences to the victims who have lost their lives to this awful disease. My prayers are with those mourning in Georgia, across America, and around the globe.

To our doctors, nurses, and first responders: Americans everywhere are looking up to your love, your sacrifice, and your uncommon courage.

I urge a "yes" vote on the rule and the underlying bill.

Mr. COLE. Madam Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. JORDAN), my good friend and a distinguished Member.

Mr. JORDAN. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Madam Speaker, eight different oversight processes are in place as we speak:

We have got the Oversight Committee itself, which has the broadest jurisdiction of any committee in Congress to do oversight.

We have the committees of jurisdiction, which each have a subcommittee that does oversight: Ways and Means, Energy and Commerce, Small Business, and, of course, Financial Services.

We have the CARES Act itself, which created the Oversight Commission in the bill itself.

We have the CARES Act, which also created the Pandemic Response Accountability Committee in the bill itself. That is the fourth one.

The fifth one, we have the IGs, the inspectors general from each of the respective agencies: Health and Human Services, Treasury.

Sixth, we have a special inspector general created in the CARES Act.

Seventh, we have \$20 million in funding appropriated in the CARES Act, which created a process for auditors and experts at GAO to do further oversight.

And finally, eighth, we have the FTC and DOJ, the agencies doing oversight and holding people accountable for the fraud that may be committed.

Eight different entities doing oversight, but the Democrats want a ninth. Why? Eight different committees doing the work making sure that the hard-earned tax dollars of the American people have the proper oversight. But we need a ninth for what reason? The ninth is political. Eight committees looking out for the taxpayer, the ninth looking out for Joe Biden; the ninth to go after President Trump.

This is just a continuation of the attack that the Democrats have had on the President for the past 4 years. It started before he was President when they opened the Trump Russia investigation, spied on two American citizens associated with the Trump campaign. It continued with the Mueller investigation. And then, of course, we had the ridiculous impeachment process based on a phone call between the President of Ukraine and President Trump.

And now this. Now this, a select committee in the summer of an election year to attack the President when we already have eight different entities doing the oversight we are all supposed to do to look out for the taxpayer interests.

The Democrats want a ninth because the ninth is political, and the ninth will be chaired by our colleague, the biggest supporter of the Democrats' nominee for President.

Madam Speaker, I urge a "no" vote.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Madam Speaker, I include in the RECORD the Guidance for Members and Attendees provided to us by the Office of the Attending Physician.

While face coverings are not mandatory, they are certainly recommended. The Office of Attending Physician has also advised that "a face cover will produce a minimal reduction in sound when using a microphone. The face covering is likely to be most useful in preventing viral spread while a person is speaking."

So people can do whatever they want to do, but I would say, while we are all trying to show how fearless we are, we should be mindful of the people surrounding us. So until I am advised otherwise, I am going to keep my mask on.

GUIDANCE FOR MEMBERS AND ATTENDEES HOUSE COMMITTEE ON RULES

In order to accommodate this meeting of the House Committee on Rules, the following guidelines have been developed in consulta-

tion with the Office of the Attending Physician (OAP), the Office of the Sergeant at Arms (SAA), and the Committee on House Administration. The OAP continues to recommend teleworking for all Congressional offices and that Members and staff maintain 6-foot social distance spacing as much as practicable when in the offices or the Capitol.

The OAP, in conjunction with guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, recommends that all Members and attendees should:

1. Avoid congregating in groups upon arrival to the room;
2. Use provided hand sanitizer;
3. Apply a face cover if a face covering is not already worn (a face cover will be available for those who need them);
4. Proceed directly to their seat, maintaining proper distancing; and
5. Remain seated until the conclusion of the meeting, to the extent possible.

Use of a face covering, while voluntary, is recommended for this specific proceeding due to occasions when the six-foot separation distance may be not be possible (Member private communications with staff, document distribution if needed, witness or staff movements, etc.).

The OAP has advised that a face cover will produce a minimal reduction in sound when using a microphone. The face covering is likely to be most useful in preventing viral spread while a person is speaking.

Members are encouraged to attend without staff or to limit themselves to a maximum of one staff person per Member if necessary. Staff who do accompany their bosses are requested to sit in the audience and only approach the dais if/when needed.

Members and attendees should not engage in personal greetings such as handshakes or embraces.

Members and attendees are asked to respect markings present on chairs to prevent their use, in accordance with social distancing guidelines.

Access restrictions to the Capitol Complex remain in place. Per guidance from the SAA, House Office Buildings remain open to Members, Congressional staff, and credentialed press.

When the meeting is adjourned, departure from the room should continue to respect social distancing by avoiding congregating in groups near the exit doors, hallways, or elevators. Members and attendees should use waterless hand cleansing upon exit after removing and disposing of their face covering.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Madam Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentlewoman from Illinois (Ms. SCHAKOWSKY).

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Madam Speaker, I rise in support of this resolution. It is sad to say, but this coronavirus pandemic has caused some of the greatest suffering in our time for individuals and for our country at large. And yet there are those few who would see this as an opportunity to benefit for themselves and their companies by price gouging or, one might say, pandemic profiteering.

We have good reason to be skeptical about many of these companies, including the pharmaceutical industry. For example, even during this crisis, we saw Gilead seek and receive from the FDA 7 years of orphan drug exclusivity for a possible treatment for the virus. Only after organizations stepped in and protested did Gilead go back to the FDA to withdraw their request.

Do we really need an oversight committee? Look what has happened already.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentlewoman has expired.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Madam Speaker, I yield an additional 15 seconds to the gentlewoman from Illinois (Ms. SCHAKOWSKY).

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. Headlines such as a \$55 million contract to a bankrupt company, who is a baker, in order to make N95 masks.

"Hedge Fund Managers Claiming Bailouts As Small Businesses."

"Over 43,000 U.S. Millionaires Will Get 'stimulus' Averaging \$1.6 Million Each."

Yes, we need an oversight committee, and we need it now.

Mr. COLE. Madam Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Kentucky (Mr. COMER), my good friend and a distinguished gentleman.

Mr. COMER. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Americans are suffering right now. Hospitals, families, and businesses are figuring out what their next step will be.

But, instead of helping American families, Speaker PELOSI wants to set up a new, costly, unnecessary select committee. This is an outrageous attempt to yet again use Congress to smear President Trump in an election year, just like the impeachment charade a few months ago.

I am all about oversight. We already have an Oversight Committee that is tasked with carrying out these very duties, and it is a very good committee, a quality committee made up of outstanding members from both sides of the aisle.

This is yet another political game from Speaker PELOSI using tax dollars for political gain. Creating a new select committee is completely redundant. We must stop these games and, instead, focus on the real problems facing the American people.

Creating an entirely new select committee is an irresponsible waste of time and resources that could be used elsewhere. Let's refocus on getting this country back on track and moving forward for the American people.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Madam Speaker, when it comes to \$2 trillion, I don't think there can be enough oversight. I think our constituents expect us to make sure that that money is being spent where it should be spent, where Congress intended it.

Madam Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON LEE).

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Madam Speaker, I rise to support the underlying bill, which was made much safer to save lives and to provide economic opportunity. But, as well, I rise to support the bipartisan, as it should be, oversight bill created by the vision of our Speaker, and I ask my colleagues to understand what oversight

is in COVID-19. It is to save lives and to make sure that we focus on the needs of those like the elderly in nursing homes who need to be tested or essential workers.

Or we find out the underlying incompetence, if you will, of large companies getting money from the mom-and-pop businesses. That needs oversight.

Or we promote more testing, like the \$25 billion that is in the underlying bill, and contact tracing. That is what oversight is.

Oversight is to maintain the idea that we have responsibility for the budget of this Nation, but we have the responsibility for the lives of this Nation.

I served as a staffer for the Select Committee on Assassinations when people were in dismay about the assassinations of Dr. King and John F. Kennedy. I will tell you that even that small committee in the House gave some comfort that Congress was caring about lives and about our budget.

I support enthusiastically the rule and, as well, the bipartisan Oversight Committee. Wise people will know that Congress must continue to do its work in a way that saves lives and strengthens our economy.

I ask support for this bill and the rule.

Mr. COLE. Madam Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. FERGUSON), my good friend and the distinguished chief deputy whip of the Republican Conference.

Mr. FERGUSON. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Madam Speaker, here we go again. Once again you are about to do what America doesn't want.

We just came from our districts where we have been solving problems with our constituents, helping them through a very, very difficult time, working to make sure that they had funding through the PPP loan program, working to make sure that our hospitals had the supplies that they needed.

I hoped there would be a sense of cooperation and shared stories of good things that were going on back in our district, despite the hard times. I had hoped that those commonalities from all congressional districts could be the shared stories that we built a new sense of cooperation on. But, no. You all seem to be like a bird dog pointing at a quail. You just can't help yourselves.

First of all, you had Russia, then impeachment, and now the coronavirus. You just can't do it. And you will say—I have heard it already—that this will not be partisan, that this is needed work. Needed more than eight committees that are already out there? Well, I can tell you this will be partisan, being led by an individual who is the Democratic nominee's number one supporter.

And I will tell you this: I am willing to bet just about everything I have got that this will be nothing more than a

partisan hack job; and if it is not, I will be the first one to apologize and happy to buy the Speaker a pint of her favorite ice cream.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Members are reminded to address their remarks to the Chair.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Madam Speaker, I want to remind my colleagues, one of our constitutional responsibilities is oversight. We just appropriated over \$2 trillion, and I applaud the Speaker of the House for making sure that this Congress does its job and does proper oversight.

I don't know about their constituents, but my constituents are puzzled why some of the money that was designed to go to small businesses ended up going to these megabusineses like Shake Shack or Ruth's Chris Steak House, so they want accountability.

Two trillion dollars, I mean, is that too much to ask? So I applaud the Speaker of the House for focusing us on making sure that we do our job, but we do oversight. This select committee is warranted, it is important, and I think Democrats and Republicans should overwhelmingly support it.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. COLE. Madam Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from Washington (Mrs. RODGERS), my good friend and a distinguished member of the Energy and Commerce Committee.

Mrs. RODGERS of Washington. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding. I appreciate his leadership.

I rise in opposition to this select committee. Energy and Commerce has a long tradition of bipartisan oversight in its broad jurisdiction and has the tools to prevent any fraud, waste, or abuse.

In the Consumer Protection and Commerce Subcommittee, we are working right now, Republicans and Democrats, to make sure the FTC is protecting Americans from bad actors who are using the coronavirus to commit fraud. Our Oversight and Investigation team is working around the clock to stop bad actors and to track the spread of the virus itself, as well as the stockpiles of PPE, ventilators, and test kits sent to the States.

Our Health Subcommittee is working with HHS, FDA, CDC, and NIH to ensure resources reach hospitals and frontline healthcare workers who need it most.

The same can be said for the Small Business and Financial Services Committees' efforts to ensure that PPP loans are implemented effectively.

There is also the Ways and Means Committee oversight of the economic impact payments or any of a number of other committees involved in Congress' unprecedented bipartisan response to this crisis.

□ 1100

This select committee duplicates the existing jurisdiction of the Energy and

Commerce Committee and others. It will erode the trust and effectiveness in our work that is underway during the greatest healthcare and economic crisis we have seen in our lifetime.

We shouldn't create a new committee that will divide us, make this response partisan, create more bureaucracy in Congress, and undermine the hard, bipartisan work of my colleagues and staff who are doing their jobs on their committees already.

Madam Speaker, I urge my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to let our committees continue to do their jobs and reject this resolution.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Madam Speaker, we are waiting for a couple of other speakers. I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. COLE. Madam Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. HICE), my good friend.

Mr. HICE of Georgia. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Madam Speaker, in a very short period of time, this body has moved an unprecedented amount of money at an unprecedented speed, and rather than taking a step back now and looking at the effectiveness of what we have implemented so far, here we are today rushing forward, not only with additional funds, but also to rig up an unnecessary and duplicative select subcommittee for the purpose of investigating the President of the United States. Make no mistake. That is the purpose of this subcommittee.

It is entirely political in nature, designed to influence the 2020 elections. From the moment it is gavelled into life, there is no question that the mission will be to prevent the reelection of President Donald Trump.

There are already eight real oversight and watchdog processes in this body. Eight.

The Oversight and Reform Committee, of which I am a member, has the broadest jurisdiction in this body, and we have the power and the experience needed to oversee any Federal coronavirus response.

So why does the Speaker want a ninth? Why are we here looking at a ninth oversight subcommittee, especially when the Democrats are already in charge of the eight that we already have? Why would the appointment of this new select subcommittee be a member of her own leadership team who has already publicly stated that this virus creates for the Democrats a tremendous opportunity to restructure things to fit their vision?

That makes it clear what the purpose of this is all about: it is because this is an election year, it is because they hate the President of the United States, and because of that, I strongly encourage my colleagues to reject this resolution, which is intended to create an un-needed and duplicative committee.

Madam Chair, I again thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

We are still waiting for a couple of additional speakers but let me just say one thing here again. It is hard to believe what we are hearing here.

My friends on one hand are telling the American people that we all care deeply about oversight, we all want to make sure that the money is being spent properly, but yet they are opposed to this.

It is \$2 trillion that we have responded with to try to deal with the crisis that we are faced with. That is a lot of money. To object to a select committee to basically make sure that it is being spent properly as this thing is unfolding, my colleagues have such a difficult time dealing with that.

Madam Speaker, again, I applaud the Speaker of the House for her leadership during this pandemic, not only on this, but on a whole range of other issues. She has taken what my Republican friends in the Senate and what the White House has proposed and made it better and made it more responsive to average working people.

That is what this is about: making sure the money gets to the people who need it, not to the people who don't need it, not to the big corporations, not to the well-off or the well connected.

So I don't understand all of the hand-wringing over this select committee. This is an important select committee, just like the one that then-Senator Truman did to make sure that the moneys that were appropriated went to help win the war.

We want to win this war too.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. COLE. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume for a quick response to my friend.

I recall that we requested oversight committees for TARP. That was not allowed by then-Speaker PELOSI. We requested oversight committees for the stimulus package in 2009. That, too, was not agreed to by Speaker PELOSI. So we find this new need for oversight refreshing, but somewhat questionable.

Madam Speaker, I also remind my friend, there are eight existing committees, all of which, by the way, the Democrats control, all of which they chair.

We have confidence in the eight existing committees to do their job. We don't see the need for a ninth.

Madam Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from California (Mr. MCCLINTOCK), my great friend.

Mr. MCCLINTOCK. Madam Speaker, when we passed the Paycheck Protection Program, I warned that serious flaws would deliver a windfall to businesses that did not need it at the expense of those that do. That is exactly what happened, exhausting the fund within days.

Now it is imperative to replenish this program to assure that small businesses that desperately need these funds receive them.

Now, this could have been done 2 weeks ago but for the Democrats' de-

mands that wasted time and added costs.

I supported the CARES Act only because I believed a better bill could not be produced given the current majority.

For the same reason, I support the bill to be taken up later today, but with this grave warning: unprecedented and unconstitutional government edicts have deliberately destroyed the livelihoods of millions of Americans and have set in motion both an economic depression and government insolvencies that threaten the very survival of our Nation. They must end now.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Madam Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentlewoman from Illinois (Mrs. BUSTOS).

Mrs. BUSTOS. Madam Speaker, 4 weeks ago we passed the largest economic rescue in American history. Today we replenish some of its most important programs.

Behind each program are real people in desperate need of our help: healthcare workers and hospitals in dire need of support, supplies, and testing;

Small business owners agonizing amid uncertainty and boxed out of loans by big banks serving well-connected clients; and

Our family farmers who continue to feed the world under unprecedented hardship, unable to qualify for the disaster loans afforded to others.

Today's legislation rights these wrongs. It also harnesses the help of our community banks and our credit unions, but it does not go far enough.

Our cities, our States need assistance now. They soon may have to lay off police and first responders, the very people we need on the front lines in this crisis.

Our corn growers and ethanol producers deserve the same help afforded Big Oil. We must take care of them in this next relief package.

Mr. COLE. Madam Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. GOHMERT), my very good friend.

Mr. GOHMERT. Madam Speaker, I thank my friend, the gentleman from Oklahoma (Mr. COLE), for yielding, and I am greatly sorry for the losses yesterday, as well as down in BRIAN BABIN's district.

I heard the Speaker say we need to move in a bipartisan manner, and I believe she meant that. But then I can't forget that she said the same thing about impeachment a year ago: we can't move forward with impeachment unless it is bipartisan.

So what are we doing first? We are going to have a vote to create another oversight committee. So apparently the answer the Democrats have is if you have got eight committees that aren't doing their job, we have the answer: another committee.

For heaven's sake, we have got people losing their businesses, they are isolated.

Humans are social animals; we like to be around other people.

There are suicides, like in Knox County, Tennessee: they have lost more people to suicide than the coronavirus.

We have got to be careful about spreading fear. We can be concerned, but we shouldn't be afraid.

But another committee? For heaven's sake, that is not what we need.

It is interesting that the answer the Democrats have to potential waste, fraud, and abuse is to create another wasteful committee.

Just make the committees we have do their job of oversight, and then we will be all right. There needs to be oversight.

We apparently need a committee to give oversight to the oversight committees, because they are not doing their job, and that is why we need a new one.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Madam Speaker, I am absolutely stunned over the outrage to sunshine and oversight. Give me a break.

Madam Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from California (Mr. THOMPSON).

Mr. THOMPSON of California. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Madam Speaker, this isn't the bill I would have written. I am incredibly frustrated that Senate Republicans stalled negotiations without offering any fixes to help get money into the hands of the small businesses that are hardest hit.

Funding needs to get to legitimate small businesses quickly and efficiently, not to big corporations.

Senate Republicans also rejected funding to help support State and local governments that are on the tip of the spear in fighting this pandemic.

With your help, Madam Speaker, we did get some improvements in this bill, such as additional funding for hospitals and testing to help respond to this crisis so we can eventually reopen our country, and improvements to the PPP and the EIDL program, which were crucial.

Times are uncertain and people in my district are hurting. They need relief now.

I will support this bill, but I look forward to future packages to get the needed relief to our communities that need it the most.

Mr. COLE. Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Madam Speaker, I yield 1½ minutes to the gentlewoman from California (Ms. BASS).

Ms. BASS. Madam Speaker, a few days after the last bill became law, stories began to surface of an extreme disproportionate death rate among African Americans in several cities, with a 70 percent death rate, while African Americans are only 20 to 30 percent of the population.

Some cite underlying health conditions as the reason for the extreme disproportionate death rate, as though this is a reason that nothing can be

done, as though we have to just accept this for now.

This bill begins the process of addressing the disproportionate death rate, but oversight and advocacy from Congress and the public will still be needed.

The bill calls for a report to be issued in 21 days, where we should have a better picture of what is happening and, hopefully, provide a roadmap.

The bill calls for reporting data on demographics including race, on the number and rates of cases, hospitalization, and deaths from COVID.

When the report is made public, it will be clear that communities with large African American populations will require focused and concentrated testing with rapid results, that contact tracing and early and aggressive treatment will be required, and that hospitals should reevaluate how they make decisions regarding who has access to ventilators.

Using formulas that decide based on who they believe has a better chance of survival will undoubtedly hurt African Americans and contribute to the disproportionate death rate.

When we gather again to pass another bill, we must include targeted resources that support aggressive interventions.

It is just not acceptable for the richest country in the history of the world to allow different populations to suffer like they don't even live in the United States but live in countries without the resources to protect its population.

Mr. COLE. Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Madam Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentlewoman from the Virgin Islands (Ms. PLASKETT).

Ms. PLASKETT. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding the time.

Madam Speaker, I join my colleagues in support of this rule. It will continue urgent support for our small businesses, hospitals, and healthcare providers on the front line.

Madam Speaker, I want to commend the House leadership for ensuring that this agreement, which includes the agreement that we will pass later on today, includes \$120 million more in small business relief that the Senate initially wanted to provide.

I am pleased to see that we will include SBA disaster loan programs and other provisions for extra support for small businesses.

The dynamic work of the members of the House leadership have been hard fought for those forgotten, and I have a great concern that without the select committee, the implementation of the incredible work will not be done.

Reporting requirements holding this administration to task are important for those that have been forgotten, for people like those in the Virgin Islands and for those who have been disproportionately affected by this law.

Madam Speaker, I urge adoption of the rule.

□ 1115

Mr. COLE. Madam Speaker, I continue to reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Madam Speaker, I am happy to yield 1 minute to the gentlewoman from Massachusetts (Ms. CLARK), my good friend.

Ms. CLARK of Massachusetts. Madam Speaker, with the Second World War raging, Eleanor Roosevelt noted that: "When all is said and done, and the statesmen discuss the future of the world, the fact remains that people fight these wars."

The war on the pandemic is being waged in our crowded hospitals, our empty classrooms, and our closed businesses. Today's bill will bring Americans desperately needed relief, and I am deeply grateful for the victories that Democrats secured.

But the pandemic has exposed the deep income, racial, and health disparities as it cuts a lethal path through our communities. And it has exposed the callous and deadly indifference of the protectors of the wealthy and the connected all too willing to sacrifice our neighbors for the bottom line.

But in this House, the people's House, we know that our strength and our recovery as a nation rests in the health and prosperity of all Americans, and we will fight with everything we have for the people.

Mr. COLE. Madam Speaker, I continue to reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Madam Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentlewoman from Ohio (Ms. FUDGE).

Ms. FUDGE. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Madam Speaker, I wonder when this administration will treat all of its citizens with the same concern. Yes, our small businesses need additional support and our hospitals, too, but big banks should not have access to any more money because they have really already taken care of all of their friends.

I am happy our farmers are being helped, but what about hungry people? The USDA has decided to buy meat and produce, put it in a box, and send it to the unemployed through food banks. Why not just increase SNAP benefits as we have requested?

When is the right time to fight for teachers and sanitation workers, police, fire, and EMS?

When do we ensure prisoners are safe and are afforded appropriate care?

When do we provide nursing homes with adequate resources?

When do we guarantee every child has access to distance learning?

When is it the right time to fight for those who can't afford to pay 2 or 3 months' rent at once?

Most Americans don't have the luxury of waiting for us to pick and choose who gets help. We keep saying it will be in the next bill. Our people need it now.

Mr. COLE. Madam Speaker, I continue to reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Madam Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentlewoman from California (Ms. LEE).

Ms. LEE of California. Madam Speaker, first of all, let me just say I rise in support of this package. I want to thank the Speaker; our leadership committee chair; members of the Congressional Black Caucus, including Chairwoman BASS; Chairwoman KELLY, chair of the Health Braintrust; and all of the Members and staff who are working together on the health provisions of this bill.

Also, let me just take this moment to thank our essential workers for their sacrifices during this horrific pandemic.

Evidence has piled up that Black and Brown people are bearing some of the worst burdens of COVID. This bill requires, as Chairwoman BASS said, the CDC to get us the data on which communities are bearing the worst brunt and then to make sure that testing is focused on these communities.

But let me just say, we have much more work to do. Too many people were trapped in poverty before this crisis, and now more people have been pushed into the ranks of the poor because of COVID. People are lining up in front of food banks.

We need to increase SNAP funding, support the State and local government workers who are on the front lines of this crisis, protect our elections, and help people who are falling through the cracks and living on the edge. We have a moral and we have a patriotic duty to do this.

Mr. COLE. Madam Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

Madam Speaker, I want to begin by thanking my friend and the Rules Committee as a committee and the staff. We met last night. Obviously, we are all meeting now at an extraordinary time, a very difficult time.

I was very proud of our committee last night, particularly our chairman and our staff for reopening and functioning and producing a contentious item, but a worthy item, to discuss here today. So thank you to Mr. Chairman for his leadership, and I thank our staff and thank our fellow members of the committee.

And I want to thank the body, including the Speaker. We are here today functioning. Obviously, we are taking precautions. Obviously, we are doing things differently. We are a little bit out of our comfort zone as a body. This isn't the way we normally work. But the point is we are here in Washington, D.C., and we are working.

While we disagree very strongly over this particular piece of legislation, later today we will vote in overwhelming bipartisan numbers for another relief package, Madam Speaker, for the American people.

That is the fourth time in a row that we have done it, and we have done it without partisanship. That doesn't mean there wasn't hard bargaining. It doesn't mean that everybody got everything they wanted in the package.

Quite the opposite. Everybody gave up some things that they wanted. But at the end of the day, we did come together.

Now, personally, I wish we would have put money earlier in the Paycheck Protection Program, but I certainly don't begrudge the additional money for hospitals and testing. So, hopefully, we can avoid that and keep programs that are working going, fine-tune them where we must.

There are certainly some changes that could be made. But I think, on balance, we ought to look back and say, at a time of great crisis, Congress has continued to function and has come together in a bipartisan manner and has done important work on behalf of the American people.

We have a lot more important work to do. There are many, many challenges that are going to confront us. Secretary Mnuchin sometimes calls the response to coronavirus a baseball game with nine innings. And I suspect that we are completing the fourth inning today, Madam Speaker, with the ultimate passage of the additional resources for the CARES Act.

Again, while we disagree on this one—I want to talk about that in a second—we agree on the most important act of the day, which is getting relief out the door to the American people and sustaining our economy under a time of great stress, helping our healthcare workers who are on the front line, trying to make sure we have the robust testing that is necessary so our Governors can make good decisions when they grapple with the tough issue of how they are to reopen their respective States.

We think, Madam Speaker, the particular item we are considering this morning is simply unnecessary. We have eight oversight committees, all of which, I remind my friends, they control. They are the majority in this body. That is appropriate. They are their oversight committees.

Creating another one we just think is, at a minimum, superfluous; and, frankly, history has taught us it is more apt to be a weapon, in our view, used to attack the President of the United States relentlessly during an election year. I would love to be wrong about that. As my friend Mr. FERGUSON said he would be the first to apologize, I will be happy to apologize, too, if I am wrong.

But, even if that were not the case, I would question the need for an additional committee. I simply don't see any need for that. We have committees that do this. We have committees that have a lot of experience in doing this. And, frankly, we have committees that have done it in a pretty bipartisan way in the past. So I would hope we would rely on those committees.

With that, Madam Speaker, I again thank my friend for the debate and thank his side for the spirited participation, but I urge rejection of this particular measure, and I urge my colleagues to vote "no" on the rule.

Madam Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Madam Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

Madam Speaker, I want to thank my friend, Mr. COLE—and he is my friend. I appreciate all of his counsel and advice in the Rules Committee, and I appreciate his respect for this institution.

I want to thank the distinguished Speaker of this House for her leadership. This is a moment in history that demands strong leadership, and she has risen to the occasion, and I applaud her and I appreciate that.

I also want to thank all of those who work on the Hill here: the Capitol Police, the Sergeant at Arms, the attending physician, the chief administrative officer, and all of the people who maintain this incredible building. I want to thank them. They protect us and they do an unbelievable job.

Madam Speaker, I want to remind people that more than 855,000 cases of coronavirus have been confirmed. Nearly 48,000 lives have been lost as of today, more than 22 million initial unemployment claims filed in the past month. Families will be changed forever. We are in a crisis, and we should be proud that we have come together repeatedly in a bipartisan way to move legislation forward to respond to that crisis.

Now, over \$2 trillion we have approved to try to help our constituents, protect them, and help protect small businesses, but that is just part of our job. Our job is not just to appropriate the money and just hope it goes to wherever it is supposed to go. We need to do the oversight. We need to make sure that every single penny that we have appropriated goes to where it needs to go.

I don't want to be here a year from now looking back and saying: Oh, look at all of the waste and all of the abuse. Look at all of the well-connected people who benefited, but look at all the people who needed the funds who didn't.

We need to get this right. That is what this select committee is about. This should not be controversial.

Again, I am stunned by the resistance to sunshine and transparency. That is what this is about, and I hope and pray that everything goes perfectly. But we cannot take that chance. We have to make sure we live up to our constitutional responsibility.

So I urge my colleagues to vote for this rule so that we can establish this select committee.

Madam Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time, and I move the previous question on the resolution.

The previous question was ordered. The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the resolution.

The question was taken; and the Speaker pro tempore announced that the ayes appeared to have it.

Mr. COLE. Madam Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, further proceedings on this question will be postponed.

□ 1130

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, the Chair will postpone further proceedings today on motions to suspend the rules on which a recorded vote or the yeas and nays are ordered, or votes objected to under clause 6 of rule XX.

The House will resume proceedings on postponed questions at a later time.

PERMISSION TO EXTEND DEBATE TIME ON H.R. 266

Mr. NEAL. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that debate under clause 1(c) of rule XV on a motion to suspend the rules relating to the Senate amendment to H.R. 266 be extended to 2 hours.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Massachusetts?

There was no objection.

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR, ENVIRONMENT, AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2019

Mr. NEAL. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and concur in the Senate amendment to the bill (H.R. 266) making appropriations for the Department of the Interior, environment, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2019, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the Senate amendment is as follows:

Senate amendment:

Strike all after the enacting clause and insert the following:

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Paycheck Protection Program and Health Care Enhancement Act".

SEC. 2. TABLE OF CONTENTS.

The table of contents for this Act is as follows:

Sec. 1. Short title.

Sec. 2. Table of contents.

Sec. 3. References.

DIVISION A—SMALL BUSINESS PROGRAMS

Sec. 101. Amendments to the Paycheck Protection Program, economic injury disaster loans, and emergency grants.

Sec. 102. Emergency designation.

DIVISION B—ADDITIONAL EMERGENCY APPROPRIATIONS FOR CORONAVIRUS RESPONSE

SEC. 3. REFERENCES.

Except as expressly provided otherwise, any reference to "this Act" contained in any division of this Act shall be treated as referring only to the provisions of that division.