



United States
of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 116th CONGRESS, SECOND SESSION

Vol. 166

WASHINGTON, THURSDAY, MAY 14, 2020

No. 91

Senate

The Senate met at 10:30 a.m. and was called to order by the President pro tempore (Mr. GRASSLEY).

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

Almighty God, guide our lawmakers today to think of themselves as Your faithful servants eager to do Your bidding. May they strive less for success and more for faithfulness, realizing that You expect dependability from them.

Lord, give them the wisdom to believe that though they may plant and water the seeds of our Nation's destiny, only You can bring the harvest. As they look to You, the Lord of the harvest, soothe their doubts and calm their fears. And Lord, we thank You for the many courageous staffers who enable the Senate to function.

We pray in Your gracious Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The President 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.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. (Mrs. HYDE-SMITH). The Senator from Iowa.

Mr. GRASSLEY. Madam President, I ask permission to address the Senate in morning business for 1 minute.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

REGULATORY ENFORCEMENT REFORM

Mr. GRASSLEY. Madam President, an important part of my job—and I hope for every Senator—is hearing the views, in my case, of Iowans but in the case of my colleagues, the citizens of

their States. But it is not every day that we hear about the executive branch of government and its bureaucracy making an effort to listen to the American people. Fortunately, that is changing under this administration.

I have advised the people of Iowa, and I am advising them again—and, hopefully, my colleagues will have their constituents take advantage of it—that this administration in January, through the White House, put out a call to Americans who deal with Federal regulations to share their ideas on how to ensure that those who face regulatory enforcement have due process and get a fair shake. Those ideas will now be used to make regulatory enforcement fairer. Take advantage of this opportunity.

Americans who face a burden of complying with regulations should have a voice in making the process better, and I applaud this administration for listening to the American people.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader is recognized.

CORONAVIRUS

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, this pandemic is weighing heavily on the American people. Roughly, 1.4 million Americans have been infected, more than 80,000 have died, and unemployment has not been this high since World War II.

Just a few months ago, millions of hard-working men and women were thriving and optimistic. They were making big plans across kitchen tables. Now all of that is in chaos.

The Chairman of the Federal Reserve reports that nearly 4 in 10 American households that earn less than \$40,000 a year had somebody get laid off in the month of March alone. This emergency is very serious, so the Senate's response has been serious.

In March, Senate Republicans designed and the full Senate passed the CARES Act. It pushed trillions of dollars to working families, job creators, and medical professionals. We sent direct cash to almost 130 million Americans. We delivered hundreds of billions of dollars in paycheck protection loans to small businesses, saving tens of millions of American jobs. We helped State and local governments defray coronavirus costs. We funded healthcare providers and testing. Even now, its programs are still taking effect, still coming online, still helping. The Senate took a blank sheet of paper and turned it into the largest rescue package in history.

We have taken this crisis seriously, but the House Democrats have taken a totally different approach. While we finalized the CARES Act, the House parachuted in with miscellaneous liberal demands that were completely unrelated to COVID-19—solar energy tax credits, airline emissions. One senior House Democrat called the virus a “tremendous opportunity to restructure things to fit our vision.” One Senate Democratic colleague asked: “How many times are we going to get a shot at a \$1 trillion-plus program?” They told us exactly what they were up to, so we ignored the leftwing wish list and stayed serious, and the CARES Act is still helping Americans bridge these temporary shutdowns.

So let's fast-forward to today. The Democratic House is still not back in Washington. Its constitutional duty

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



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stations are still unmanned, but the Democrats cannot stop salivating over the possibilities for partisan gain.

Former Vice President Biden says he sees this tragedy as an “incredible opportunity . . . to fundamentally transform the country.” Biden said it is an “incredible opportunity . . . to fundamentally transform the country.”

Speaker PELOSI said: “I see everything as an opportunity.”

A cochair of the Congressional Progressive Caucus said: “For me, the leverage is that there is enormous suffering.” “The leverage is that there is enormous suffering.” There are 80,000 Americans who have died and more than 20 million who have lost their jobs. I call that a crisis; they call it leverage.

This week, the Speaker published an 1,800-page seasonal catalog of leftwing oddities and called it a coronavirus relief bill. So here we go again. It includes a massive Tax Code giveaway to high earners in blue States. Working families are struggling to put food on the table, but the House Democrats are prioritizing millionaires on the coasts. It would print another round of checks—listen to this—specifically for illegal immigrants. Can you believe it? We forgot to have the Treasury Department send money to people who are here illegally. My goodness. What an oversight. Thank goodness the Democrats are on the case.

The Speaker's bill also tries to use the virus as cover to implement sweeping changes to election laws that the Democrats have literally wanted for years, like forcing every single State to embrace California's sketchy ballot harvesting whether they want to or not.

Then there is the cherry on top. It is the bold new policy from the Washington Democrats that will kick the coronavirus to the curb and save American families from this crisis. Here it is—new annual studies on diversity and inclusion within the cannabis industry. There is not one study but two of them. Let me say that again. The Democrats' supposed coronavirus bill includes taxpayer-funded studies to measure diversity and inclusion among the people who profit off of marijuana.

The word “cannabis” appears in this bill 68 times—more times than the word “job” and 4 times as much as the word “hire.” Maybe that is just as well because when their proposal does try to treat the economic crisis, it proposes stifling, anti-work policies that would only make it harder for Americans to get their jobs back. For example, they literally propose to raise taxes on small business and drain more cash from Main Street during a Main Street meltdown. So maybe it is best if the House Democrats focus on cannabis studies and leave economics to the rest of us.

This is a totally unserious effort. Even the mainstream media says: “Neither this bill nor anything resembling it will ever become law. It's a Democratic wish list.”

Forget about making law; this thing even fails as a messaging bill. That is what is so remarkable. The House Democrats had a blank slate to write anything they wanted to define the modern Democratic Party—any vision for the society that they wanted—and here is what they chose: tax hikes on small businesses, giveaways to blue State millionaires, government checks for illegal immigrants, and sending diversity detectives to inspect the pot industry. The House gave itself no assignments for 2 months except to develop this proposal. Yet it still reads like the Speaker of the House pasted together some random ideas from her most liberal Members and slapped the word “coronavirus” on top of it—an unserious product from an unserious House majority that has spent months dealing itself out of the crisis.

The House Democrats have been missing in action for months. While the Senate was passing the CARES Act, the Democratic House was on the sidelines substantively and literally. They had already gone home. Nearly 2 months later, the Senators are back at our duty stations with new precautions. We have been back for 2 weeks. We are holding major hearings on the pandemic. We are legislating and confirming nominees. Yet the House is still at home. And when it does contribute, it is not serious.

The House Democrats have checked out of this crisis and left governing up to the Senate. They even intend to shatter congressional history and jam through remote voting so they can continue to be counterproductive from the comfort of their homes. Let me say that again. They even intend to shatter congressional history and jam through remote voting so they can continue to be counterproductive from the comfort of their own homes.

Look, here in the real world, the Senate Republicans are working seriously to help the country reopen. The crushing unemployment figures, even with the CARES Act, show that no amount of Federal spending could substitute for the entirety of the U.S. economy. We need to be smart, and we need to be safe, but we have to find a more sustainable middle ground.

This week, Chairman ALEXANDER and the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions heard from Dr. Fauci, Dr. Redfield, and other top experts on exactly this subject. There are at least two big things our Nation will need to start recovering: stepped-up testing nationwide and legal liability protections so that K-12 schools, universities, charities, and employers are not invaded by trial lawyers the instant they unlock their doors.

On testing, fortunately, the Senate has already done a great deal. The executive branch and especially the States are in the driver's seat, but we have already sent billions of dollars to help scale up testing nationwide. On legal liability reform, the work lies ahead of us. As my Republican col-

leagues and I have made clear, strong legal protections will be a hard redline in any future legislation.

That is what is happening here in the Senate—serious leadership on a serious crisis like we have been doing for months. This half of the Capitol is doing our job.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is closed.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

USA FREEDOM REAUTHORIZATION ACT OF 2020—Continued

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of H.R. 6172, which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 6172) to amend the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act of 1978 to prohibit the production of certain business records, and for other purposes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority whip.

CORONAVIRUS

Mr. THUNE. Madam President, as the majority leader just pointed out, the Senate has been and will be focused on responding to the coronavirus crisis in this country in a way that hopefully will enable the American people to recover and that will restore our economy—that will get things back to normal. As he pointed out, that requires dealing with the health emergency as well as with the economic emergency crisis that has been created by this.

With respect to the health emergency, the leader pointed out that there are literally tens of billions of dollars being spent now on vaccine research, on anti-viral therapeutics, and on testing. We believe that, in order for us to get our economy fully back, we have to deal with the health emergency in front of us, so dollars have been made available—hundreds of billions of dollars—to healthcare providers, hospitals, doctors, nursing homes, and providers who are on the frontlines of this crisis and trying to deal with the challenges it presents every single day. That is what we have focused on. In addition, we have focused on the economic crisis and the impact it has had on our small businesses and on our workers.

Everything that has been included in the bills that have already been passed here in the U.S. Senate—now we have No. 4—and have been signed into law by the President have been singularly