

Menendez
Moran
Murkowski
Murray
Paul
Perdue
Peters
Portman
Reed
Risch
Roberts
Romney

Rosen
Rounds
Rubio
Sasse
Schatz
Schumer
Scott (FL)
Scott (SC)
Shaheen
Shelby
Sinema
Smith

Stabenow
Sullivan
Tester
Thune
Tillis
Udall
Van Hollen
Warner
Whitehouse
Wicker
Young

NAYS—4

Harris
Murphy

Warren
Wyden

NOT VOTING—7

Burr
Cramer
Enzi

Markey
Merkley
Sanders

Toomey

The motion is agreed to.

NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2021

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the bill by title.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 4049) to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2021 for military activities of the Department of Defense, for military construction, and for defense activities of the Department of Energy, to prescribe military personnel strengths for such fiscal year, and for other purposes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oklahoma.

AMENDMENT NO. 2301

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, I call up the substitute amendment No. 2301.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the amendment.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Oklahoma [Mr. INHOFE] proposes an amendment numbered 2301.

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the reading of the amendment be waived.

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

(The amendment is printed in today's RECORD under "Text of Amendments.")

AMENDMENT NO. 2080 TO AMENDMENT NO. 2301

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I call up amendment No. 2080.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Kentucky [Mr. MCCONNELL], for Mr. PORTMAN, proposes an amendment numbered 2080 to amendment No. 2301.

Mr. MCCONNELL. I ask consent that the reading of the amendment be waived.

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

The amendment (No. 2080) is as follows:

(Purpose: To require an element in annual reports on cyber science and technology activities on work with academic consortia on high priority cybersecurity research activities in Department of Defense capabilities)

At the end of subtitle C of title II, add the following:

SEC. 240. ELEMENT IN ANNUAL REPORTS ON CYBER SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY ACTIVITIES ON WORK WITH ACADEMIC CONSORTIA ON HIGH PRIORITY CYBERSECURITY RESEARCH ACTIVITIES IN DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE CAPABILITIES.

Section 257(b)(2) of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2020 (Public Law 116-92; 133 Stat. 1291) is amended by adding at end the following new subparagraph:

“(J) Efforts to work with academic consortia on high priority cybersecurity research activities.”.

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, for the information of all Senators, Senator REED and I have reached an agreement on the first managers' package, and we will be hotlining that list on both sides this evening with the hopes of clearing it and adopting those amendments tomorrow.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate be in a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

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

MEASURE READ THE FIRST TIME—H.R. 7259

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I understand there is a bill at the desk, and I ask for its first reading.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will read the title of the bill for the first time.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 7259) to allow acceleration certificates awarded under the Patents for Humanity Program to be transferable.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I now ask for a second reading, and in order to place the bill on the calendar under the provisions of rule XIV, I object to my own request.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection having been heard, the bill will receive a second reading on the next legislative day.

APPOINTMENT

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Chair, on behalf of the Vice President, pursuant to the provisions of S. Con. Res. 38 (116th Congress), appoints the following Senators to the Joint Congressional Committee on Inaugural Ceremonies: the Honorable MITCH MCCONNELL of Kentucky; the Honorable ROY BLUNT of Missouri; and the Honorable AMY KLOBUCHAR of Minnesota.

ORDERS FOR TUESDAY, JUNE 30, 2020

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today, it

adjourn until 10 a.m., Tuesday, June 30; further, that following the prayer and pledge, the morning hour be deemed expired, the Journal of proceedings be approved to date, the time of the two leaders be reserved for their use later in the day, and morning business be closed; further, following leader remarks, the Senate resume consideration of Calendar No. 483, S. 4049; finally, that the Senate recess from 12:30 until 2:15 p.m. for the weekly conference meetings.

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

ORDER FOR ADJOURNMENT

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, if there is no further business to come before the Senate, I ask unanimous consent that it stand adjourned under the previous order, following the remarks of our Democratic colleagues.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SULLIVAN). The Senator from Oregon.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, the COVID-19 pandemic has thrown our country into a nightmare level crisis of joblessness. The Congress has not done enough to stop it and has not done enough to save the jobs of our people.

I have come to the floor this evening to call for the Senate to pass legislation that is all about saving the public sector jobs that form the backbone of our local communities, our firefighters, our first responders, our teachers, our families, and so many others. They need our help. They need it now.

Senate Democrats have been warning since March that when COVID-19 cases exploded and our economy went into lockdown, our States, our cities, and our towns are now facing budgetary disasters unlike any they have gone through in recent memory. The shortfalls that State and local governments are facing due to the pandemic make the great recession look like a modest little economic hiccup. Layoffs are now happening at nightmarish levels.

In March, April, and May, there were 1.5 million job losses. Among these key individuals were the firefighters, the first responders, our public employees, folks who teach our kids, work in public health, emergency response, and play a key role in maintaining our roads and highways. I am just going to take a few minutes to run through some specific examples of why Senate Democrats think this is so important.

First, what kind of sense does it make to sit back and allow thousands and thousands of first responders to lose their jobs in the middle of a pandemic? COVID-19 cases have spiked now in places around this country. Our public health systems are getting hit like they were hammered with a wrecking ball. State and local governments are being forced to cut EMS

workers at the exact moment they need more first responders who know how to keep the ailing of this country safe.

Second, let me mention education. Our country is in danger of losing a generation of teachers if Congress does not act to save their jobs. The official jobs data showed that in April alone, just 1 month, nearly half a million K-12 employees lost their jobs—half a million. Education experts have estimated that hundreds of thousands of teachers could be permanently laid off without action.

Schoolchildren are already facing major setbacks due to the fact that they can't get the same level of face-to-face instruction during the pandemic. Far too many kids come from working families and are falling behind because they don't have the technology, and they don't have the support at home. Too many kids are hungry. Too many kids are neglected. Nobody knows when they are going to be back in class full time.

Helping those young people catch up when this pandemic ends is already going to be incredibly hard, and it will be even harder if the Nation loses hundreds of thousands of dedicated teachers in the meantime, and that is just K-12.

The COVID-19 crash is a disaster for Americans who want to get an affordable college degree as well. Our public colleges and universities are taking enormous losses. In my home State of Oregon, the losses added up to \$130 million this spring. States are facing big, higher education budget cuts. School administrators are doing their best to plan for the future, but, still, they don't know when their campuses are going to go back to normal. You only have to look back to the great recession to see what is likely to happen next. More and more costs getting pushed onto more and more students and their working families. Two-thirds of the class of 2018 borrowed to pay for college, and those borrowers held an average of \$30,000 in debt on graduation. Someday soon, that may be something like a bargain.

Third, our country's already crumbling infrastructure is going to get even worse if communities can't afford to invest in roads and highways and other essential infrastructure projects. It is a self-defeating prospect. If the Congress doesn't help communities tackle the projects now, they will cost even more down the road and when the maintenance backlog grows. Delaying these kinds of projects makes it even harder for local economies to recover because all those workers will be out of a job, and a lot of businesses don't want to invest in places where there is a crumbling infrastructure.

The proposal I offer tonight with the Democratic leader will help to save these jobs and stave off a whole lot of preventable economic hardship. One of the key lessons the Senate ought to remember from the great recession is

that failing to support State and local budgets will prolong suffering across this country. It will slow down the recovery, and it will guarantee the country does not bounce back quickly in 2020.

Our proposal builds on legislation that has already passed the other body. It incorporates State and local portions of the Heroes Act that rescues firefighters, first responders, infrastructure jobs, and teachers. It also includes an important proposal for the rural West—Secure Rural Schools and Payments in Lieu of Taxes, what is called SRS and PILT. Even before COVID-19, our rural communities started with weaker economies, fewer public health resources, and worse access to healthcare. They were bound to have a harder time responding to and from the pandemic.

Secure Rural Schools, which I authored with our former colleague, is all about bringing certainty and stability to communities and counties, often the frontline healthcare providers in far-out places. These are places where you have seen boom-and-bust traditional dependence on resource extraction, and there have been cycles where it is almost impossible, as the Presiding Officer knows, to plan for what is ahead.

Our proposal would create a permanent endowment of funds to provide a predictable source of funding for rural economic development, roads, and schools. Payment in lieu of taxes is all about providing that same kind of certainty to those who live in rural areas dominated by Federal lands. They have the same right as anybody else to reliable services: firefighters, safe roads, highways, and schools. Ten years of permanent mandatory payment in lieu of taxes will help those counties budget for the future.

I am going to close with one last argument I have heard from the other side and then yield to the distinguished Democratic leader. The other side often says that our ideas are some sort of blue State bailout. That is wrong, wrong, wrong.

Teachers are going to get pink slips in Texas, Kentucky, South Carolina, and Florida, and they aren't going to believe that saving their jobs is a blue State bailout. Of the 42 States and Territories covered by Secure Rural Schools, less than a handful are blue States.

The virus has absolutely no interest in political parties. It might hit Democratic States first, but it is now sweeping many parts of the country, including States that voted for Donald Trump.

Despite being small and rural and, generally, relatively remote, county governments that rely on Secure Rural Schools and payment in lieu of taxes are responding to the same national public health crisis facing larger cities and urban areas. This economic crisis is hitting everybody.

I don't want to see hundreds of thousands of teachers laid off anywhere—

not in Oregon, not in Iowa, not in Texas, not in Kentucky. Especially when it is safe for kids to go back to school in person, I don't want them packed into classrooms with 40 or 50 other students. I don't want first responders to be laid off in the middle of a pandemic.

I don't want our Nation's roads and highways to crumble into even worse disrepair because the Congress failed to address the nationwide budget crisis. The Senate has an obligation to act.

I am now going to yield to the distinguished Democratic leader, and then I will offer a unanimous consent request to actually advance this critically important cause.

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I thank my good friend from Oregon for his excellent and eloquent words. I want to thank him for being such a leader on this issue and so many others. I thank my colleague from New Hampshire, who will speak after me. I think Senator MENENDEZ is expected here, as well, to say a few words before the unanimous consent request that will be made by my colleague from Oregon.

We are a long way off from beating COVID-19. Our communities need Federal relief as soon as possible. The disease continues to spread in an alarming rate across much of the South and West, and our country is facing probably the greatest economic challenge since the Great Depression.

Yet, for over 2 months, the Republican Senate has chosen to delay, delay, delay. First, Leader MCCONNELL said another COVID relief bill was "likely" in June. Now, the earliest it could happen is late July, and, even then, the Republican leader said he wants to "assess the conditions in the country" first before writing a bill "in his office."

I will make two points. The conditions in the country are terrible. You don't need to wait to assess them. We must act now. Second, if the leader thinks writing a bill in his office will produce results, I ask him to look at COVID 2, 3, and 3.5, where, in each case, he wrote a bill in his office without Democratic input. We insisted that we be included by not going forward, and we got a much better bill. We hope that is what he will do from the outset—work with us in a bipartisan way and work with the House, as well, to get something done.

The time for waiting and the time for partisan posturing is over. We are on the precipice of several deadlines that require immediate action from Congress. There are several cliffs, but perhaps the most dangerous is the cliff for State and local governments, so many of which are finalizing their budget before the new fiscal year on July 1, in 2 days.

State, local, and Tribal governments have already laid off more than 1.6 million workers and are being forced to cut critical services. At least 25 States have lost a minimum of 20,000 jobs. Ap-
propos to the point my colleague from

Oregon made, there are 25,000 State and local jobs in Florida. What are we saying to them? There are 29,000 in Kentucky. What are we saying to them? There are 93,000 in Texas. What are we saying to them?

These are not abstract numbers. They are teachers and firefighters and busdrivers and healthcare workers and more. It includes so many public health workers essential to contact tracing so we can lick this disease once and for all. Without Federal support, those job losses will continue, and the loss of vital services will continue as well.

So far, the Senate Republican response to this potential crisis has been a giant shrug of the shoulders. Leader MCCONNELL had once said that he would certainly be in favor of allowing the States to use the bankruptcy route. That is the Republican leader telling States, red and blue alike, why don't you go bankrupt.

That is not acceptable to Senate Democrats. So tonight I am joining Senators WYDEN, MENENDEZ, HASSAN, CARPER, GILLIBRAND, and MURPHY to ask the Senate's consent to pass emergency Federal funding so that State, local, and Tribal governments can keep fighting the pandemic and keep their communities safe.

Lest people think this is a blue issue or a red issue, I ask unanimous consent that the following letter be printed in the RECORD:

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD as follows:

NATIONAL GOVERNORS ASSOCIATION,

June 29, 2020.

Hon. MITCH MCCONNELL,
Majority Leader, U.S. Senate, Washington, DC.

Hon. CHUCK SCHUMER,
Minority Leader, U.S. Senate, Washington, DC.

DEAR MAJORITY LEADER MCCONNELL AND MINORITY LEADER SCHUMER: We write today to advocate on behalf of states, territories, counties, cities and towns, all of which are experiencing historic budget shortfalls as they continue to respond to the pandemic. In less than two days, the budget years for 45 states and thousands of local governments will begin. Unlike the federal government, these state and local governments must begin their fiscal years on time and with a balanced budget. If the Senate fails to act immediately to support state and local governments, our nation's recovery from the pandemic-induced recession will suffer and millions of Americans will needlessly be harmed.

Previous federal bills responding to COVID-19 provided important support, many through well-established grant programs, yet none allow for the replacement of billions of lost revenue due to COVID-19. More robust and direct stimulus is needed for state and local governments to both rebuild the economy and maintain essential services in education, health care, emergency operations, public safety and more.

As we move closer to the end of the budget year, furloughs and job cuts are on the table for many states and localities. These jobs losses not only affect the provision of government services, but also add to state unemployment. The damage will get far worse without federal assistance, forcing drastic cuts that will further delay and cancel infra-

structure projects, as at least 26 states have announced construction delays for transportation projects. The loss of such projects will ripple through states' construction industry, delaying recovery further.

State and local governments also purchase goods and services which add to the nation's output, and in 2019, state and local governments' purchases accounted for 11 percent of GDP. When these activities slow down, there is an effect on the nation's economy. Alarmingly, CBO's June letter on its forecast of Gross Domestic Product for 2020 and 2021 found that "state and local governments' purchases of goods and services fell by \$350 billion, making up 9 percent of the total decline in GDP.

Nearly 15 million Americans are employed by state and local governments. Teachers, first responders and emergency medical service workers are on the front lines of this crisis doing the essential work of the country. Government employment continues to suffer substantial losses with over 1.6 million state and local government jobs lost since March.

Leaders in Washington have expressed support for flexible fiscal aid to states and localities of all sizes. Yet months have gone by and our communities continue to suffer. Americans have a history of standing together in times of crisis and must do so now.

Sincerely,

Accelerate Indiana Municipalities; ACT, Inc.; AECOM; Alabama League of Municipalities; Alaska Municipal League; Alkermes; American Association of Port Authorities; American Beverage Association; American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees; American Federation of Teachers; American Gas Association; American Hotel & Lodging Association; American Network of Community Options and Resources (ANCOR); American Planning Association; American Public Human Services Association; American Public Power Association; American Public Works Association (APWA); American Shore & Beach Preservation Association; American Society of Civil Engineers; AmeriHealth.

Caritas; Anthem; Arizona Association of Counties; Arkansas Municipal League; Arthritis Foundation; Association of County Commissioners of Georgia; Association of Arkansas Counties; Association of County Commissions of Alabama; Association of Financial Guaranty Insurers; Association of Indiana Counties; Association of Minnesota Counties; Association of Oregon Counties; Association of Washington Cities; Axxess; BrightSpring; Health Services California; Marine Affairs & Navigation Conference (CMANC); California State Association of Counties; Center for Public Safety Management.

Central Gulf Coast Chapter of the American Shore & Beach Preservation Association; CGI Communications, Inc.; Coast Builders Coalition; Colorado Municipal League; CompTIA—Computing Technology Industry Association; Connecticut Conference of Municipalities; County Commissioners Association of Ohio; County Commissioners Association of Pennsylvania; County Commissioners Association of West Virginia; County Executives of America; Credit Union National Association (CUNA); Data Center Coalition; Delaware League of Local Governments; Dexcom; Esri, Inc.; Florida Association of Counties; Florida League of Cities; Florida Shore & Beach Preservation Association; Georgia Municipal Association.

GHIA; GoRail; Government Finance Officers Association; Great Lakes Dredge & Dock; IBM; Illinois Municipal League; Illinois State Association of Counties; Institute for Building Technology and Safety; International Association of Emergency Managers; International City/County Manage-

ment Association; International Municipal Lawyers Association, Inc.; Internet Association; Intuit Inc.; Iowa League of Cities; Iowa State Association of Counties; ITC Holdings Inc.; Jersey Shore Partnership; Johnson & Johnson; Kansas Association of Counties; Kentucky Association of Counties.

Land O'Lakes Inc.; Large Public Power Council; League of Arizona Cities and Towns; League of California Cities; League of Kansas Municipalities; League of Minnesota Cities; League of Nebraska Municipalities; League of Oregon Cities; League of Wisconsin Municipalities; Louisiana Municipal Association; Magna; Maine Municipal Association; Maryland Association of Counties; Maryland Municipal League; Massachusetts Coastal Coalition; Massachusetts Municipal Association; Michigan Association of Counties; Michigan Municipal League; Mississippi Association of Supervisors; Mississippi Municipal League.

Motorola Solutions, Inc.; Municipal Association of South Carolina; NACBHDD and NARMH; National Association for County Community and Economic Development; National Association for Home Care & Hospice; National Association of Black County Officials (NABCO); National Association of Bond Lawyers; National Association of County Collectors, Treasurers & Finance Officers (NACCTFO); National Association of Counties; National Association of County Engineers; National Association of County Human Services Administrators; National Association of Home Builders; National Association of Regional Councils; National Association of State Auditors, Comptrollers and Treasurers; National Association of State Procurement Officials (NASPO); National Association of State Treasurers; National Association of Towns and Townships; National Community Development Association.

National Conference of State Legislatures; National Governors Association; National Emergency Management Association; National League of Cities; National Marine Manufacturers Association; National Organization of Black County Officials, Inc (NOBCO); National Workforce Association; Nebraska Association of County Officials; Netsmart; Nevada Association of Counties; New Jersey Association of Counties; New Jersey State League of Municipalities; New Mexico Counties; New York State Association of Counties; New York State Conference of Mayors and Municipal Officials; NIC; North Carolina League of Municipalities; North Dakota Association of Counties; North Dakota League of Cities; NWEA; Ohio Municipal League.

Oklahoma Municipal League; PACENation; Partnership for Medicaid Home-Based Care; Pennsylvania Municipal League; Police Jury Association of Louisiana; Port of Walla Walla; ResCare Workforce Services; Rhode Island League of Cities and Towns; Service Employees International Union (SEIU); Siemens; Sourcewell; South Dakota Municipal League; Southern California Edison; Teachers Insurance and Annuity Association of America (TIAA); TechNet; Tennessee County Services Association; Tennessee Municipal League; Texas Association of Counties; Texas Municipal League; The Coca-Cola Company; The Community Outcomes Fund at Maycomb Capital.

The Council of State Governments; The Design-Build Institute of America; The United States Conference of Mayors; three+one; Thrive Skilled Pediatric Care; U.S. Tire Manufacturers Association (USTMA); U.S. Water Alliance; United Counties Council of Illinois; Utah League of Cities and Towns; Vermont League of Cities and Towns; Virginia Association of Counties; Virginia Municipal League; Washington

City/County Management Association (WCMA); Washington State Association of Counties; West Virginia Association of Counties; West Virginia Municipal League; Wisconsin Counties Association; Wisconsin County Highway Association; Wyoming Association of Municipalities; Wyoming County Commissioners Association.

Mr. SCHUMER. This letter is from the “Big 7” national associations. They represent the Governors, Democrat and Republican; the mayors, Democrat and Republican; the State legislatures, Democrat and Republican; the county leaders, Democrat and Republican; and the city managers. They all got together in a bipartisan way, as this Chamber should do, and wrote the Senate a letter pleading—pleading—for Federal support and warning of the dire consequences of the delay.

Let me read a passage from their letter to Leader MCCONNELL and myself, with a copy to all Republican and Democratic Senators. There are many organizations from red States signing this letter. This is what they wrote:

Previous federal bills responding to COVID-19 provided important support . . . yet none allow for the replacement of billions of lost revenue due to the COVID-19. More robust and direct stimulus is needed for state and local governments to both rebuild the economy and maintain essential services in education, healthcare, emergency operations, public safety and more . . . Months have gone by and our communities continue to suffer. Americans have a history of standing together in a time of crisis and must do so now.

Let me repeat those words for every Member of this Chamber to hear: “Americans have a history of standing together in a time of crisis and must do so now.”

I urge my colleagues—and, particularly, my Republican colleagues—to listen to those words. These are your States, your cities, your mayors, your counties, and your State governments pleading with you for relief—not in a month, not later this year, but right now.

I hope my Republican friends will listen to their voices—the voices of their constituents and State leaders—and consent tonight to pass Federal support for State, local, and Tribal governments. Blocking it will send a terrible signal to the American people that this Senate—this Republican-led Senate—is unwilling to act with any urgency to pass the relief that our States desperately need.

I now yield to my colleague from New Hampshire, who has been such a strong leader, particularly pointing out how lost revenues hurt governments—big, small, rural, urban, suburban, you name it.

Ms. HASSAN. Mr. President, I thank the distinguished leader, and I thank my colleague from Oregon, Senator WYDEN, for joining in this motion and for making it.

I rise today to join them in calling for urgently needed funding for State and local governments to support our communities as they continue to grapple with the COVID-19 pandemic.

Across our country, State and local governments have been at the forefront of responding to this crisis and providing people and businesses with the support they need. State and local governments also employ millions of essential public employees—including teachers, first responders, and others—who have been working around the clock to help keep the American people safe.

But in the face of these unprecedented circumstances, States and local communities are facing new, mounting costs and a catastrophic loss of revenue. Without additional Federal resources, we will see even more job losses and further economic harm. We must do more to support the American people.

Just last week, Moody’s Analytics released a sobering report on what State and local governments are up against. This report indicated that without significant Federal support for State and local governments, 4 million additional people could lose their jobs.

Throughout this crisis, we have worked together to try to save American jobs. Why, then, would we now sit and do nothing for the people who make our communities run?

States and cities employ essential workers who have been on the frontlines of this crisis. We need these workers now more than ever. We should support the important work they are doing, not leave their jobs at risk.

In addition to job cuts, without additional support, State and local governments may also need to cut programs and services that the American people depend on. Forcing States to slash education, infrastructure, and public health budgets, among others, would be deeply harmful at any time, but in the middle of a pandemic and the recession it has helped create, the ripple effect of those cuts would be even more staggering. Already, States and cities are cutting or delaying fixing sewer lines or roads and delaying putting out critical contracts to bid, with a ripple effect felt throughout the economy.

It doesn’t have to be this way. Senate Democrats are focused on providing significant economic relief for State and local governments across the country. This would mitigate the job losses and further economic damage that we are seeing as a result of this crisis.

I urge my Republican colleagues to work with us to deliver this necessary relief and ensure that States have the flexibility to use this funding to backfill lost revenue and preserve jobs.

The recent spike in cases in many States reinforces that the public health threat remains extremely serious. Our economy will be feeling the effects of this pandemic for years to come.

State and local governments need our strong support to help save lives and strengthen our economy, and they need it right now. Blocking this relief will only make a dire economic situation even worse. That is the last thing the American people need.

I join Senator WYDEN and my colleagues in moving this UC request.

Thank you.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Jersey.

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. President, I rise today to join my colleagues to stress the urgency for Congress to provide robust, flexible assistance to State and local governments on the frontlines of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Because this administration has failed to devise and deploy a national response to a national emergency, the burden of containing and defeating the virus has largely fallen on our States, our counties, and our municipalities. They are expending enormous resources to expand testing, shore up hospitals, process unemployment claims, and get our residents the help they desperately need.

At the same time, revenues have fallen off a cliff due to the economic fallout. Monies collected from sales, property taxes, building permits, court fees, parking meters, transit fares—you name it—are all down.

I served at every level of government in New Jersey—the school board, mayor, State legislature. I know exactly what they are going through. It isn’t about any irresponsibility on their part. It is the consequences of a national pandemic. We didn’t ask for 14,000 of our citizens in New Jersey to die. We didn’t ask for nearly 180,000 New Jerseyans to ultimately be infected. But that is our reality. And that is not only our reality. There are other States similarly situated.

Unlike the Federal Government, virtually all State and local governments are constitutionally obligated—constitutionally obligated—to pass a balanced budget. Forty-five States have a June 30 deadline. That is tomorrow. Others are fast approaching.

This isn’t a blue State or red State issue. This isn’t about pensions, as some have tried to suggest. This is a red, white, and blue issue. It is an American issue. This virus doesn’t see political boundaries. This isn’t an issue of fiscal responsibility. No one—no one—is immune. We see it across the Nation, huge spikes taking place in Florida, in Texas, in Arizona, and others.

Earlier today, the bipartisan National Governors Association, the National League of Cities, the National Association of Counties, the U.S. Conference Mayors, the National Conference of State Legislatures, the Council of State Governments, and the International City/County Management Association sent a joint letter to Senate leadership. I have been a part of some of those organizations at different times. I have never seen them all come together on any given issue. They came together on this one.

Over 170 businesses and organizations signed on, all unified with a clear message that, if we fail to provide our States and communities with immediate assistance, we will only hamper

our Nation's ability to fully recover, and Americans will needlessly suffer.

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, more than 1.4 million public employees and counting have been laid off or furloughed across the country—over 90,000 in Texas; 65,000 in Ohio; nearly 30,000 in Kentucky; 25,000 both in Colorado and Florida. Every State and community is bleeding.

We are talking about first responders, teachers, nurses, sanitation workers, and other employees on the frontlines of the COVID fight. We need them on the job, not the unemployment line. It would be the height of irony that the result of the pandemic or, more importantly, our government's unwillingness to respond to the challenge of State and municipalities is that those whom we needed the most, those whom we still need the most, those whom we will need the most tomorrow are going to be laid off.

The essential services our residents and businesses rely upon are being slashed left and right. For instance, the National League of Cities reports that more than 700 U.S. cities have halted roadway repairs and delayed equipment purchases to plug local budget holes. We are seeing deep, painful cuts across the board. Moody's projected last week that State budget shortfalls will top \$500 billion over the next 3 years.

Now, I have heard some in this body argue that if we just reopen our economy, we would negate the need for Congress to act. Well, that has been proven a fallacy. COVID-19 cases are spiking across the country, especially in those States that were quick to reopen. We are seeing daily records being set in places like Arizona, Florida, Georgia, and Texas, forcing some areas to tighten their restrictions.

Yet, in my home State of New Jersey, which was second only to New York in the number of COVID cases, we have not just flattened the curve; our infection rates are dropping. As we methodically and responsibly reopen, there is no doubt that the emergency protection measures we took in New Jersey helped stop the spread of COVID-19 and save lives, but that progress has come with tremendous economic pain and personal sacrifice that no State and community will be able to escape.

So we can't allow ourselves to be handcuffed to partisan ideology. This isn't about left or right, conservative or progressive politics. I honestly believe that most of our colleagues on the Republican side understand this. Most recognize that forcing States and communities to go bankrupt is not a conservative principle, that the last thing we need during an economic crisis is to send 3 to 4 million public workers to the unemployment line without the ability for them to respond on our collective behalf.

We need bold bipartisan action to address this national crisis. That is why the State Municipal Assistance for Re-

sponse and Transition Act, or the SMART Act, is the commonsense solution we need to give our communities a fighting chance and to stop the economy from freefall.

I want to thank Senators CASSIDY, HYDE-SMITH, COLLINS, MANCHIN, and BOOKER for joining me in this bipartisan effort, and we are working every day to build more support.

The SMART Act provides \$500 billion in flexible Federal funds that will help our communities dramatically expand the testing capacity and contact tracing we need to contain the virus, which is a necessary step to restoring consumer confidence and restarting the economy.

It will help stave off massive layoffs, tax hikes, and deep, painful cuts to essential services. It will keep our EMTs, firefighters, public health workers, teachers, and other essential employees on the job during this critical time—because it is not just about defeating COVID-19. We still need to keep our first responders on the job, our children learning, the trash picked up, the roads maintained, and the buses and trains running on time.

Unless we act soon, we will see more mass layoffs, devastating tax increases, and a breakdown in public safety and essential services. We cannot—in all good conscience—sit back and watch our States, counties, cities, and towns fail. We cannot shift the Federal Government's responsibility and then leave them holding the bag.

We can't turn our backs on the American people. A national emergency requires a national response, and it is this body's sworn duty to act, to send our States and local communities the resources they desperately need to combat COVID-19 and to continue to serve the constituents we have all been elected to represent.

If the safety and security of the American people is job one, this is also safety and security.

I will close with this. I appreciate that there are different points of view, but I really get upset when I hear that States like mine or others somehow want to be bailed out.

I will tell you what—New Jersey would be happy to take the excess money it sends to the Federal Treasury rather than what it gets in return—billions of dollars—and say: We will handle the problem on our own.

We would like to see some of our fellow States here, which receive more money than they contribute to the Federal Treasury, return it. We are not a moocher State; we are a donor State.

So some of my colleagues here should look: They get \$20 billion, \$30 billion more from the Federal Government than they pay into the Federal Treasury. We in New Jersey pay more than we get.

Now that we are in the midst of a national emergency in which we have thousands of our citizens dying, thousands more still infected, and we did the right thing in order to stop the

dying, we should pay a greater consequence because we did the right thing in doing job No. 1: the safety and security of our citizens?

I don't think so.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oregon.

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, I thank my colleagues. A number have already given eloquent remarks, and we still have more to come. I know, per the agreement, that it is time to propound the unanimous consent request.

So, with the support of thousands of firefighters, first responders, teachers, county health providers, and thousands more Americans of both political parties with an extraordinary work ethic, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of the State, Local, and Tribal Fiscal Relief and Rural Stability Act, which is at the desk. I further ask that the bill be considered read three times and passed and that the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Senator from Florida.

Mr. SCOTT of Florida. Mr. President, reserving the right to object, this is clearly a challenging time for every level of government. I think we will all admit that this crisis was unprecedented, and Congress has already taken bold action to stem this virus and save our economy. But if we are not careful, Congress will create another equally devastating crisis down the road—a crisis of our own making.

Our national debt and deficits, already at unsustainable levels, have skyrocketed as Congress has spent almost \$3 trillion—\$3 trillion—to address this crisis. To put that in perspective, Congress has spent \$9,000 for every American.

At some point we need to start thinking about the impact this spending will have on the future of our children and our grandchildren, how we are impacting our ability to fund our military and our safety nets like Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid.

Again, I know everyone here wants to help our States. I want to help our States, too, which is why I support maintaining the existing restrictions tied to the Coronavirus Relief Fund that were included in the CARES Act to make sure this spending is for coronavirus response.

Congress has already allocated billions in direct and indirect aid to States and localities. Total direct funding from the Federal Government already exceeds \$1 trillion. Let me just go through it.

We gave them \$150 billion for COVID-19 expenses. To put that in perspective, while I was Governor of Florida, we had four hurricanes. The Federal Government never funded 100 percent of my cost. We are funding 100 percent of the COVID-19 cost.

We have given our State and local governments \$500 billion in short-term loans. We have given them \$45 billion in FEMA disaster funds, \$30 billion in education funds without any information on whether education costs have gone up, \$34 billion for mass transit and community grants, \$270 billion for CARES Act emergency appropriations, and \$50 billion for Medicaid—and as we have all seen with the healthcare costs, Medicaid costs have gone down around the country.

Even this doesn't begin to count another \$1.3 trillion in indirect assistance to small businesses, individuals, and increased unemployment benefits to families in all of our States.

We have given \$175 billion to our healthcare community. We have given \$11 billion to our States to deal with testing.

Now my colleagues want to spend another \$1 trillion before the other trillion dollars that was already allocated has even been spent.

I sent a letter this month to all U.S. Governors to get more details on exactly how they are allocating the Federal coronavirus response funds that they have already received. I have heard back only from four States.

Do you think I have heard back from New York? Of course not, and I don't expect to. Why? Because politicians in these liberal States have refused to live within their means for decades, and they want Floridians to backfill their budgets and pay for the incompetency of Governors like Andrew Cuomo.

Andrew Cuomo got elected when I got elected—at the end of 2010, at the end of the financial crisis. I have watched him in my 8 years as Governor. Did he balance his budget? No, he doesn't balance his budget. He keeps borrowing more money year after year.

The Wall Street Journal's editorial board said: "The policy question is why taxpayers in Florida and other well-managed states should pay higher taxes to rescue an Albany political class that refuses to restrain its tax-and-spend governance."

New York has increased their spending since 2010 by \$43 billion, which is \$570,000 per new resident—\$570,000 per new resident. They already have a State and local personal income tax rate of 12.7 percent.

I know why they want money: They can't tax their citizens any more. They have already done it. Because of all of their taxes, people keep moving to States like Florida. They have lost \$9.6 billion in adjusted gross income to other States just since 2018.

So what these States have done is they don't live within their means, and now they want us to come be responsible for their bad budgets, their pension plans, and things like that.

One of my colleagues brought up this concept that some States are donors. I have been up here 18 months. I have looked at the Federal budget. I haven't seen a dime come from the States. It

comes from the taxpayers in those States. Do you know how it comes here? It comes here to pay for things like Social Security and Medicare. Then these citizens get sick and tired of the high taxes in places like New Jersey, New York, Illinois, and California and move to lower tax States and then receive these benefits.

Then people come up here and say: Oh, our government funded governments in other States. No, they don't. The citizens do it, and then they get sick and tired of those high taxes and move.

So we know New York, California, and Illinois have no problem using hard-earned taxpayer dollars to fund their liberal priorities and to backfill their budget shortfalls and solve their longstanding fiscal problems.

It is not fair to the citizens of States like Florida where, over my 8 years as Governor, we made the hard choices that put our State on a financially secure path. Because we made those choices, the Governor of Florida was able to sign a responsible State budget today without having to beg the Federal Government for a bailout. Guess what. There are teacher pay raises in there and increased funding for K-12 education.

American families make responsible budgetary decisions every day. Successful companies make responsible budget decisions every day. Well-meaning States like Florida have done it for years. It is time for New York, Illinois, and California to do the same.

We have to get serious about how we are spending taxpayer money and the fact that this year's Federal budget deficit will be the largest in the history of this country. While it may be tempting to throw money at the problem and then believe that removing the restrictions on funding will satisfy States for a bailout, I am afraid that my colleagues are mistaken.

These funds are still needed for coronavirus response, and unfortunately many States have not been shy about their desire for hundreds of billions of dollars in taxpayer bailouts for their liberal agendas. I am not going to let this happen.

By the way, when you hear about all these letters that come that want more money—I spent 8 years as Governor of Florida. I don't remember one time that somebody came to me and said: Why don't you spend less money? Of course everybody is going to come up here and ask us for more money, more money, more money. It is somebody's money.

I think about this in the context of my seven grandchildren. We cannot saddle them and children like them across the country with mountains of debt—debt that right now stands in excess of \$77,000 per American—\$77,000 per American.

Do you know what it was in 1976? It was \$3 per American. It is \$77,000. To take away the same opportunities I had to live the American dream from

our children and grandchildren would not only be a political failure, it would be an abdication of our moral responsibility.

It is time to make the hard choices, to put our Nation on a path to recovery—recovery from this virus, from the economic devastations brought with it, and from the fiscal calamity that decades of politicians have ignored. I hope my colleagues will join me in the fight for our future.

I therefore respectfully object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The Senator from Oregon.

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, to make a very brief response—and I know my colleagues have been very patient—I just want to make sure that everybody really put in context the remarks the Senator from Florida made. He is basically saying that if you don't address healthcare now, if you don't address education now, if you don't address roads now, that somehow there aren't going to be any consequences.

There are going to be very real consequences. People are going to be sicker, for example. We are going to spend much more down the road. We have a weakened and smaller economy, and we will have that for an unknown amount of time.

My colleague mentioned his concern about weakened national security. How can a semi-permanently weakened economy not affect national security? Of course it is going to affect national security, and it is going to affect national security badly.

Finally, I will make one additional point, and I know my colleagues will address this as well. My colleague from Florida talks about deficits. I am the ranking Democrat on the Finance Committee, where we sat through my colleagues' tax bill—a bill that he voted for, and he strongly supported it and said it is going to pay for itself; what is to worry about?

Nobody does deficits better than that side of the aisle. Nobody does them better and bigger and in a more irresponsible way.

I wanted to put that in context. I look forward to the remarks of my friend from Connecticut and Nevada.

Mr. SCOTT of Florida. Mr. President, I would like to respond to my colleague before he leaves.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Florida.

Mr. SCOTT of Florida. Mr. President, I wasn't here when the tax bill was done. I cut taxes of over \$10 billion. We cut taxes and fees. And what happened is our economy grew. We added 1.7 billion jobs.

Let's go back and look at this. We talk about money. We have given \$150 billion for the expenses. We have given loans. We have given FEMA disaster funds. We have given education funds. We have given mass transit funds. We have given emergency appropriations for a variety of different sections. We have given many healthcare dollars for

Medicaid. On top of that, we allocated \$175 billion to our healthcare system, and we gave our States \$11 billion for testing. It is not like we have been up here and not responding. We have responded.

By the way, the dollars have not all been spent. What we need to do is, let's see what these Governors come back with. I have gotten a response from four Governors so far. Let's look at what they said, and then we can make a responsible decision on how we spend our money going forward.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Connecticut.

Mr. MURPHY. Mr. President, let me tell you how the bailout has worked. When COVID hit this country and people were dying from a disease that we didn't have a vaccine for, as emergency rooms all over the country were being overwhelmed, the Federal Government and the Trump administration did nothing. They did nothing. They didn't stand up a national testing program. They didn't stand up a national trace and quarantine system. They didn't let the CDC do their job and issue national guidelines around how to close businesses and schools. They didn't lead proposing legislation before Congress to tackle the costs of this response.

President Trump put in place a feckless travel restriction that still allowed tens of thousands of people to get here from the countries that were infected, and then the Federal Government gave up. It did nothing. It left the entirety of the response to the States.

Here is how the bailout works. The States have bailed out the Federal Government by stepping up to the plate and being primary responders to this epidemic. Hospitals and local public health systems have bailed out the Federal Government, which did nothing to stop this virus. That is how the bailout has worked.

All States are asking for is to help pay for the expense of confronting this virus. If a bailout equals saving lives, then I am for a bailout. Without help from the Federal Government, people are going to die. States that have to balance their Federal budgets are not going to be able to erect the kind of anti-pandemic infrastructure that will save lives.

My colleague from Florida has left, but let's also just be honest about the accounting here. He had a chart up about Florida bailing out New York. If you want to do a deal in which Connecticut and New York and New Jersey get to keep all of the revenue that we send to the Federal Government, that we get a guarantee for every dollar we send to Washington, we get a dollar back, we are all in.

I don't think my friend from Florida would take that deal because every single year, on average, a Connecticut citizen gives \$4,000 more to the Federal Government than that Connecticut citizen gets back. The average New York citizen gives on average \$1,700 more to the Federal Government than they get

back. That is because we are wealthier States.

You know what, while we fight to try to get as much of that revenue back to our State as possible, we understand that because citizens in our States have done a little bit better, we should help pay for the healthcare of people in Florida; we should help pay for the education of poor kids in Florida.

We grouse about the amount of taxes we pay, but we understand the deal in which, because we have done a little bit better, we are going to help States that need a little bit more help. But on an average year, the average Florida recipient gets \$2,700 more in Federal assistance than they give. That sounds like a bailout—on an annual basis, repeating year after year.

What we are asking here is for some help to save lives. We are not asking to give out surplus checks to our constituents; we are asking for help to keep people alive all throughout this country. States and municipalities are the ones that are conducting the response because the Trump administration has refused to do it, and it is an expensive response.

If you want to keep people alive, then you have to help us pay for that expense. You have to help us pay for that expense. Our revenues are cratering as the economy has been shut down. Our expenses are spiraling as we have been left holding the bag. When that happens, you can only do two things if you are a State that has to balance your budget, as Connecticut is, every year. We can either raise taxes—think about that: raising taxes in the middle of an economy in meltdown—or we can lay people off.

Already across this country, 1.5 million State and local workers have been laid off, and there are more to come. Many of them will be in the public health field—the very people who we need to be able to identify where the virus exists, trace the contacts, and quarantine people to keep others safe. Those are the people who are going to be laid off.

It becomes this downward spiral in which, as the Federal Government refuses to help States pay for the virus response and the States can no longer effectively stand up a response effort, the virus wins. That is one of the reasons you are seeing the virus spread in places like Florida or Texas—because we don't have the infrastructure in place. The Trump administration refused to build it, and now we are refusing to help States build it.

It has been 45 days since the House passed their legislation helping States to keep people alive. I was on this floor as my Republican colleagues were literally jumping from their seats when Senate Democrats were insisting that we take an extra day or two to pass the CARES Act, to get it right—jumping out of their seats with a sense of urgency.

The virus is back on the march again. The economy is in worse shape

today than it was in March. It has been 45 days since the House sent us legislation to keep people alive, and we have done nothing.

My colleagues, I want to leave you with just one picture—really two pictures side by side for my State. Just ask yourself after thinking about this, visualizing this, if this is really the world you want to choose to live in through your inaction.

We have our share of billionaires in Connecticut. They are important to us. They pay a decent amount of taxes. They contribute philanthropically. But they have done very well over the course of the pandemic. A survey just came out that showed that over half of those who count themselves as billionaires in Connecticut had dramatically increased their net worth since this pandemic began. In fact, of all the billionaires in Connecticut, they had increased their total wealth by about \$2 billion—\$2 billion. That is driven in part by a stock market that has priced in all of the Trump administration's support for corporations. It is because of a stock market that has also priced in the mass extinction of lots of small businesses that will accrue to the benefit of those corporations.

I want you to think about the richest Americans over the course of the last several months having seen their nest egg grow—grow. They can afford more. They can pass down more wealth to their children, even with 20 percent of Americans unemployed.

Put that next to this visual. Jen Sherman lives in my State and has a 14-year-old named Gavin. He is a special education student with a host of learning challenges. He hasn't been in school since March. He needs school because at school are his professionals—his counselors, his therapists. School is where his routine is.

Jen says: My kid is falling apart in front of my eyes. It is making me physically ill watching him be out of school for going on for 4 months. He is just deteriorating on me. His mental health is concerning. It is the unknown. He has so many questions we can't answer.

Jen is getting ready to send Gavin, who is already broken down, back to school. As she is readying to send him back to school, school districts across the State of Connecticut are talking about laying off the very professionals who will help Gavin get back to that routine.

Surveys suggest that if we don't pass another emergency response package for States, 10 percent of teachers could be laid off. You know who is going to come first. It is going to be those para-professionals. It will be those counselors who build support services around the most vulnerable kids.

As corporations and billionaires have done better and better, kids like Gavin—low-income families across this country, the masses of the unemployed—are suffering and will not be able to get back to normal unless we beat this virus. We can't beat it if we

don't help States and municipalities with the work that needs to be done.

It has been some 45 days since we watched the House pass legislation that could save lives and allow us to stand up a true national effort to beat this virus once and for all. I would plead to my colleagues to not go home for a 2-week vacation without passing legislation to help us stand up a State and local response to COVID-19.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Nevada.

Ms. CORTEZ MASTO. Mr. President, along with my colleague, I am astounded that we have gone this long without any type of relief for our State and local governments that are suffering right now. The last time this Chamber passed legislation to address the coronavirus pandemic was April 21, 2020. That was over 2 months ago.

I can tell you, I know, Mr. President and all of my colleagues, you are hearing from your constituents in your States. I am hearing from my constituents. I have heard from thousands of Nevadans who find themselves lying awake at night trying to figure out how to pay the rent, feed their kids, and take care of family members at elevated risk from COVID-19.

People in the Silver State want to know what more the Federal Government is doing to help them, and rightly so, but they do not want to hear us on the floor of the Senate Chamber identifying and arguing that liberal States should not get some sort of relief right now.

I just heard my colleague from Florida identifying that liberal States shouldn't get funding. What is a liberal State? How do we define that? Does that mean it is a Democratic State or a Republican State because I can tell you—you have seen it and I have seen it—we have all seen letters from our Governors across this country in a bipartisan way—letters signed by Democratic Governors and Republican Governors asking for relief and support from this Congress. It is not just the Governors; it is the mayors; it is the county chairmen, the county commissioners.

I will tell you, there are some beautiful places in my State, and we are Nevadans. Whether you are a Republican or you are a Democrat, every single one of my mayors I have talked to, every single one of the county commissioners and the county chairmen, along with my Governor—we come from beautiful, diverse backgrounds—they are looking for additional support. We can't put a pause on it now. We can't wait.

I don't understand why we have been waiting since April. In April, State and local governments laid off 1 million workers across the country and froze or cut the salaries of thousands more. In April, in my home State of Nevada, unemployment was skyrocketing to 28 percent, the highest in the Nation. That is nearly one in three Nevadans

without a job. Let me put that in comparison. The highest national unemployment rate America ever recorded during the Great Depression was 25.6 percent.

On May 25, the House voted for the comprehensive Heroes Act to support State, local, and Tribal governments, to bolster health systems, to provide further stimulus payments, to help frontline workers, and strengthen this Nation's economy. At that time, we as Senators could have rolled up our sleeves right then and worked to find common ground with the House so we could provide help and assistance to so many people across this country.

Unfortunately, on May 26, our majority leader told reporters that the Senate would probably—we would probably pass more legislation. Now it is the end of June, and we have no legislation from the Senate on the greatest crisis facing this Nation since World War II, even though we are hearing constantly from our constituents and from our States.

Meanwhile, we are suffering. I can tell you, Nevadans are suffering like almost every other State in the country.

Nevada has to balance its budget on July 1, just a few days from now. Forty-six States have similar budgets they have to balance. Unlike the Federal Government, States can't borrow to make up for shortfalls. Every State in this country is collecting less in taxes than it usually would, and every State in the country faces unprecedented and unforeseen expenses because of this pandemic.

In my State, the Governor has estimated there will be a \$1.3 billion budget shortfall. Las Vegas alone is facing a drop in revenue of over \$100 million. The city of Reno expects a \$30 million hole in its budget. These are real dollars that are going to come out of essential services. State, local, and Tribal governments are absolutely on the frontlines of this health crisis.

The Senate must join the House in passing this vital legislation to give assistance to so many in need right now across this country.

We heard from my colleagues that States and localities have to pay EMTs, police, firefighters, healthcare providers—those essential people who are on the frontlines dealing with this healthcare crisis. According to a study by the National League of Cities, half the cities in the country expect that budget shortfall will affect public safety.

State and local governments also fund schools and teachers. In the middle of this pandemic, they have to figure out ways to deliver online education to students who don't have computers or internet and work to support parents trying to help their kids learn. They are having to figure out how to feed kids in the next school year under inflexible nutrition program rules.

Meanwhile, with these added challenges in Nevada, we are having to con-

sider cutting \$125 million from higher education and \$100 million from elementary and secondary education. In Nevada, like so many other places, this is all going on against the backdrop of tremendous economic pain. We have 300,000 people in the Silver State claiming unemployment insurance and thousands of those still waiting to receive their benefits.

This economic shock continues. People are going to start losing their homes or be evicted from their apartments if we don't do something to address it now. Nevada was already facing tremendous affordable housing crisis. We need urgent solutions to prevent this wave of dislocations and homelessness.

And equally urgent is the help needed for our small businesses. I was just on a call earlier today with the executive directors of the chambers throughout our State. I can guarantee you, I am not alone. In your State and all of our States, our small businesses are scrambling to find new business models and new sources of revenue. Many of these businesses are the heart of our communities, and if they go under permanently, cities and towns will suffer as well.

Our frontline medical workers—the true heroes—continue to need support. As cases climb in Nevada, they are working tirelessly to save lives and prevent complications, and they need our support.

Our frontline medical workers and our States also rely on Medicaid so that other people who are also struggling financially can still get critical healthcare when they need it. In Nevada, nearly 45,000 people are newly reliant on this safety net coverage.

Without additional resources to cover the costs associated with their coverage, the State will be forced to cut payments to the doctors who serve them, and this is in a State that already has one of the country's lowest rates of doctors per capita. Almost three out of four Nevada providers are worried about the financial viability of their practices in the face of the current crisis.

When we talk about funding State and local governments, we cannot forget our Tribal governments. They don't collect taxes. They are barred from doing so. Yet they rely on businesses to fund services. With Nevada's economy so hard hit, our Tribal communities need another source of funding, and they need support. This is while many of the Tribes in my State are still in lockdown, still trying to get access to sufficient COVID-19 testing and PPE and even key data. The CARES Act funding wasn't even released to Tribal governments across the country for 60 days, and the Senate majority leader still thinks things aren't urgent? It is just wrong.

The Senate must move urgently to strengthen the very institutions across this country that are delivering essential service to Americans. It is just a basic necessity.

I understand that many of my colleagues want to make sure we spend Federal funds wisely, and I want that, too, but the way to achieve this is for all of us to start working now. Nevadans need us to take action. The American people need us to take action. I ask Leader MCCONNELL to take up and pass the Heroes Act or convene on the floor of the Senate or in our committees real bipartisan discussions so we can pass the next economic stimulus package.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Connecticut.

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. I am honored to follow the Senator from Nevada who knows so well the importance of public service and public servants.

One of the reasons why we are here is because many of those public servants doing such great service for our communities will be laid off or furloughed to the detriment of their communities and their States. As the Senator knows in Nevada, and I know in Connecticut, what is necessary for them to continue their work is, in fact, the Heroes Act.

We have been talking a lot about the frontline workers, the heroes, like first responders, police, firefighters, the doctors and nurses, the grocery checkers, the delivery people far and wide, high and low. They have been doing great work. Many of them are going to be directly affected if we fail to pass the Heroes Act. Many of them and their work will be for naught if we fail to support the Heroes Act and enable State and local government to continue to employ them and support them.

I have been traveling across the State of Connecticut over these last 2½ months. What I have found is unparalleled hardship and heartbreak.

Yesterday, I visited a small business, a restaurant in Norwalk called No Leftovers, offering Caribbean food. It has been in business for 3 years. Its owner has received no Paycheck Protection Program funding, and it is hanging by a thread. That story is repeated again and again and again.

One of the reasons he is so fearful about the future is that zoning in Norwalk has been delayed because people are not at work. What happens to Norwalk and its Zoning and Land Use Department if there is no money to pay for it? That story writ large is about the future of America and the American dream that No Leftovers and small businesses like his exemplify, and it is a Black-owned business. The tragedy of the Black-owned businesses going under is one of the unwritten stories of this pandemic. Forty-one percent have failed during this pandemic—often through no fault of those business owners—because they face this economic crisis, and they face the loss of service if State and local governments, in effect, have to cut their workforces and their services to those businesses. This is not only Black-owned but businesses owned across the

board by all Americans and employing Americans.

Small businesses, as we know, no matter who owns them, are the major job creators today in the United States. There are linkages here, as I have been hearing. I go around the State talking to those business owners—not only the big contractors, the defense providers, like Sikorsky and Pratt & Whitney, but their supply chain. Those small- and medium-sized businesses will be disastrously affected by a failure to keep faith, move forward, and pass the Heroes Act.

Those frontline workers deserve the Heroes Fund—hazardous duty pay up to \$25,000, retroactive to the beginning of this national emergency. Again, recognizing public service, not only rewarding it but also retaining and recruiting more of them.

State and local governments depend on those frontline workers whom we talk so glowingly about. Now is our chance to put the money where our mouth is, and we have not only a moral obligation, we have an economic duty and a patriotic duty as we go into July 4.

Finally, let me just say—and I said it last week—that the U.S. Senate is about to leave town for 2 weeks, wanting America to believe that we have done our job. The fact is, we will have failed to have done our job unless we will have acted on the Heroes Act. Failing to act on the Heroes Act is an abrogation of our duty. We cannot go back and talk about the spirit of the Fourth of July and about the resilience and resoluteness of the Founders if we cannot be sufficiently determined to do our job here.

That aid to State and local governments is not a matter of convenience or luxury; it is a necessity for us to finance the public health departments that conduct testing and contact tracing as well as those economic development departments and land use departments, health, firefighting, policing, teaching. These are the core functions of our government, and there will be layoffs—massive layoffs—across the country if we fail to do our job.

I have been reading a book called “The Great Influenza” by John Barry. One of the lessons of that pandemic is that the failure to tell the truth is itself a failure that can lead to disaster. It can spawn fear and even terror. It can lead to complacency and inaction.

The failure to tell the truth is all too common these days with regard to this pandemic. The numbers tell, with much greater accuracy, the story of this pandemic than what we have been hearing from the White House. Yet now we have an obligation to make sure the truth is told, and that means facing the obligation to act. The way we can act is on the Heroes Act. The way we can tell the truth is to squarely lay before the American people what the challenges are and what the costs will be if we fail to act.

The other great lesson of that book is of the failure by local health departments and by local leaders to command the resources and devote them to fighting the pandemic itself. This contributed to it. We need to learn the lessons of history. They are sometimes so simple and powerful that we look the other way.

Before we leave town, let us look squarely at the Heroes Act and do the right thing—pass it and make sure that America moves forward to conquer this public health emergency and economic crisis that has been made all the more severe by the unfinished business of this country in dealing with racism and discrimination. We have that opportunity. The July 4 holiday should not be a time off; it ought to be a time on for us to do the right thing, and it is on us.

I yield the floor.

MESSAGES FROM THE PRESIDENT

Messages from the President of the United States were communicated to the Senate by Mrs. Neiman, one of his secretaries.

EXECUTIVE MESSAGES REFERRED

As in executive session the Presiding Officer laid before the Senate messages from the President of the United States submitting sundry nominations which were referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

(The messages received today are printed at the end of the Senate proceedings.)

MESSAGE FROM THE HOUSE

At 3:02 p.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mr. Novotny, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House has passed the following bills, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H.R. 51. An act to provide for the admission of the State of Washington, D.C. into the Union.

H.R. 3094. An act to designate the National Pulse Memorial located at 1912 South Orange Avenue, Orlando, Florida, 32806, and for other purposes.

H.R. 7036. An act to amend the Antitrust Criminal Penalty Enhancement and Reform Act of 2004 to repeal the sunset provision.

H.R. 7120. An act to hold law enforcement accountable for misconduct in court, improve transparency through data collection, and reform police training and policies.

H.R. 7259. An act to allow acceleration certificates awarded under the Patents for Humanity Program to be transferable.

The message also announced that the House has agreed to the following concurrent resolution, without amendment:

S. Con. Res. 38. Concurrent resolution to establish the Joint Congressional Committee on Inaugural Ceremonies for the inauguration of the President-elect and Vice President-elect of the United States on January 20, 2021.

The message further announced that the House of Representatives having