

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