

States District Judge for the Western District of Louisiana.

Mr. McCONNELL. Madam President, 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. SCHUMER. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.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 MINORITY LEADER

The Democratic leader is recognized.

CORONAVIRUS

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, yesterday, after putting the Senate on pause for 3 months and after months of blocking nearly every Democratic attempt to pass legislation related to the coronavirus, the Senate Republicans finally revealed their long overdue proposal for the next phase of COVID relief.

In my many years of serving in this Chamber, I have never seen a Republican majority—a Senate majority of any type—respond to a national emergency in such a disorganized and disoriented fashion. Weeks of infighting among Senate Republicans and the White House caused unnecessary and harmful delays.

Instead of presenting a single, unified bill, the Republicans released several separate drafts last night, and there might be more today. They can't agree on one bill. They can't get 51 votes for anything that is comprehensive and that deals with the very real problems the American people face. Even before the Republicans announced their bills, senior Republican Senators admitted they lacked the full support of the Republicans. Two Republican chairmen have said that probably half of the Republican Senate will vote against their own proposals. Worst of all, the Republican plan falls dreadfully short. It is ununified, unserious, and completely unsatisfactory.

My Republican friends, this is the greatest crisis America has faced in generations—100 years since the last health crisis of this magnitude, 75 years since the Great Depression—and you are paying attention to your corporate friends and not answering the needs of the people.

We Democrats want a real bill that answers people's needs, that deals with the serious problems we face. That is what we are fighting for. We will keep fighting for it, and our Republican friends are nowhere to be found.

While the Republican proposal fails to provide crucial relief for families, workers, and the unemployed, it is littered with corporate giveaways, K Street handouts, and Presidential pet projects. The Republican bill includes a \$20 billion slush fund for large agribusiness and tax breaks for three-martini lunches, but it doesn't provide a dime in food assistance for hungry kids. It includes an unprecedented, sweeping provision to shield corpora-

tions for 5 years from liability for negligent treatment of workers and consumers, but there is no new, sweeping provision to shield Americans from evictions or foreclosures.

It includes a \$30 billion wish list for defense contractors but no funding to make sure Americans can vote safely in November. There are reports that the Republican proposal may include a provision to lower capital standards at the Wall Street big banks but nothing to help State, local, and Tribal governments keep teachers, firefighters, and busdrivers on the job.

The Senate Republicans managed to sneak in nearly \$2 billion in taxpayer funds for a new FBI building, the location of which will increase the value of the Trump hotel and enrich the President and his family. Yes. In this proposal, the Senate Republicans reward the President and his family's business interests but not our essential workers.

Whom do my Republican friends need to help more—President Trump, who proudly claims he is a billionaire, or a worker who is about to lose his job, a small businessperson whose business is going under, or a family who can't feed hungry children? Who needs the help more—they or President Trump?

Perhaps, worst of all, in the middle of the pandemic, the Senate Republicans and the White House want to give out-of-work Americans a 30-percent pay cut. If you have lost your job through no fault of your own and you can't go back to work because the administration bungled this crisis, the Senate Republicans propose taking \$1,600 out of your pocket every single month.

Well, let me show my colleagues what New Yorkers think of the Republican proposal: Let them eat cake. GOP plan slices \$600 check and rejects aid to states. Let them eat cake. That is what New Yorkers think. That is what Americans think. Let them eat cake. Shame. Shame on our Republican friends.

The cover of the New York Daily News sums it up. Let them eat cake. "Let them eat cake" sums up the Republican proposal in response to the greatest economic crisis in 75 years. Let them eat cake.

People can't feed their kids. People are losing their homes, getting kicked out of their apartments. Small businesses are going under. The Republican response? Let them eat cake.

Who are the Republicans fighting for in this proposal? Tax breaks for three-martini lunches but no food assistance for the poor? Immunity for corporations but no immunity for Americans facing eviction? Twenty, thirty million unemployed Americans and Republicans say take a 30-percent pay cut? Who are the Republicans fighting for in this proposal?

If you are a big bank, a defense contractor, a member of the Trump family, the Republican proposal has some good news for you, but if you can barely afford the rent, can't find work, can't feed your kids, or are fighting for

your family's future, the Republican plan leaves you out in the cold.

The consequences of the Republican policy on unemployment alone would be disastrous. Those enhanced benefits have kept 12 million Americans out of poverty. Those enhanced benefits are the one bright spot in this declining economy—that consumer spending is going up now, in large part because of pandemic unemployment insurance as well as PPP.

One of the few things that has kept our economy from deteriorating further is that these unemployment benefits have boosted consumer spending. That is why economists say the Republican proposal could cost over 1 million jobs this year and 3.4 million jobs next year. The Republican proposal is causing us to lose even more jobs.

States have warned us that the Republican plan on unemployment is unworkable, to boot. We called State unemployment offices yesterday to ask them what would happen if the Republicans passed this new scheme. One State office simply said: Chaos. Chaos. Office after office said it would take weeks, months to even implement the new plan. What are people going to do during those weeks and months when they are not getting unemployment insurance?

The idea on the Republican side that we have to slash unemployment benefits because otherwise Americans won't go back to work is exaggerated. Americans want to work, are ready to work, and are desperate to get back to work. Such little faith in the American people. Such a bad outlook on human nature. People want to work, Republican friends; they just don't have jobs to do it, and we are not going to let them starve while that happens.

God forbid we provide tens of millions of unemployed Americans a lifeline until we defeat this disease and get our economy back on its feet seems to be the Republican attitude. The Republicans seem to think the American people are a bunch of loafers. Well, they are not.

Now, we Democrats want to get something done. We are certainly frustrated with the dithering, the disunity, and the lack of understanding of the depth of the crisis coming from the Republican side, but that will not stop us. We must press on with bipartisan negotiations. Time is running out. We cannot afford to fail. But the Republican new proposal is not an adequate starting point.

History is repeating itself. Each time we came together in the past to pass COVID 2, COVID 3, and COVID 3.5, it was because both parties sat down with each other and negotiated and did the hard work. But that was only after Republicans dared us and put an inadequate proposal on the floor and said: We will blame you. We held firm. They came back. We negotiated a much better bill. My hope, my belief, is that they will have to do that again.

Leader McCONNELL is in his "Alice in Wonderland" characterizations here on