

the food on our dinner tables and make sure our supermarket shelves are stocked.

These producers are facing low prices, regulatory overreach, a challenging trade environment, and drastic and sudden changes in demand for their crops and animals. To top it off, net farm income is estimated to drop by nearly \$20 billion as of this year. Despite all these challenges, they have continued to produce even more with less.

American farmers and ranchers are so efficient at their jobs that we are able to enjoy the most affordable food of any country in the world—and the most safe. We also have the safest and most ample food supply.

That is why I consider—as well as all of my colleagues on the Agriculture Committee and others who are privileged to represent farmers, ranchers, and growers—that they are true heroes.

Producing food for a troubled and hungry world is what farmers do day in and day out, but especially at times like this, it is nothing short of heroic. We have taken steps to address the needs of our Nation's farmers and ranchers, and in recent months—in March—unanimously, we passed the CARES Act.

I would say that would be a goal we might want to achieve with the Heroes Act scaled down to whatever we want to call it—and also the HEALS Act. At any rate, it was unanimous back then, and that funded the Department of Agriculture to address the needs related to the pandemic, among a lot of other things.

We included \$9.5 billion for Agriculture Secretary Sonny Perdue to deliver emergency support for those in agriculture and the food industry who suffered losses due to the pandemic, and we included \$14 billion partial replenishment for the Department of Agriculture's Commodity Credit Corporation to provide additional assistance to affected producers. This legislation ensured the continued implementation of our 2018 farm bill programs, which do provide certainty and predictability at a time when both are scarce.

We also provided additional resources for telemedicine, broadband connectivity, as well as business and industry loans. The CARES Act also supplied the Department with the resources to continue mandatory inspection services to ensure our food safety and minimize potential interruption in the food supply chain.

COVID-19 created a ripple effect that has been felt from the farm to the supermarket. The agriculture and food sector, along with the administration, the CDC, and OSHA have all implemented practices and policies that address worker health and safety in our processing plants. Keeping America's meat and poultry processing system functional was imperative—it was difficult, but we are making progress—as was boosting worker safety and protection in these plants.

Now we must take what lessons we have learned in the past few months and build upon this progress.

I am privileged to be the chairman of the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry. I have worked on the role of addressing rural America's priorities as part of a fourth COVID-19 relief package, as have all members of the committee, both Democrat and Republican.

This week, we are considering legislation with the hopes of a bipartisan solution. We all know and we anticipate this process will go through several twists and turns before a final agreement is reached, but we must provide solutions. The entire country is truly counting on us.

In closing, I want to again thank our farmers, our ranchers, and our growers all across the country who have continued to do their job during these very difficult times, and I want them to know that we are continuing to work to make sure they have the tools needed to continue to feed not only our country but a very troubled and hungry world.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Mississippi.

Mrs. HYDE-SMITH. Mr. President, as we debate the need for additional coronavirus relief funding, I am pleased to join my colleagues in commending the millions of Americans who have gone above and beyond to help others during this pandemic.

Throughout our Nation's history, everyday heroes emerge in times of turmoil to aid their neighbors in so many ways. The COVID-19 pandemic is no exception. In every corner of my State, Mississippi's first responders and healthcare providers are historically stepping into harm's way to provide care to patients affected by the virus.

REMEMBERING WILLIAM DAVID MARTIN

Mrs. HYDE-SMITH. Mr. President, let me first honor the life of William David Martin, a paramedic with American Medical Response of Southwest Mississippi, serving on the frontlines of Mississippi's healthcare as COVID-19 began to spread.

Sadly, in April, he passed away from complications due to the virus. Mr. Martin is a true hero and one example of the extent to which first responders and healthcare workers are working to overcome this national emergency.

COVID-19 HEROES

Mrs. HYDE-SMITH. Mr. President, rural hospitals like King's Daughters Medical Center in my hometown of Brookhaven have always been the backbone of healthcare in Mississippi. The work of the staff at these rural hospitals during the pandemic has been remarkable.

Dedicated nurses like my friends Larue Lambert, Tammy Livingston, Misty Britt, Christina Miller, and their

coworkers—which are so many—toil every day under heavy stress and heart-wrenching situations to care for patients and their families. They are lifesavers, and they are best friends to total strangers. They take on extra shifts and duties while doing what they can to keep morale up. They are healthcare heroes who are enduring extreme conditions.

Doctors like Dr. Jeff Ross are working through both physical and mental exhaustion. Yet they continue to do their job, selflessly managing the care of their fellow Mississippians.

In the heavily affected Jackson metropolitan area, the University of Mississippi Medical Center has brought its unique capabilities to bear. In the early days of the pandemic, its research labs rushed to create its own in-house COVID test. And the UMC National Telehealth Center of Excellence quickly ramped up technology to triage patients for testing and provide socially distanced care.

I greatly admire UMC's work with the Federal Government on best telehealth practices during a pandemic. As potential treatments have emerged, UMC researchers and healthcare providers have stood up eight cutting-edge COVID clinical trials in their new clinical trials unit.

Our healthcare providers aren't the only ones who have been working to protect the health of Mississippians. Industries across the State have quickly pivoted to provide needed supplies to fight COVID-19. For example, distilleries like Wonderbird Spirits in Taylor, Cathead Distillery in Jackson, and Lazy Magnolia Brewery in Kiln made the quick decision to begin producing hand sanitizer early in the pandemic. Furniture companies, like Confortaire in Tupelo, stepped up to produce needed PPE for the North Mississippi Medical Center and our local schools. And Mississippi Prison Industries, a non-profit that gives incarcerated individuals the opportunity to be employed and gain work experience, is producing up to 15,000 masks and 7,000 isolation gowns per day.

Since the start of this pandemic, I recognized that we are dealing with two emergencies. There is the healthcare emergency and the economic emergency. I am proud of the many ways in which Mississippians are helping each other weather these difficult economic times.

Mississippi bankers worked around the clock, 7 days a week, to help small businesses access the Paycheck Protection Program loans. Our friend Brad Jones at the Bank of Franklin in Meadville, MS, was so helpful in keeping me abreast of the needs of our local business owners. Because of their efforts, Mississippi ranked No. 1 in the entire Nation in PPP loans, with nearly 50,000 loans processed. This tireless work is helping small businesses stay open with their employees at work.

Ensuring Mississippians have access to food has been a challenge. A Mississippian who has been a godsend to