

Yet that small business person and the people I talk to in Michigan feel an incredible sense of urgency.

I talk to our family farmers who work night and day, battling the weather and low prices and chaotic trade policies. I have talked to someone raising livestock who can't find a processor that they need right now to make the food for hungry families. They certainly feel a tremendous sense of urgency.

The reality is that there are millions of people across this country who don't understand what is not happening here—why there is no sense of urgency, why there hasn't been a willingness to come together. Why didn't it happen 2½ months ago? What is going on? It appears that too many people don't care.

This is the United States of America. We are one of the wealthiest nations in the world. We invented the assembly line. We put our footprints on the Moon. We are seeing what is happening today. We should never have gotten to this point right now where people are losing 60 percent of their income on unemployment benefits, are hungry trying to feed their kids, worried about losing the roof over their head or their small business or the family farm. We should never have gotten to this point, but here we are.

It has been more than 80 days since the House passed the Heroes Act—more than 80 days. Since that time, our essential workers, who deserve hazard pay, have been waiting. Those providing public services in our cities and towns and in States have been waiting for the support they need so that they don't lose their job and we don't lose those public services. Our businesses, our schools, our farmers all have been waiting, waiting, waiting. The reality is it is because it is just another Thursday—just another Thursday afternoon in the U.S. Senate.

Senator MCCONNELL has made it very clear that they are just going to have to wait some more. Right now, we should be voting on an important survival package for people in our country. We should be investing whatever it takes to manage and get our arms around this virus, do the testing, provide the healthcare, remain laser focused on getting vaccines. People should have confidence that everything humanly possible is being done and that there is a sense of urgency here.

I feel a sense of urgency. My Democratic colleagues feel the sense of urgency. Through the actions on this floor, we do not see that the Senate Republican majority feels the sense of urgency that every single person in Michigan feels right now.

We need to take action. People are tired of waiting. They can't afford to wait any longer. This is about their lives and their livelihoods. People need help. The Congress, working with the President, needs to provide that help, and there is no excuse not to act.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maryland.

CORONAVIRUS

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Mr. President, here we are—another Thursday afternoon in the Senate. It is pretty quiet around here. It is amazing how quickly this place gets quiet when the Senate majority leader, the Republican leader, Senator MCCONNELL, tells people: We don't have any more work to do today. By the way, we don't have any more work to do tomorrow, Friday. By the way, don't worry about Saturday or Sunday. Monday, you know, I will be here, says the Majority leader, but the Senate doesn't need to be here doing its work—maybe not Tuesday or Wednesday either.

I want to thank the Senator from Michigan, Ms. STABENOW, for being down here, standing up for working men and women and families and small businesses because, for them, it is not business as usual. It is not business as usual for all the folks who are out of work.

Thirty million Americans are on unemployment insurance, but here in the Senate, for the Senate majority leader, it is business as usual. Take a day off. Take the weekend off. Be on standby next week. Maybe we will start doing something real.

I can tell you the coronavirus is not on standby. The coronavirus is not taking a day off or 2 days off. It is continuing to spread in many parts of the country. We don't have enough testing equipment. We are not able to test people quickly. It takes people days and days and days and, in some cases, weeks to get their results.

We hear the President of the United States saying he wants to open up the economy and open up schools. We all want to open up the economy. We all want our children back in school, for classrooms are the best place for learning. But do you know what? You can't just wish for that to happen, just like you can't wish for the coronavirus to go away, and that makes it go away. You need to do real work. You need the testing equipment so that we can test people in realtime and make sure that we prevent further outbreaks. We don't want bonfires to turn into brush fires to turn into prairie fires. You need to catch the virus and contain it. You can't do that if you don't have testing equipment.

So the virus is not taking a day off or 2 or 3 or a week, and we shouldn't either. This Senate needs to do its job. We are in the middle of a pandemic. This is not a normal August. This should not be business as usual, and as Senator STABENOW said, we should not be here, at this moment, with important protections having already expired. This Senate sat by and did nothing while the protections against evictions expired. The eviction moratorium that was protecting millions of Americans—gone. The extra \$600 a week in

unemployment—gone. Yet here we are with the majority leader saying: Take Friday off. Take Saturday off. Business as usual.

Well, that is a difficult thing to tell families and workers and small businesses around the country, and it cannot be business as usual.

The House of Representatives passed the Heroes Act more than 2½ months ago. It realized that after we passed the CARES Act in a bipartisan way, important protections were going to expire, and it acted. The House made sure it passed legislation to extend the enhanced unemployment of \$600 a week. It passed legislation to extend the eviction moratorium. It provided additional food assistance for our kids. It provided important funds for rental assistance, which not only helps tenants stay in their apartments and homes but provides the payments to the landlords so the landlords can make the payments to the people they owe money to and on up the economic food chain.

The House did all of that, and what did the Senate do for 2½ months? Nothing. Nothing. It is like a train is heading right for you, and you stand in the middle of the tracks until it hits you when any commonsense person would do what the House of Representatives did, which was to take action to make sure that we didn't cross these deadlines and cause unnecessary harm to millions of American families, workers, and small businesses. That is what the Senate has done.

Now, even after we are into those deadlines—we have crossed those deadlines—what does the majority leader here, the Republican leader, say? Take tomorrow off. Take the weekend off. Take Monday off. In fact, the Senate may not come in for a while. I mean, we will come in, but there will be no voting, no real business.

Let me tell you what I am hearing from my constituents, because I know it is not different from what other Members are hearing from theirs. Here is a letter I received from a single mom.

I live . . . with my 15-year-old son as a single mother. I am asking for your help in voting to extend the \$600 Federal unemployment benefit. I understand a lot of politicians do not want this extended due to the thought that the benefit is too great and will prevent Marylanders from wanting to return back to work, in that they make more money from staying at home off of the State/government this way. Now, we all know, if your job calls you back during this time and you choose not to return, your benefits are going to be cut off anyway.

As for me, I am losing thousands of dollars each month being out of work and am barely scraping by as it is now with the extra \$600. I desperately WANT TO RETURN to work and make my regular salary, which is more. I am very thankful for the extra \$600 a week and have no idea how I would have survived without it during this time. I have zero other means to any money or credit. I have been able to pay my rent, feed my son, and pay some bills. I have deferred my car payment until August and am behind on car insurance. I am desperately asking for your help

and the help of the government to extend this extra \$600 a week benefit for a little while longer. Not to sound ungrateful, but an extra \$100 or \$200 per week is just not enough to help pay rent and other bills. Cutting this benefit abruptly will cause such economic hardship and devastation to so many Americans.

This is a single mother, with a 15-year-old son, who is pleading with the U.S. Senate to do its job. And what does the majority leader say to Senators? Take tomorrow off. Take Saturday off. Take Sunday off. Take Monday off.

I want to read another letter I received on this subject. Here is what my constituent wrote:

I am emailing in hopes of asking for your support to extend the \$600 Federal assistance in addition to unemployment. While I realize that the country has to spend more and more during this pandemic, many of us are learning our temporary layoffs are now permanent (I received the call yesterday) and our industries are still completely shut down. I have always worked in the hotel industry and have no further education or experience than that. The hospitality industry is the hardest hit during this pandemic. While I search multiple times a day for jobs, they simply are not open because the industry has not yet recovered. In fact, our industry is downsizing immensely.

I am a single mother to one 5-year-old boy who will start kindergarten in the fall. We do not receive any financial assistance through the State, such as housing assistance or child support. Maryland unemployment of \$430 per week will not even cover the rent costs, and we will quickly be evicted with no options for housing.

I am not looking to make more money than I was at my job. That is not possible. I grossed \$75,000 in 2019, but I am looking to be able to pay my rent and bills and part-time childcare because it is in the best interest of my son to have social interaction and education during the pandemic even if I am not working. Please—I beg you—please support the extension of the \$600 per week benefit.

Now, I have heard a lot of Senators on this floor over weeks and months talk about how we just cannot extend \$600 a week. Yet we hear from these moms and parents who are pleading for that help so that they can simply pay their bills and get by. Even with that, they are not able to pay all of their bills.

The Republican leader says to the U.S. Senate: Take a day off. Take 2 days off. Next week, I will be in, says the majority leader, but I don't need for the Senate to be in, doing its work.

What are we all here for? We should be here 24/7, working around the clock together to resolve these issues.

We have a lot of multi, multi, multi-millionaires in this U.S. Senate, and it is really rich for all of us to be telling families out there that the extra \$600 per week is too much. That is just too much.

These are individuals who want to go back to work. I just read to you a letter from someone who works in the hospitality industry. That is her experience. That is what she knows.

I don't know if our Republican colleagues have checked recently, but the unemployment rate is around 15 per-

cent. There are a lot of people out there who are looking for work who can't find it. They can't find it because we are in the middle of a pandemic, and that has caused a lot of small businesses and others to shut down in order to make sure that we stop the spread of the virus.

These are people who want to get back to work. They want nothing better than that. They want their children back in school. All of us do. Yet we have a failed, botched Federal response, starting with the White House—starting with the President, who has made this a political issue when it has to be a health issue. It has made the problem a lot worse, and we all know it. We all know that this pandemic is lasting longer in the United States and has killed more people in the United States because of a totally failed response right from the top, and we should not be complicit in that. We should do our job.

We have the majority leader, the Republican leader. What is he saying? He is not even part of the negotiations, right? He says: You know, I am in my Republican caucus lunches, and, reportedly, only half of the Republican Senators want to do anything.

I don't know if that is true or not, but that is what Republican Senators are saying on national television. That is what we are hearing from the Republican caucus. So, if that is not true, it would be great to hear all of the Republican Senators come down to the floor and talk about what they are willing to do, not what they are not willing to do. Because there are not the votes there, the majority leader has contracted out his negotiation authority to the White House, and he has told the Senate to go home.

Let's just start doing our job here in the U.S. Senate. Nobody should be contracting out his job and his vote and his negotiating authority to the White House. This is the U.S. Senate. I don't know what people ran for if they just want to say: Oh, I can't deal with this because my caucus doesn't support any response. Go talk to the White House.

In the meantime in the Senate, take Friday off. Take Saturday off. Take Sunday off. Maybe take Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday off, too.

That is a hell of a message to send to the American people in the middle of a pandemic during which so many people are hurting.

I will end with this. Instead of the majority leader's coming down to the floor today and telling everybody to go away, we should stay here. We should stay here, and we should do our job. Doing our job means coming together with the next round of emergency legislation to slow down and then stop the spread of the virus and help the millions of Americans who are in tremendous economic pain right now. This is not business as usual. The Senate needs to do its job. Let's stay here and get it done.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Delaware.

CORONAVIRUS

Mr. COONS. Mr. President, I rise to join my colleagues this afternoon in asking: Is this just another Thursday—is this just another afternoon in a week, in an average year, or in an average August—when it is fine for all of us to simply head to our other commitments and concerns?

Sometimes here in Washington it is awfully easy to feel and be disconnected—disconnected from the daily concerns and grinding anxiety of the pressing issues that make the lives of the folks we represent so different.

I want to start by reminding us of something a Senator—a Senator from Minnesota—once said in the 1970s. It was Hubert Humphrey who said: The moral character of a society can best be gauged by how they treat those at the dawn of life, its children; those in the shadows of life, the disabled, the disadvantaged; and those in the twilight of life, senior citizens.

Well, if that were the measure of this place in this day and this time, then we are failing.

I think every person here, every person listening or watching knows that we are in the midst of three crises at the same time: a global pandemic, the COVID-19 pandemic, in which a highly transmissible disease has spread rapidly across the world. Many other nations have gotten ahead of it, have managed it, have stabilized it, but here in the United States, we have failed to get our arms around it, to stop it, and to deliver the coordinated resources and supplies needed to give some confidence, some positive direction in our public health infrastructure; in our schools, in our senior skilled nursing centers; in our communities. It has gotten away from us.

More than 150,000 Americans have died so far, and States that thought they had it well under control are seeing it reemerge, and States that early on saw no impact are seeing record deaths and infections.

And coming right on the heels of it, a recession—a recession deep and sharp. In the last quarter, a nearly 40-percent drop in our GDP; the sharpest since we began recording that.

And then third, a renewed focus on inequality in our country. We have seen, because of this pandemic and recession and because of the brutal killing of George Floyd, a reminder of the ways in which we are unequal in our access to healthcare, our access to opportunity, our access to housing.

So that is the environment we are in. Several months ago, we all came to this floor and unanimously voted—unanimously, in this bitter and divided partisan time, we unanimously voted to deliver \$2.3 trillion in assistance and support that sent checks to individual Americans and families, that sent checks to those who were newly unemployed, that sent support for small