The Senate met at 11 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable Roy Blunt, a Senator from the State of Missouri.

PRAYER
The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

O God, our refuge and strength, give us reverence for Your greatness. Guide our Senators around the pitfalls of their work, enabling them to have hearts sustained by Your peace. May they surrender their will to You as they trust You to guide their lives.

Lord, give them the wisdom to receive Your reproof, with the understanding that You chastise those whom You love for their good. Make their lives productive for the glory of Your Name.

Mighty God, protect the oppressed and helpless, preserving them from evil.

We pray in Your great Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE
The Presiding Officer led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

APPOINTMENT OF ACTING PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE
The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will please read a communication to the Senate from the President pro tempore (Mr. Grassley).

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the following letter:


To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby appoint the Honorable Roy Blunt, a Senator from the State of Missouri, to perform the duties of the Chair.

Chuck Grassley, President pro tempore.

Mr. Blunt thereupon assumed the Chair as Acting President pro tempore.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER
The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

CORONAVIRUS
Mr. McConnell. Mr. President, yesterday, I spoke about the disconnect between the discourse here in Washington and the pain and uncertainty that American families are feeling all across our country.

I spoke about the human toll of the Democrats’ choice to play politics with billions and billions of aid and block it all over non-COVID-related wish list items.

It has been clear for some weeks that the Speaker of the House and the Senate Democratic leader are treating this crisis like an ordinary political game.

The New York Times says Speaker Pelosi is “playing hardball.” POLITICO says she is “taking a huge risk . . . as she remains almost entirely unyielding in her demands.”

More than 160,000 Americans have been killed by the worst infectious disease outbreak in more than a century. More than 16 million Americans are out of work. An entire school year for our kids is in limbo, but Democrats are playing political games like this were some run-of-the-mill typical negotiation.

Speaker Pelosi’s own Democratic House Members call her proposal “Washington gamesmanship,” “partisan gamesmanship,” and “playing politics.” Those are House Democrats I am quoting on the House Democratic bill.

Yesterday, literally a few minutes after I said on the floor that Democrats should stop treating this crisis like a game, the Democratic leader came to the floor to talk about who “ran down the clock,” who “tossed up an air ball,” and who “subbed themselves out of the game.”

So, look, the Democrats aren’t taking this as a serious issue. They aren’t acting like this is serious, and the American people are hurting in the meantime.

Let’s get outside the beltway and listen to how this crisis has impacted real American families and how the Democrats’ stonewalling continues to hurt them.

Since we passed the CARES Act, I have been visiting healthcare facilities in my home State of Kentucky—places like St. Claire’s Healthcare in Morehead and King’s Daughters Medical
Center in Ashland—always wearing a mask and social distancing, of course. I have thanked the frontline workers and heard how the Senate’s last rescue package has helped them save lives and stay safer themselves while doing it. That is why Senate Republicans proposed major new investments in health providers. We want to send tens of billions more to expand testing, to reimburse healthcare facilities for unplanned pandemic expenses, to speed the development and rapid distribution of COVID-19 treatments, and to find a vaccine to finish the battle on behalf of our communities, and Congress must not be finished helping them do it. That is why Senate Republicans proposed major new investments in health providers.

We are grateful for the $465,000 in the PPP. One woman-owned small business in Kentucky shared: ‘‘Those benefiting from PPP. But Republicans want another round of direct checks—direct checks to households across Kentucky and across America. I just heard from one constituent who said: ‘With my first one, I was able to get an eye exam and need help; I appreciate all you can do. Some of us are hurting and need help.’ I want to put more cash in her pocket right now, but Democrats are blocking every penny over unrelated, liberal demands.’’

So do you see the pattern? Kentuckians need more help; Americans need more help. The American people are not doing fighting this virus, and Republicans are not doing crafting policies to help them. But the difference between now and March is that Democrats seem to be finished being reasonable.

The Speaker of the House and the Senate Democratic leader have cut all their colleagues—all of them, all of their committees—out of negotiations. They are doing this alone, and they have declared that none of the priorities I have named will see a single dime unless—the two of them have declared none of the priorities I have named will see a single dime unless millionaires in Brooklyn and San Francisco get a massive tax cut. States get a trillion-dollar slush fund to cover budget problems long before the pandemic, and we tax essential workers to pay unemployed people a higher salary to stay home.

Republicans wanted to reach agreement on all these issues where we could find common ground and fight over this last few issues later. But the Speaker and the Democratic leader say nothing can move unless every one of these unrelated, far-left items tags along.

These two individuals are letting the wish lists of wealthy coastal elites stand between every working family in America and the additional help they deserve. So maybe in a few moments the Democratic leader or somebody on the other side will try again to explain how their wish lists of wealthy coastal elites tags along. That is why Senate Republicans proposed major new investments in health providers. Our country is approaching another small business tipping point, and workers need results. And Republicans will fight until we actually get an outcome.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will be in a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

The Senator from Virginia.

VICE PRESIDENTIAL NOMINATION

Mr. KAINÉ. Mr. President, I rise today to speak about the latest coronavirus emergency aid package, but before I do, as a matter of personal privilege, I want to offer some comments in praise of a colleague. Just as we gather together, regardless of party, to mourn when a colleague dies or be there for a colleague who is undergoing a challenge, I think it is good to gather together and acknowledge when something positive happens to a colleague, regardless of our political affiliation.

This is the first opportunity on the Senate floor to offer a word about Senator Kamala Harris, one of our colleagues, who, in a historic move, was asked by another former Senate colleague, Vice President Joe Biden, to join him as his preferred nominee to be Vice President of the United States.

I have come to know Senator Harris in her 4 years in the Senate, as many of us have, through her service on especially the Judiciary Committee and the Intelligence Committee.

Her public service track record is a significant one worthy of praise, from her work as a district attorney, first a line prosecutor, and then the elected district attorney in San Francisco, where she focused on trying to keep her community safe, to serving as California’s attorney general, broadening the portfolio to include environmental justice and consumer protection, and now her work in the Senate since 2016.

What I find so compelling about Senator Harris, in addition to her track record of public service during a very long career, is her personal story. Raised as the child of two immigrants, a Jamaican father and an Indian mother, as so many in this country raised as children of immigrants, she developed a passion to serve and a patriotic love of country.

She is the first African-American woman nominee ever to be on a ticket. She is the first person of South Asian descent ever to be on a ticket. And in 2020, with the 100th anniversary of the amendment that guaranteed women the right to vote, I can think of no
greater way to celebrate a centennial than for one of our colleagues who is a woman to have a chance to break a glass ceiling that still has existed, whereby no woman in this country has ever been a Vice President or President.

We are so good at so much in this country. In fact, we are so good at many things with regard to women in this country, but we are sort of uniquely bad in electing women to higher office. In Congress right now, 24 percent of Congress is women, and that ranks us 76th in the world in terms of our percentage of women in a national legisliative body. We are tied with Afghanistan, but we trail Iraq and Mexico and many other nations.

So regardless of how it all works out between now and November, and regardless of our own political affiliations, this is a good day, I believe, for the country and a good day for the Senate when 1 of the 100 is recognized in such a way and introduced to the American public with an opportunity to serve at a significant level.

CORONAVIRUS

Mr. KAINE. Mr. President, returning to the latest coronavirus emergency aid package—currently, the package doesn’t exist. There have been no bipartisan negotiations on it since last Friday. That is disappointing to all of us who strongly and willingly want to negotiate and vote for a strong bipartisan relief package.

The House of Representatives passed its strong package back on May 15, now nearly 2 months ago. Today is August 12. There was some hope that maybe the economic devastation was reducing, but COVID cases did not tick down over the summer, and in fact, they have ticked up in many parts of the country, and the Senate has not taken any votes on the House bill or indeed on any bill. That is disappointing.

More than that, it is disappointing for millions of Americans who are in the midst of hard times right now. They are worried about their own health or the health of their loved ones. They are worried about whether they will receive unemployment benefits and how they will make rent or mortgage or how their children will get an education. We know in this body we can transcend politics as usual to address the coronavirus because we did so in March by passing the CARES Act, even as Members of the body, including me, were getting coronavirus as we were having those negotiations. Even as staffers were getting it, even as Senate spouses were getting it, we stayed at the table and found a bipartisan bill that helped us deal with the challenge for a few critical months.

But we are here debating this again because the magnitude of the crisis is not a crisis of a few months. No, it is such that the aid provided thus far is running out while Americans’ hardships continue. That is why it is essential that we not give up and that we stay here as long as it takes to come through for the American people.

I have yet to hear from Congress and, indeed, some in this body say about more Federal aid for the coronavirus response say: I just don’t see the need for it. Indeed, the majority leader has candidly acknowledged that approximately 80 percent of the Republican caucus will not vote for more aid. Well, I want to make the case first that there is need for it, and the need is undeniable because the circumstances that people are living in are dire.

Last Friday, we found out that the unemployment rate in July was 10.2 percent, which is a number that is higher than at any point during the 2008, 2009 recession. The President called these “Great Jobs Numbers!” But I don’t see anything great about 1 in 10 Americans who are in the workforce not being able to find work. More than 30 million Americans are collecting unemployment benefits, and last week those checks were cut by more than 50 percent. In Virginia, just as an example, unemployed workers are now receiving a maximum—a maximum—of $378 a week. That is not enough to pay rent, let alone rent, groceries, child care, or any other costs that families face every day.

Because they lost their jobs and other income, millions of Americans are now at risk of eviction or foreclosure. The $600 Federal unemployment benefit and Federal eviction moratorium were holding this off for many, but with those relief measures expiring, families are unable to continue paying their August or September bills.

One estimate is that 12 million evictions will be filed by October, and 12 million is essentially the combined population of about 6 or 7 States. There could be that many evictions filed by October. Just in Virginia, that was a State-imposed eviction moratorium that lapsed for 5 weeks, and just in those 5 weeks, nearly 10,000 evictions were filed, potentially forcing people out of their homes.

Three in ten Virginia renters surveyed by the National Low Income Housing Coalition said that was the case. Housing instability is difficult at any point in time, but imagine losing your housing during a pandemic. What are people supposed to do during a pandemic? They can’t stay home and don’t go out and don’t be with others, that will help keep your family safe. But how can you quarantine at home if you are in danger of losing your home?

Like the majority leader, who quoted from constituents in Kentucky, I am hearing from Virginia constituents every day.

From Allison in Henrico:
I have now exhausted my savings account and have rent due, groceries to buy and bills to pay. I am now desperate for immediate help.

From Rhys in Mechanicsville:
I have three children, one with significant special needs. My wife cannot work now due to covid-19 and the school closures. I am behind on numerous bills, including mortgage, utility, and other bills.

From Dominique in Fairfax:
My rent is now 3 months behind as well as my other bills and I am receiving letters [threatening] evictions and services being turned off.

Unfortunately, these examples are now not aberrations, but they are common. We all know people—we all know people—who are at risk of losing their home or being hungry or losing healthcare or their savings depleted because of the absence of work.

So we have to make sure that people are not removed from their homes in the middle of a health crisis. We need to make sure they can continue to pay their bills until the health crisis is sufficiently addressed and the economy gets back to where it was.

Schools and colleges across the country are trying to reopen right now. It doesn’t matter if it is online, or a hybrid model, we want them to reopen safely right now, and this is the time to provide schools with the resources they need to deliver quality instruction, not punish them for following public health guidance and data.

Working families are struggling to find childcare options. This is critical to reopening the economy. Childcare providers themselves are struggling. Virginia, according to national surveys, is at risk of losing 45 percent of its licensed childcare capacity; that is, 130,000 childcare slots in Virginia without the additional support they would need to help them stay viable. If we lose childcare capacity, that will have a significant consequence in terms of the ability of people to go back to work so that the economy can start to grow again.

On the nutrition front, we are facing an unprecedented rise in food insecurity as thousands of Virginians and millions of Americans have newly enrolled in the SNAP program. The Brookings Institute estimates that nearly 14 million children are living in food insecure households—14 million children. That is nearly six times the number of children who were food insecure just as recently as 2018, and nearly three times as many who were food insecure at the peak of the great recession in 2009 and 2008.

As I bet all of my colleagues have experienced this because we are all out in our States talking to folks. Food banks have been slammed with demand they have never witnessed before, and it has been harder for food banks to get grocery access because grocery store shelves have also been ravaged because people are going to grocery stores while restaurants are closed.
What do food banks do with increasing demand and fewer donations from grocery stores? The Capital Area Food Bank purchased 100 semitruck loads of food in April, which is triple what the food bank purchased in all of 2019. Just in 1 month, they tripled the food that they were chasing year-to-year in 2019. The Blue Ridge Area Food Bank, which serves the western part of Virginia, saw the number of new families seeking food assistance quadruple from last year, just as of May.

Americans are in a dire state. Their basic needs are at stake, we Democrats want to address that hardship. We did address that hardship in the Heroes Act, which we passed in mid-May. We want to keep people from losing their jobs, being evicted, and going hungry.

I know there are many Republicans who share these same goals, but the proposals that have been on the table in this body are simply inadequate. There are areas that we agree on. Aid to small businesses; aid to health care. Broadband is important because as people telecommute or get telehealth or get educational content online, they have to have access to broadband. Testing is important. Childcare is important to the economy. The important priorities I believe we can come together on, but the Republican plan that the Senate GOP introduced in this body, which the majority leader again acknowledges that at least 20 Members will vote against, has large cuts to unemployment aid, no State and local government aid to prevent layoffs of first responders and vital programs and services.

The majority leader characterized State and local government agencies as a “slush fund.” I was a mayor. I was a Governor. I know what is happening to State and local budgets, and when the revenues to State and local governments decline, there is about one place the cuts can go, and that is where they can go is through furloughs, waivers, salary cuts, and cutting personnel.

The overwhelming majority of first responders in this country work for State and local governments. It is never a good time to cut police, fire, EMT, ambulance, healthcare workers—never a good time—but the worst time to do it is in the midst of a global health pandemic. It is not a slush fund; it is a necessity that the communities where people live and work have basic services to get through this challenge.

The Republican proposal has inadequate education aid, no aid for the eviction tsunami that is facing us to provide rent or mortgage assistance, no nutrition aid in the SNAP program or otherwise to help the 14 million kids who, today, are living in food-insecure households.

The Republican proposal did include a comprehensive liability shield to prevent anyone from suing if their employer’s negligence causes a virus outbreak. I thought it was interesting that so often on the other side of the aisle in this body, when this prospective bill has been talked about, that has been in the front of the line as if the worry about lawsuits is the biggest concern that the American people have right now. No one in Virginia, when they tell me about their concerns, is putting lawsuits more on the top of the list. We are talking about food, hunger, healthcare, and housing.

The liability shield proposal in the GOP goes even further than protecting businesses against liability. It is just as bad as our States’ abilities to pass safety regulations. Virginia became the first State in the country to do an emergency temporary standard to provide guidance to public places and employers about safety standards that they could use on the job. It is good to get advice about safety standards because most businesses don’t have an NIH or CDC or a health department, so advice about standards that should be followed in workplaces is a first. First, first State in the country to do that.

The Republican liability shield would not only give people liability protections, but it would take away the ability of the States to do what Virginia did and try to give aid to try to strong protect for workers and customers. That is unacceptable—unacceptable.

Democrats offered to meet halfway. We knew when the Heroes Act passed—I mean, we have been around the block a few times. If the Republicans were just as of May.

That is a good idea. We will just vote for it.

That is not the way things work. The Senate Republicans would have their proposals, just as Democrats have their proposal. The two proposals have dramatically different prerogatives. The Senate proposal, together with the White House, came in the neighborhood of $1 trillion and the House proposal came in the neighborhood of $3 trillion.

There is nothing magic about these numbers, but it is important to understand that willingness to compromise is something Americans expect of us right now. Democrats said: OK, you know what, if it is a $1 trillion, we will take $1 trillion, and we have a package that is worth $3 trillion. Let’s split the difference. We will have to decide how to compose the $2 trillion package, but let’s split the difference. The White House refused. The White House got an offer to meet halfway and said: That is not what we are going to do. We insist on the skinny version.

The skinny version is inadequate to meet the moment. This is the worst economic contraction in the 145 years that we have had measured. We have had measured quarterly economic growth in this country. This is the worst pandemic that the United States has dealt with since the flu pandemic of 1917 and 1918. A narrow bill isn’t enough.

If you don’t like the Democratic bill because you think the pricetag is too big, how about meeting us halfway? That is how negotiations so often happen. After the White House rejected the notion of meeting halfway, the President issued Executive orders that he claims break through the logjam.

Like many things the President does, though, an analysis of the Executive orders demonstrates there is little substance there. The President proposed a deferred payroll tax collection. That doesn’t actually give Americans more money; it just gives them a larger tax break next year. Because it is a deferral, the President cannot lift the obligation off either the employers or the employees. It is also very confusing to employers to suggest: OK, you should defer, but it is likely to start back up again and that is very confusing to employers, especially small employers, to figure out.

We all know that the payroll tax is the main pillar of Social Security, as every generation pays into the system while they are working so they can enjoy retirement with dignity in their senior years. President Trump has said that this isn’t just a deferral, but if he has his way and is reelected, he is going to permanently cancel the tax. That would undermine retirement security for all future generations.

The Executive order with respect to housing did actually nothing. It just ordered agencies to look into delaying evictions and foreclosures, but no assurance and no dollars for those facing eviction or for those facing foreclosures. Look into “can you delay them.”

Governors are already saying that the Executive order dealing with unemployment aid looks like an extension, but if you dig into it, that is not what it is. It wasn’t as if Senate Republicans would have their proposal. The White House, came in the neighborhood of $3 trillion. Let’s split the difference. The White House refused. The White House got an offer to meet halfway and said: That is not what we are going to do. We insist on the skinny version.

What about the millions of students who are struggling to financially find a way to go back to college, or the schools that are trying to find a way to still make sure students get an education when they are working families that are struggling to find childcare? School boards and superintendents around the country have come with a proposal saying that to open schools safely would cost about $175 billion, and that is what Democrats have put on the table. That is not addressed at all in the Executive orders, even as we stand at the threshold of schools reopening.

In sum, the President’s Executive orders address virtually none of the hardships, solve virtually none of the hardships, and lift virtually none of the burdens that Americans are suffering through right now. We are having hard
times, We are having hard times, and it is our duty to try to address that hardship.

Democrats are willing to compromise. When we say, “Hey, we have a plan but we will meet you halfway in your plan,” and the White House says, “No,” you know, what are we supposed to do? What are we supposed to do? A skinny version isn’t sufficient for the magnitude of the crisis.

The Senate Republican proposal has some elements that we support, but it leaves so many others unaddressed that it is not adequate. The Republican White House has rejected compromise. President Trump’s Executive orders are partly illegal, partly unworkable, and completely insufficient. It doesn’t have to be this way because there are many areas on which we can find agreement.

I know many in this body are hearing from their home States’ Governors, mayors, local governments, colleges and who is worried about rent or food, or somebody who has lost a job or someone who has gotten COVID–19 or somebody of a government frozen in the ice of its own indifference.

The Senate Republican proposal has some elements that we support, but it leaves so many others unaddressed that it is not adequate. The Republican White House has rejected compromise. President Trump’s Executive orders are partly illegal, partly unworkable, and completely insufficient. It doesn’t have to be this way because there are many areas on which we can find agreement.

I know many in this body are hearing from their home States’ Governors, mayors, local governments, colleges and universities, school boards and the chambers of commerce. You are hearing the same thing that I am hearing from Virginians.

So, as I conclude, it doesn’t have to be this way. We can put together a good bipartisan deal, but it can’t be a “White House my way or the highway.” It has to be a willingness to meet and find compromise between a Democratic proposal and a proposal that is not only at least some on the GOP side and the White House.

Any large compromise in a divided government is bound to be imperfect. I am reminded of a quote from FDR during the Depression years. You never really had to use quotes from the Depression because the magnitude of the Depression was different than what I have experienced during most of my life, but now quotes from the Depression, I think, bear some revisiting. Here is what FDR said as the administration was at the time, were doing everything they could to figure out a way to help out needy Americans: “Better the occasional faults of a government that lives in a spirit of charity than the consistent omissions of a government frozen in the ice of its own indifference.”

By now, everybody knows somebody who has gotten COVID–19 or somebody who has gotten sick or even died or somebody who has lost a job or somebody who is worried about rent or food. We all know those people, and many of us have experienced this in our own families. Are we going to help or are we going to be frozen in the ice of our own indifference? Let’s surprise the Senate. Let’s work together and get this done.

With that, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. BOOZMAN). The Senator from Nevada.

CORONAVIRUS

Ms. CORTEZ MASTO. Mr. President, you know, as I sit and listen to my colleagues from Virginia, I can’t agree more. Now is the time, really, for us to come together to do what the Senate traditionally does best, and that is working on the best interests of the people across this country who are struggling right now.

Compromise is a bad word. It is time for us to get in a room and really do the job that the American public expects us to do, and that is looking out for their best interests at a time when we have a healthcare pandemic. Now, keep in mind that this is a once-in-a-lifetime moment to act.

So that requires us to come together and really focus on how we help Americans across this country who are struggling right now. They shouldn’t be penalized.

We have asked them to stay home and shelter in place because we are trying to address how we do the research that is necessary for a vaccine. Hopefully, one day, we will have that vaccine. We need to ramp up the testing so that Americans can feel safe and comfortable knowing whether they have this virus or not or the antibody, but we are not there yet because more work needs to be done, particularly by this Congress. The American public has heard us, and they are sheltering in place, they are staying home, and they have shuttered their businesses. Now, more than ever, this country needs the Senate to act.

The House has done its job 2 months ago. They worked a comprehensive package, and I say “comprehensive” because we can’t just pick and choose winners and losers here. This isn’t what this is about. This is about making sure we are bringing relief and helping those across this country. Everybody is impacted. We have promised them: If you do what we say and we help stem the spread of this virus, we are going to have your backs, and we are going to support you. I will say that we have failed at that. This administration has failed. We have failed at that promise. I know when we all go to our offices or we go home to our States, we are hearing from our constituents. We get emails, we get calls, and we get letters. I know you all feel the same as I do, and we read them and we listen to them. I don’t know of one State in this country right now where somebody is not suffering from this pandemic who needs our help.

I know that is why I am here, because we all took the oath. We said we are going to be here to work in the best interests of our States and this country and to make sure that those individuals across this country who pay our salaries—those taxpayers—expect us to do our jobs and work. And that is what I am asking for right now.

You know, I have been to the floor of the Senate more than to talk about the struggles that I see in my State. We all get letters, and I do want to focus today on one. There are so many, and that is why a comprehensive package is necessary. Right now, I would love to talk to you about what I am seeing in my home State when it comes to our seniors and those who are in need right now with funding to help nursing homes.

And, maybe just a little bit of background. I just think that it is how it starts with all of us—calls into our offices and letters coming from our constituents. There are two calls that I received. One of them was from a daughter who was calling for her father who works at a VA nursing home in Boulder City, NV, and because he isn’t showing symptoms, he isn’t getting tested. With so many cases there, how is this possible? Where are the tests? This is a daughter who is concerned for her father, knowing that if we just get people tested, there is that comfort in knowing whether or not you have this virus and whether you should be quarantined or how we protect you, particularly those in nursing homes.

Then, another call I received was from a mother. She is also a certified nursing assistant at a nursing home, and she is telling me that many there because they don’t have the proper PPE. They want to work, but they don’t want to expose themselves. So what are we doing right now to address all of these needs?

And, listen, there is so much. It is overwhelming. I know it. That is why we were sent here for the hard decisions, not the easy ones, to make sure we are all working in the best interests of the people in our States. I know you all feel the same way.

I have to tell you this. There are thousands of Nevadans that know the anxiety that comes because there is a spouse, a parent, or a grandparent in a nursing home, and they are unable to visit with them or hug their loved ones for fear of giving COVID–19. You have seen it. You have heard it, and I have heard it. Too many loved ones have lost their loved ones because of this virus, and they were not able to be there.

Do you know who was there with them in the nursing home? Those incredible heroes on the frontlines, who are sacrificing their own health to be with them, for those who passed away because of COVID–19. There are so many factors that raise a coronavirus risk for nursing home residents. The majority of the residents, as we all know, are seniors. Many have underlying conditions. They live in close quarters, and they share common spaces. And we also know this: Residents and staff of these facilities shouldn’t be an afterthought. They are a core part of our communities and our healthcare system. They are the elders, and they are the keepers of our stories. We have to do more to protect them.

We need to protect the workers in these homes, too, many of whom belong to communities of color and who are struggling to provide care to a population with unique needs.

The reason why I bring this up is because there is legislation out there to
do just what I am talking about and what we need in our communities. It is not something new. It has already been introduced. My colleague Bob Casey introduced the Nursing Home COVID-19 Protection and Prevention Act to get nursing and long-care facilities in Nevada and other states the same supplies, PPE, the testing that they need, and the staffing to help the staff and those who are in those communities.

These homes need support to slow the spread of the virus and to respond rapidly to situations, using all we have learned from combating this virus so far. The bill funds teams of nurses and other critical staff to lend emergency help at nursing homes with outbreaks and to bring the best practices to bear in helping sick residents.

This bill ensures folks in my home State and across the country are being taken care of and that families have peace of mind that there is accountability for providers and protections in place for families.

I am hearing from family members and loved ones with those in nursing homes in my State. I am hearing from caregivers and healthcare workers. I know all of you are as well, and one thing that comes from all these folks is a feeling of being forgotten. No one—one in America should feel forgotten right now. It is time for us to come together.

We need to make sure nursing homes follow guidelines and that, if they fail to do so, they will be held accountable. We also must arm them with the tools they need to face a virus that has been relentless in attacking seniors. We should make sure that the next coronavirus package that we should be negotiating and working on right now does everything it can to support the most fragile in our communities because they are also some of our most precious.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The senior Senator from Missouri.

Mr. BLUNT. Mr. President, I think the President of the United States has done the things he can do within his authority to try to address the issues before us, but the truth is, his authority just doesn’t go far enough.

Now, I have frequently questioned the President’s view of how broad the Presidential authority is, but in these actions he took in the last few days, I looked at them carefully, and I think he had the authority to do what he did, but he would probably be the first to admit that the authority he has doesn’t solve the problem the way it needs to be solved.

It is time that the Congress stepped up and did its job. You know, in this debate with the President, there is the article I view of the government. There is a reason that the legislative branch is article I. There is a reason it is our job to do what we can, and there is a reason that it is the President’s job to execute those laws. Occasionally, the President has to act quicker on some emergency basis than the Congress, and within the fairly narrow ability he has to act on this issue, he has tried his best to step up where the Congress has failed to step up.

My good friend from Virginia just said, well, the House bill is $3 trillion, and the Senate bill is $1 trillion. We should figure out how to compromise at $2 trillion. Now, I believe in compromise. I think it is the essence of democracy, but compromise actually has to be based on some principle of the issue we are dealing with. I know, for example, if the House bill had been $5 trillion, I guess the logic would be that we compromise at $3 trillion. If they had known that, their bill would have probably been $5 trillion.

When the bill was passed, it was described by more than one reporter as a Democratic wish list or the ultimate campaign platform having everything in it. It was described by a whole lot more than one reporter that a lot of the things to do with COVID, and another third of their bill is about the big question of what we can do to help State and local government.

Let’s put that issue aside for a minute. It is an issue that clearly the House feels strongly about. Clearly, there are challenges to governments, particularly at the local level, I think, and that has to be dealt with in some way and maybe not at the $871 billion level or whatever they have suggested. But that is a different issue that I will, first of all, concede is very much part of the discussion and should be.

But if you take out the third of the bill that has nothing to do with COVID—let’s get that off the table. We could have a debate about whether people who are in the legal marijuana trade should get access to banking, but I think you have to work really hard to make that a COVID issue. We could have a debate about whether the Federal Government should require every State in the country to allow ballot harvesting, but I think that is very hard to make a COVID-19 issue.

A third of the bill, according to many people who analyzed the bill when it came out, has nothing to do with COVID. So let’s set aside the other third of the bill that deals with State and local government, our giving State and local government what we don’t have to replace money they don’t have. I am not going to say that some element of that will not be in a final bill, but let’s talk about the things we all know need to be in the first bill, which, in the House bill, were about $1 trillion.

How do you compromise with the House when you agree with them on a number and they change the number?

Getting back to school is a critical part of what ought to be happening right now. By the way, back-to-school money the schools get in December will not be nearly as helpful as back-to-school money the schools get in August. They need the money now. We need to see kids back to school, whether it is distance learning, which takes some assets and planning that districts need to do more on, or in-person learning where that is possible, where you have more expenses for probably more bus routes so you don’t put as many kids on the same bus; delays for delayed starting times; and more expenses for social distancing in classrooms. They need that money now.

In their bill, the Heroes Act, for example, secondary, and higher education, the House put in $100 billion. We looked at that carefully. I chair the committee that appropriates. I think we know as much in our committee as anybody in the Senate about some of the needs that are out there. We thought the number was $105 billion. As soon as our bill came out, the Senate—really need $400 billion. How do you meet somebody in the middle when they keep changing where the middle is?

The Heroes Act, which Members on the other side of the aisle have repeatedly said we should pass and pass immediately, had $100 billion. We had $105 billion. If you would have been good enough. We might have argued some about the language, but there is no much difference on the language. The argument is that Republicans never spend enough, according to the Democrats, and the Republicans seem to have no limit on what they are willing to spend, according to us.

For childcare, there is a critical need for people to get both back to school and back to work. The childcare system is intensely stressed as part of what is going on—people who lose their jobs and local government what we don’t have. The House put in $7.5 billion, and then suddenly the middle was somewhere between $15 billion and $30 billion. You would think that would be a COVID issue. We could have a debate about whether the Federal Government should require every State to offer childcare; people who would prefer, when they have figured out how to do this a different way, not to put their kids back in childcare for a little while. I haven’t talked to anybody who is the—childcare cost to make up for the fact that 50 percent of the kids aren’t there? Of course not. That doesn’t work at all.

The House put in the Heroes Act $7.5 billion for childcare; we put $15 billion for childcare. Then the House decides: Well, no, we really need $40 billion or $50 billion for childcare. It is pretty hard to compromise in the middle if the middle was somewhere between $15 billion—and I think, hopefully, our number would have prevailed—and $7.5 billion, and then suddenly the middle is somewhere between $50 billion and $15 billion.

Let’s be serious here. Let’s get this job done. Let’s get kids back to school. Let’s get childcare back for kids. Let’s do what we can to restore the healthcare system that has been incredibly
stressed during this, and let’s quit acting like there is this vast disagreement, when the disagreement is way more apparent than real.

If you look at the third of the bill that dealt with COVID-19 that the House passed very close to the Senate, we are a little ahead of them on testing. Testing absolutely is essential, in my view, to get kids back to school and to get people back to work. Until we get well into the vaccine period, having the vaccine for that vaccine to people. Testing is going to continue to be critical. We have money for vaccines and vaccine distribution that I think exceeds the House bill money. We could talk about what is really not a very big difference in a $1 trillion bill or something a little more than that.

We have said in our bill that, on testing, on vaccines, and on other things, we are going to set some priorities. We said the Federal Government priority is to be sure that everybody gets that test and they can get it as quickly as they can get it. We said nursing homes, childcare centers, elementary and secondary education, and colleges and universities would be Federal priorities. Employers are going to have to deal with some of the workplace priorities, but we think those are the right Federal priorities, and we put it in our bill.

Back to work: You have to have childcare, again, to get back to work. A second round of PPP: Again, something the Senator from Virginia agreed we need to do.

Healthcare provider assistance: We ask our healthcare providers to do the two hardest things you could possibly do at the same time: one was stop all of the income you can possibly stop—stop the so-called elective surgeries. By the way, some elective surgeries get less elective the longer you wait until you have them, and we are seeing some results today. I think there was some logic to stop putting people into the hospital, if you didn’t have to, or having them in the surgeon’s facility, if you didn’t have to, until we knew what was happening here—and not only stop the income but stand ready for the worst epidemic your community may have ever had to deal with or may ever have to deal with at any time in the future. So maintain your full readiness, stop your income. We need to come back now for the third time to provide money for PPP. Again, money now is much more valuable than money 90 days from now.

Telemedicine: We finally have woken up to what the Federal Government should have been doing for a decade and embrace telemedicine as part of normal office visits that don’t have to happen in the office as part of behavioral health.

Our bill says that CMS, which determines how Medicare money is spent, can’t go back, we say, that they have allowed in the last few months, ever. And on some of the things they have allowed, they can’t go back for a significant period of time to see how this works.

Broadband: We could deal with this. If we are going to have telemedicine and telebehavioral health, that kind of medicine, as well as other kinds of telemedicine, we need access to broadband. Kids who are learning remotely have to have the same opportunity as other kids who are learning remotely and need to have access to broadband. They need it as soon as the assistance to get hooked up, which is a little easier than just access. We have been working hard in this Senate and in our State legislature in my State to get the Missourians who don’t have access to high-speed broadband to get that access.

There are areas here that are areas we need to be dealing with. Most of them, you have to really work hard to pretend there is a disagreement. Sure, you can decide that your education category was only really 25 percent of what you really needed, but I think our House friends know that is not right, and we know that is not right. This is probably not the last bill we will pass, if it turns out we are incorrect on our $100 billion or $105 billion, but $100 billion right now to schools trying to get started is worth more than what $200 billion will be in May.

Let’s give them the help they need when they need it. Let’s quit arguing about whether the President has inadequate tools to do what everybody knows needs to be done. Certainly, that is true. That should be true, that under the Constitution, the Congress has to do its job.

Compromise is more than some middle number between an outrageous number and a number that may turn out to be not quite big enough. Let’s change the color of the number and the text get serious. Let’s do our job. Let’s get back to school, the country back to work, the country back to childcare, and do those things we need to do to restore both the healthcare system and, more importantly, the health of every American we can possibly help.

I yield the floor. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The bill clerk will call the roll.

Mr. CASSIDY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

VETERANS MENTAL HEALTH CARE IMPROVEMENT ACT

Mr. CASSIDY. Mr. President, I rise today to speak to a very important piece of legislation, which quietly passed this Chamber last week. It included several provisions I authored and offered based upon my experience as a physician that specifically provides mental health support to America’s veterans.

We all agree, we owe the men and women who fought and fight for this country a tremendous debt of gratitude for the sacrifices they made to preserve our freedom. It is dangerous, and our servicemembers answer the call. Many come back scarred from injuries sustained during that service.

But there are scars that we cannot see. Service can take a physical toll but also a mental one. Too many veterans struggle with mental health illness and suicidal thoughts. About 17 veterans per day from all of our wars put together take their own lives. For comparison, 22 servicemembers were killed in combat in Afghanistan throughout all of 2019. We are losing the bravest men and women in the field. That is something to ponder.

We must do a better job of leading the mental health needs of veterans. Today I am pleased to add a big step forward last week when we passed the Commander John Scott Hannon Veterans Mental Health Care Improvement Act.

This bill improves outreach to veterans and offers new mental healthcare options in five major ways: First, the bill bolsters the VA’s mental health workforce to serve more veterans. It gives the VA direct hiring authority for mental health professionals. The VA can offer scholarships to mental health professionals to work at vet centers, and it provides for at least one suicide prevention coordinator at every Veterans Administration Hospital.

It improves rural veteran access to mental healthcare by increasing the number of locations where veterans can access VA telehealth services. It also offers grants to non-VA organizations that provide mental health services or alternative treatments to veterans.

The bill strengthens support and assistance for servicemembers transitioning out of the military by automatically giving every servicemember a full year of VA healthcare when they leave the military.

By the way, this came to my mind: It turns out that most suicides occur within 6 weeks of one of our soldiers or sailors or marines leaving the service; within 6 months of that departure is when they tend to commit suicide. But it is about 6 months before they first access VA services. We have to have these provisions of transition and one that makes sure they all know they have VA benefits for that first year.

The Veterans Mental Health Care Improvement Act also studies and invests in innovative and alternative evidence-based treatment options. It invests in research on the impact of living at high altitudes, on veterans’ suicide risk, and on identifying and treating other risk factors for mental health illness.

It holds the VA accountable for its mental healthcare and suicide prevention efforts. It does this by examining...
how the VA manages suicide prevention resources and how the VA provides care and information sharing for veterans seeking mental healthcare from both VA and community providers. This bill takes a strong, evidence-based approach to meeting veterans' needs that haven't always been given priority. It is encouraging to me that it is bipartisan. At a time when we don't appear to agree on very much, we are able to deliver for our heroes.

I have worked with my Democratic colleagues to write bills that were included in this package. Senator Tester and I partnered on the Promoting Coordination for Veteran Suicide Prevention Act. This bill, this amendment, ensures that a thorough review of veterans who die by suicide within 1 year of separation from the Armed Services is conducted jointly by both the Department of Defense and by the VA.

As I mentioned, most suicides occur within 6 months of separating from service. If that is the case, then the Department of Defense can do a review of what are those risk factors and have a warm handoff to the Veterans' Administration Hospital. And because we made a change for the first year of service within the VA, that warm handoff can be taken without any impediments of is there coverage or is there not.

There is also going to be a partnership between the mental health and suicide prevention experts in both the VA and DOD that will contribute to improved information sharing and help further close the gap in ensuring high-quality, seamless care between these two Departments, focusing on the serviceperson who has now become a veteran.

Senator Tester and I also worked together on the VA Research Approval Efficiency Act. This provision authorizes the Veterans Administration to leverage commercial institutional review boards for use in connection with VA-sponsored clinical research. Getting the VA commercial options for approving clinical trials will add much-needed efficiencies and begin to reduce the disparity with academic and other institutions that today, lead in clinical trial administration.

If we know that our treatments for those with mental illness often need to be improved, we want to give our veterans access to those improvements as soon as possible, but we also want to make sure that those treatments suit the needs of the veteran. You can only do this by encouraging that research activity with full consent of the veteran—full consent—which she or he must participate in these trials for her benefit, his benefit, but also for the benefit of us all. This reform enables the VA to increase the caliber care it delivers to veterans in a variety of clinical areas.

Senator Tester and I introduced the Improving Mental Health Care for Veterans Act. This provision requires VA and DOD to establish a joint clinical practice guideline for treatment of serious mental illness. This common-sense approach builds on an already robust library of clinical practice guidelines that serve to standardize and reinforce treatment procedures in other areas. Just as a point, if someone is found to be well-controlled in a certain medical regimen but then they transition to another different care with a different formula, then all the hard work to find just the right clinical pharmaceutical program to keep the person balanced now has to be changed because the second department has a different formula—a different set of drugs with which they wish to treat—all the good work done here is lost there.

We wish to eliminate that possibility by making sure there is a common set of clinical guidelines so that somebody with stress is passed off and it is seamless, both in terms of the clinical care, but also the medicines which they may take.

The passage of the Commander John Scott Hannon Veterans Mental Health Care Improvement Act is the culmination of a lot of hard work from both Democratic and Republican Senators. It now goes to the House for consideration. I urge the House to swiftly pass this legislation so that President Trump can sign it into law.

This bill will have a direct, positive impact in the care the VA delivers to American veterans. They answered the call to serve our Nation; now, Congress must answer the call to better serve them.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. BOOZMAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. Cassidy). Without objection, it is so ordered.

VETERANS

Mr. BOOZMAN. I want to take a second to thank the President Office for the great work that he is doing on the Veterans’ Affairs Committee. As the Senator just spoke earlier, he is working hard to take these bills and improve them. Everyone is working together, and we certainly appreciate the fact that the Senator has so much experience in a variety of different ways and has added so much the committee. We are very thankful for that.

I rise today to recognize the significant steps that the Senate recently took to improve the mental healthcare of veterans and save lives with the passage of the Commander John Scott Hannon Veterans Mental Health Care Improvement Act. This moves us one step closer to paving a new path forward in suicide prevention and implementing a new strategy that, I believe, will give hope and purpose to the men and women who live with these invisible injuries. More than 50,000 organizations nationwide provide suicide prevention services for veterans. These nonprofits and community organizations rely vitally on the lead to build effective programs.

I have heard from veterans how organizations like the one based in Rogers, AR, Sheep Dog Impact Assistance, are encouraging them to live their best life. I have also seen how outdoor therapies like Rivers of Recovery are supporting the mental health needs of veterans and how veteran service organizations are stepping up and addressing mental healthcare in their communities.

We have so many organizations in Arkansas and throughout the country that are doing a great job in this capacity. In Mount Home, AR, the Disabled American Veterans chapter changed its approach after the region experienced the highest veteran suicide rate in the State, one of the highest in the Nation. Members enhanced their contact with veterans in the area. This connection has saved lives and reversed the suicide rate in Northern Arkansas.

It makes sense that we harness the ideas and successes of this DAV chapter and other advocates into sound policy. That is why I joined with Senator WARNER and Ranking Member JON TESTER, and our staffs in include our proposal, the IMPROVE Well-Being for Veterans’ Act, in the comprehensive mental healthcare package, again, that we just passed in the Senate. I especially want to thank Rosie Heiss, Amanda Want, and Pat McGuilin, members of my staff who spent countless hours and worked with numerous groups to find a solution to help veterans.

The VA estimates around 20 veterans commit suicide each day. That number has remained roughly unchanged despite a tremendous increase in funding. Interestingly, only 6 of those 20 veterans are receiving healthcare services in the VA. By sharing information and collaborating with veteran-serving nonprofits and other community organizations, we can expand our network and provide the help the veterans need and ultimately, capture more veterans into our VA system.

VA Secretary Robert Wilkie called this approach “key” to unlocking the
veteran suicide crisis. Hopefully, he is right. I applaud the Senate for advancing this bill and look forward to working with my colleagues in the House of Representatives to quickly approve this legislation so that we can reassure veterans that their best days are ahead of them.

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. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. Boozman). Without objection, it is so ordered.

NATIONAL SEERSUCKER DAY

Mr. CASSIDY. Mr. President, today I rise in recognition of seersucker manufacturers and enthusiasts across the United States. I wish everyone a Happy National Seersucker Day. This uniquely American fashion has a storied history dating back to 1909. The first seersucker suit was designed by Joseph Haspel at his Broad Street facility in New Orleans, LA. Louisiana is proud to have played an important part in introducing the country to seersucker apparel.

This lightweight cotton fabric, known for its signature pucker, has been worn and enjoyed by Americans across the country during the hot summer months. Mr. Haspel said it best: "Hot is hot, no matter what you do for a living."

In the 1990s, Seersucker Day was established by Members of this Chamber to honor this unique American fashion. I proudly resumed this tradition in 2014 in the U.S. House of Representatives and continued this tradition in the U.S. Senate. This year, I wish to designate June 13 as the seventh annual National Seersucker Day. I encourage everyone to wear seersucker on this day to commemorate this traditionally American clothing.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

TRIBUTE TO THE TREASUREBELLES

Mr. DAINES. Mr. President, this week I have the honor of recognizing the women of the TreasureBelles out of Treasure County for their efforts to promote Montana ag, and I applaud their efforts to serve their fellow Montanans in the Treasure County community.

MESSAGE FROM THE HOUSE

At 11:02 a.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 bill, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H.R. 7617. An act making appropriations for the Department of Defense for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2021, and for other purposes.

MEASURES REFERRED

The following bill was read the first and the second times by unanimous consent, and referred to:

H.R. 7617. An act making appropriations for the Department of Defense for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2021, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Appropriations.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

The following reports of committees were submitted:

By Mr. WICKER, from the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation, with an amendment in the nature of a substitute:

S. 999. A bill to provide for Federal coordination of activities supporting sustainable chemistry, and for other purposes (Rept. No. 116–251).

By Mr. WICKER, from the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation:

Report to accompany S. 2525. A bill to require the National Institute of Standards and Technology to conduct a study of personal protective equipment worn by firefighters to determine the prevalence and concentration of per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances, and for other purposes (Rept. No. 116–252).

By Mr. WICKER, from the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation:

S. 2525. A bill to require the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration to make certain operational models available to the public, and for other purposes (Rept. No. 116–253).

By Mr. WICKER, from the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation, with amendments:

S. 2775. A bill to improve the cyber workforce of the United States, and for other purposes (Rept. No. 116–254).


By Mr. WICKER, from the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation, without amendment:

S. 3132. A bill to extend the Undertaking Spam, Spyware, and Other OnlineFraud Enforcement With Enforcers beyond Borders Act of 2006, and for other purposes (Rept. No. 116–256).

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

The following bills and joint resolutions were introduced, read the first and second times by unanimous consent, and referred as indicated:

By Mr. MARKEY:

S. 4523. A bill to regulate large-scale emissions of methane and natural gas, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Mr. CARPER:

S. 4524. A bill to amend titles XIX and XXI of the Social Security Act to provide coverage of comprehensive tobacco cessation services under such titles, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mrs. BLACKBURN:

S. 4525. A bill to ensure that health care providers do not incur additional Federal income tax liability due to receipt of assistance through the Provider Relief Fund during the COVID–19 pandemic; to the Committee on Finance.

By Ms. HIRONO (for herself, Mr. CASEY, Ms. HARRIS, Mr. BROWN, Ms. ROSEN, Ms. Cortez Masto, Mr. SANDERS, Mr. BOOKER, Ms. BALKIN, and Mr. BLUMENTHAL):

S. 4526. A bill to ensure that COVID–19 related Federal programs and assistance provide for the translation of informational materials relating to awareness testing, and treatment for COVID–19 into priority languages; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

ADDITIONAL COSPONSORS

S. 450

At the request of Mrs. GILLIBRAND, the names of the Senator from Minnesota (Ms. KLOBUCHAR) and the Senator from Hawaii (Ms. HIRONO) were added as cosponsors of S. 450, a bill to modernize voter registration, promote access to voting for individuals with disabilities, protect the ability of individuals to exercise the right to vote in elections for Federal office, and for other purposes.

S. 624

At the request of Ms. KLOBUCHAR, the name of the Senator from Nevada (Ms. ROSEN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 624, a bill to amend the Help America Vote Act of 2002 to require States to provide for same day registration.

S. 1791

At the request of Mrs. GILLIBRAND, the names of the Senator from Delaware (Mr. CARPER) and the Senator from Rhode Island (Ms. SHUMACKER) were added as cosponsors of S. 1791, a bill to prohibit discrimination on the basis of religion, sex (including sexual orientation and gender identity), and marital status in the administration and provision of child welfare services, to improve safety, well-being, and permanency for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer or questioning foster youth, and for other purposes.

S. 2561

At the request of Mrs. SHAHEEN, her name was added as a cosponsor of S. 2561, a bill to amend the Lacey Act Amendments of 1981 to clarify provisions enacted by the Captive Wildlife Safety Act, to further the conservation
At the request of Mr. Menendez, the name of the Senator from New Jersey (Ms. Smith) was added as a cosponsor of S. 4538, a bill to amend title XIX of the Social Security Act to allow States to provide coverage under the Medicaid program for vaccines and treatment for COVID–19 for uninsured individuals without the imposition of cost sharing requirements, and for other purposes.

AMENDMENTS SUBMITTED AND PROPOSED

SA 2648. Mr. Grassley (for himself and Ms. Ernst) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 2499 proposed by Mr. McConnell to the bill S. 178, to condemn gross human rights violations of ethnic Turkic Muslims in Xinjiang, and calling for an end to arbitrary detention, torture, and harassment of these communities inside and outside China; which was ordered to lie on the table.

At the request of Mr. Enzi, the bill S. 178, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 2650. Mr. Enzi submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 2499 proposed by Mr. McConnell to the bill S. 178, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

TEXT OF AMENDMENTS

SEC. ___ RENEWABLE FUEL FEEDSTOCK REIMBURSEMENT PROGRAM.

(a) DEFINITION.—(1) ELIGIBLE ENTITY.—The term ‘‘eligible entity’’ means an entity located in the United States that produces renewable fuel used as transportation fuel (as those terms are defined in section 211(o)(1) of the Clean Air Act (42 U.S.C. 7545(o)(1))).

(b) ELIGIBLE FEEDSTOCK.—The term ‘‘eligible feedstock’’ means renewable biomass described in section 211(o)(1)(D) of the Clean Air Act (42 U.S.C. 7545(o)(1)(D)) that is intended to be used to produce the renewable fuel described in paragraph (1).

(c) SECRETARY.—The term ‘‘Secretary’’ means the Secretary of Agriculture.

(b) ESTABLISHMENT OF PROGRAM.—Notwithstanding any other law, for purposes of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986—

(1) the amount of any CARES Act Provider Relief Fund payment shall be excluded from the gross income of the recipient of such payment; and

(2) no deduction shall be denied or reduced, no tax attribute shall be reduced, and no tax increase shall be denied, by reason of the exclusion from gross income provided by this subsection.

(b) CARES ACT PROVIDER RELIEF FUND PAYMENTS TO HEALTH CARE PROVIDERS.

SEC. ___ TAX TREATMENT OF PROVIDER RELIEF FUND PAYMENTS TO HEALTH CARE PROVIDERS.

(a) TAXABILITY.—Notwithstanding any other law, for purposes of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986—

(1) the amount of any CARES Act Provider Relief Fund payment shall be excluded from the gross income of the recipient of such payment; and

(2) no deduction shall be denied or reduced, no tax attribute shall be reduced, and no tax increase shall be denied, by reason of the exclusion from gross income provided by this subsection.

(b) CARES ACT PROVIDER RELIEF FUND PAYMENT.—For purposes of this subsection, the term ‘‘CARES Act Provider Relief Fund payment’’ means any grant or similar assistance
provided by the Secretary of Health and Human Services under the provider relief fund established through the Public Health and Social Services Emergency Fund under the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (Public Law 116-136), including any additional amounts appropriated to such fund under the Paycheck Protection Program and Health Care Enhancement Act (Public Law 116-139) or any other provision of law enacted after the date of enactment of such Act.

SA 2650. Mr. ENZI submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 2489 proposed by Mr. McCONNELL to the bill S. 178, to condemn gross human rights violations of ethnic Turkic Muslims in Xinjiang, and calling for an end to arbitrary detention, torture, and harassment of these communities inside and outside China, which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. 3. PANDEMIC UNEMPLOYMENT ASSISTANCE.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 2102(a) of the Relief for Workers Affected by Coronavirus Act (contained in subtitle A of title II of division A of the CARES Act (Public Law 116-136)) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (3)—

(A) in subparagraph (A)—

(i) in clause (i), by striking “and” at the end; and

(ii) by inserting after clause (i) the following:

‘‘(iii) an individual who does not provide documentation substantiating employment or self-employment or the planned commencement of employment or self-employment under subparagraph (A)(iii).’’;

(2) by redesignating paragraphs (4) and (5) as paragraphs (5) and (6), respectively; and

(3) by inserting after paragraph (3) the following:

‘‘(4) DOCUMENTATION SUBSTANTIATING EMPLOYMENT OR SELF-EMPLOYMENT OR THE PLANNED COMMENCEMENT OF EMPLOYMENT OR SELF-EMPLOYMENT.—The term ‘documentation substantiating employment or self-employment or the planned commencement of employment or self-employment’ means documentation provided by the individual or included in the State agency records substantiating employment or self-employment and wages earned or paid for such employment or self-employment, or such information related to the planned commencement of employment or self-employment.’’.

(b) APPLICABILITY.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Beginning not later than 30 days after the date of enactment of this Act, each State shall require that documentation substantiating employment or self-employment or the planned commencement of employment or self-employment not later than 21 days after the later of the date on which the individual submits an application for assistance under this section or the date on which the individual is directed by the State Agency to submit such documentation, except that—

‘‘(I) such deadline may be extended if the individual has shown good cause under the applicable State law for failing to submit such documentation; and

‘‘(II) the documentation described in this clause shall not be required if the individual previously submitted such information to the regular or other unemployment compensation; and’’; and

(2) PRIOR APPLICANTS.—Any individual who applied for pandemic unemployment assistance under section 2102 of the Relief for Workers Affected by Coronavirus Act (contained in subtitle A of title II of division A of the CARES Act (Public Law 116-136)) on or after the date of enactment of this Act shall submit documentation substantiating employment or self-employment or the planned commencement of employment or self-employment or the planned commencement of employment or self-employment (as defined in such section 2102) not later than 90 days after the date of enactment of this Act (or earlier if required by the State) or the individual will be ineligible to receive pandemic unemployment assistance under such section 2102.
SENATE COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Title IV of Senate Resolution 4, agreed to by the Senate of February 4, 1977, calls for establishment of a system for a computerized schedule of all meetings and hearings of Senate committees, subcommittees, joint committees, and committees of conference. This title requires all such committees to notify the Office of the Senate Daily Digest—designated by the Rules Committee—are time, place and purpose of the meetings, when scheduled and any cancellations or changes in the meetings as they occur.

As an additional procedure along with the computerization of this information, the Office of the Senate Daily Digest will prepare this information for printing in the Extensions of Remarks section of the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD on Monday and Wednesday of each week.

Meetings scheduled for Thursday, August 13, 2020 may be found in the Daily Digest of today's RECORD.

MEETINGS SCHEDULED
SEPTEMBER 23
9:15 a.m.
Committee on Armed Services
Subcommittee on Readiness and Management Support
To hold hearings to examine Navy and Marine Corps readiness.

SD-G50
Daily Digest

Senate

Chamber Action
Routine Proceedings, pages S5391–S5401

Measures Introduced: Four bills were introduced, as follows: S. 4523–4526.

Measures Reported:
  S. 999, to provide for Federal coordination of activities supporting sustainable chemistry, with an amendment in the nature of a substitute. (S. Rept. No. 116–251)
  Report to accompany S. 2525, to require the Director of the National Institute of Standards and Technology to conduct a study of personal protective equipment worn by firefighters to determine the prevalence and concentration of per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances. (S. Rept. No. 116–252)
  S. 2597, to require the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration to make certain operational models available to the public, with an amendment. (S. Rept. No. 116–253)
  S. 2775, to improve the cyber workforce of the United States, with amendments. (S. Rept. No. 116–254)

S. 2805, to improve transit-oriented development financing, with amendments. (S. Rept. No. 116–255)

S. 3132, to extend the Undertaking Spam, Spyware, And Fraud Enforcement With Enforcers beyond Borders Act of 2006. (S. Rept. No. 116–256)

Messages from the House:

Measures Referred:

Additional Cosponsors:

Statements on Introduced Bills/Resolutions:

Additional Statements:

Amendments Submitted:

Adjournment: Senate convened at 11 a.m. and adjourned at 12:51 p.m., until 11 a.m. on Thursday, August 13, 2020. (For Senate’s program, see the remarks of the Majority Leader in today’s Record on page S5401.)

Committee Meetings

(Committees not listed did not meet)

No committee meetings were held.

House of Representatives

Chamber Action

The House was not in session today. The House is scheduled to meet at 2 p.m. on Friday, August 14, 2020.

Committee Meetings

No hearings were held.

Joint Meetings

No joint committee meetings were held.

NEW PUBLIC LAWS

(For last listing of Public Laws, see DAILY DIGEST, p. D722)

H.R. 886, to direct the Attorney General to establish and carry out a Veteran Treatment Court Program. Signed on August 8, 2020. (Public Law 116–153)

H.R. 3504, to amend title 38, United States Code, to provide for improvements to the specially adapted housing program and educational assistance programs of the Department of Veterans Affairs. Signed on August 8, 2020. (Public Law 116–154)
H.R. 4920, to amend title 38, United States Code, to provide for an exception to certain small business contracting requirements applicable to the Department of Veterans Affairs procurement of certain goods and services covered under the Ability One program. Signed on August 8, 2020. (Public Law 116–155)

COMMITTEE MEETINGS FOR THURSDAY,
AUGUST 13, 2020
(Committee meetings are open unless otherwise indicated)

Senate
No meetings/hearings scheduled.

House
No hearings are scheduled.
Next Meeting of the SENATE
11 a.m., Thursday, August 13

Senate Chamber

Program for Thursday: Senate will be in a period of morning business.

Next Meeting of the HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
2 p.m., Friday, August 14

House Chamber

Program for Friday: House will meet in Pro Forma session at 2 p.m.