

defund police at State and local levels because these units of government won't have the resources to hire the policemen they need, the law enforcement officials they need, nor the firefighters, nor the teachers, nor the healthcare workers. But that is priority one for Senator McCONNELL: no help—no help for State and local governments for fear that you might actually send money to a Democratic mayor or a Democratic Governor. Spare me. That fire is not looking for party registration; it is looking for kindling to light the fire of infection.

Now, on housing, well, how does the McConnell proposal deal with housing? No funding—no funding for housing or rental assistance.

Now, on the stimulus checks—\$1,200 stimulus checks. I listened to talk radio back in Chicago, and people are wondering: Is it possible we are going to see a \$1,200 check? Well, you won't see it in Senator McCONNELL's proposal. There are no direct stimulus payments.

How about unemployment benefits? The Federal unemployment benefits that expired on July 31 were \$600 a week over the State amount, whatever it might be. Some people may have made more in the process than they did at work, but most were struggling to get by. If Members of the Senate had not been in touch with real America in a while, they may think that folks with these checks were binging on Netflix and eating chocolate-covered cherries night and day. That is not the case that I saw back in Illinois. People who had lost their jobs, even at the time they received these unemployment checks, were still struggling to pay for the mortgage, pay for the rent, pay for the car, keep up with the credit card bills, and put food on the table.

So what does Senator McCONNELL propose that we do? He proposes we cut in half that amount—to \$300 a week. I guess back in Kentucky it is a little bit different world, at least the way he sees it, but where I live, that means a pretty dramatic cut in survival pay—survival pay—for people who have lost their jobs.

On the healthcare side, this is the one that troubles me the most. Couldn't we all agree that we don't test enough for the COVID-19 virus in America? There are about 1 million people tested a day. Public health officials say: Well, you need at least 4 million. Others say: But if you truly want to reopen the economy and reopen the schools, you need 14 million a day. So you would guess that anything we pass would really zero in on testing to find out those who are positive, to do the contact tracing to warn those who may have been exposed, and to try to contain the virus.

So let's take a look at what Senator McCONNELL thinks about the priority of testing. There is \$16 billion for testing. How much did the Democrats—NANCY PELOSI—propose? She proposed \$75 billion. And let me add that the

McConnell bill provides no funding for hospitals or healthcare clinics and no dedicated funding for nursing homes, where we know the populations are so vulnerable. When it comes to the reality of what we are facing in this COVID-19 pandemic, the McConnell bill, which is coming before us this afternoon, is deficient in testing at a time when we are facing so many infections.

On nutrition, the McConnell bill says that there will be no SNAP benefit increases or funding for food banks and, on education, provides \$105 billion for education stabilization funds. Two-thirds of the K-12 funds will be held until schools provide a reopening plan and, of course, the voucher program.

On postal assistance, the McConnell proposal alters the language in the original legislation to change the borrowing authority. The Postal Service is doing its best, and I thank the men and women who are engaged in it. We should do more than thank them. We ought to fund them and give them a helping hand.

So what it boils down to is this: If this is a real pandemic, if we want to believe the public health experts—whom the President has called “idiots,” like Dr. Anthony Fauci, who has been my friend for 20 years—if we want to believe the public health experts, we need to address this in a serious manner as we did last March in passing the CARES Act. This is not a time for people to cover their backsides politically. It is a time to remember that the American people need our help more than ever. A halfhearted and half-inspired effort to do this will not answer the call.

We need to stand as a nation on a bipartisan basis. How does it start? It starts when Democrats and Republicans sit at the same table, which has not happened. It starts when we agree—both parties agree—on what the priorities must be, and it starts when we stop the speeches and start with real action to pass legislation like the CARES Act, which passed 96 to nothing on this floor. It is time to take this deadly virus and epidemic seriously.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

RECESS

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate recess until 2:15 p.m. today.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

There being no objection, the Senate, at 12:07 p.m., recessed until 2:15 p.m. and reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Mrs. CAPITO).

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR—Continued

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from South Dakota.

NOMINATION OF AMY CONEY BARRETT

Mr. THUNE. Madam President, last week, the Judiciary Committee held

its hearing on Judge Amy Coney Barrett's nomination, and it was easy to see why Judge Barrett is held in such high regard by her colleagues, students, and peers and why the American Bar Association gave her its highest rating of “well qualified.”

We knew long before the hearing that Judge Barrett possesses an extraordinary intelligence and a comprehensive command of the law. But over 3 days of testimony, Americans got to see her qualifications for themselves, and they saw why she has been described as “a jurist of formidable intellect,” a “brilliant and conscientious lawyer,” and “a staggering academic mind.” Even the Democratic ranking member on the committee, the senior Senator from California, couldn't hide the fact that she was impressed.

Most importantly, however, Americans saw that Judge Barrett understands the proper role of a judge in our system of government. As Judge Barrett made clear, she understands that the job of a judge is to interpret the law, not to make the law; to call balls and strikes, not to rewrite the rules of the game; or, as Judge Barrett said to the Democrat whip at the hearing last week: “I apply the law. I follow the law. You make policy.”

Judge Barrett has made it clear that when cases come before her on the Supreme Court, she will consider the facts, the law, and the Constitution, and nothing else—not her personal beliefs, not her political opinions, just the law and the Constitution. That is the kind of Justice that all of us—Democrat or Republican, liberal or conservative—should want.

I could spend hours highlighting all the extraordinary tributes to Judge Barrett that have poured in since her nomination, from lawyers and scholars of every background and political persuasion, but I don't want to tie up the Senate floor. So I will just mention one piece of testimony that struck me in particular.

As I mentioned, the American Bar Association released its rating of Judge Barrett last week, a rating that the Democratic leader, by the way, has called the “gold standard”—the “gold standard”—by which judicial candidates are judged. Well, the ABA gave Judge Barrett its highest possible rating—“well qualified.” And the chairman of the American Bar Association's Standing Committee on the Federal Judiciary, the ABA committee that issues these ratings, testified before the Judiciary Committee during Judge Barrett's hearing. I would like to read from the testimony that he submitted to the committee.

Lawyers and judges uniformly praised the nominee's integrity. Most remarkably, in interviews with individuals in the legal profession and the community who know Judge Barrett, whether for a few years or decades, not one person uttered a negative word about her character. Accordingly, the Standing Committee was not required to consider any negative criticisms of Judge Barrett.

His testimony went on: