

counties' health departments have increasingly relied on this funding to ensure they are able to meet the needs of their community now and into the future as this pandemic stretches on.

Many States, including my own of Kansas, have also established forward-looking programs to distribute grants for economic development projects that respond to COVID-19, such as telemedicine, tele-education projects, and projects that would improve broadband infrastructure in rural and underserved areas. These communities already face a sharp divide in terms of broadband availability, and this pandemic has highlighted that. Unfortunately, for all the work we have accomplished in spreading the use of broadband, the availability of broadband, increasing its connectivity, there are still plenty of areas that need to be improved for access to quality internet services.

As more broadband-intensive work like video conferencing and virtual appointments now takes place at a much higher rate, the urgency to improve these services increases. Rural communities stand to lose the most without these types of projects.

Many of the projects require long lead times to wisely plan, appropriate, and expend Federal funding. However—and here is the problem—the CARES Act mandates that CRF funds be spent by the end of this year, now just a little more than a month away. This is absolutely not enough time for preparation-intensive projects to be carefully planned and executed. The current deadline puts several long-term economic development plans at risk of losing funding if they are not completed by December 31, and it also prevents new, meaningful proposals from being considered in the first place.

Many Kansans—from our county health departments to our universities, to our schools, to our cities and counties, to mayors and county commissioners whom I have visited with—have urged us to extend this looming deadline. We need to have a longer period of time so that the Federal dollars are not spent—I always try to avoid using the phrase “Federal dollars.” They are really taxpayer dollars or borrowed money that has to be paid back by taxpayers. It is a silly proposition that we would require the money to be spent when what it will mean is we will spend money less effectively and less efficiently than we otherwise would in the absence of this near-term deadline.

That is why Senator ROBERTS and I have introduced the Remove Impediments for a Successful Economic Recovery Act, or RISER. This bill would extend that deadline for State and local governments by 2 years for a set of currently eligible expenditures that meet criteria for qualified economic development plans.

This bill would allow funds for critical projects that require additional attention and time for a more thoughtful investment to be spent more effectively without cutting short a strategic

investment that Congress made back in March to support our communities that need it the most.

I believe that State and local governments know what is best for their communities, including where and when to spend these Federal dollars.

Extending the relief for CRF payments dedicated to, particularly, job creation projects will allow Kansas and other States to strategically target areas of need over a longer period of time, making more certain that our taxpayer dollars are making the greatest impact to help our people recover from this pandemic. This will better ensure that the areas in need identified by States and localities have a stable source of investment that will aid in the ongoing economic recovery.

That said, I remain engaged with the Treasury and Senate Finance Committee to improve the RISER Act to ensure the availability of bipartisan support. This is a bill I want to pass, not a bill I just want to introduce.

While this thoughtful discussion with Treasury and the Finance Committee continues, I recognize that Congress must urgently act to extend the deadline in the meantime.

While I have a particular bill that does things that I think are hugely important in this arena, I also recognize that we don't have the time to wait. Often throughout these few days that I have been home, away from Washington, DC, I have been asked: How is your legislation coming? The answer is: There is broad bipartisan support. Most Senators—most Republican Senators and most Democratic Senators—are supportive of this measure, but the issue is: Will we be able to extend the deadline in time for our local units of government to know that they have an additional amount of time, or, in the absence of that, will we allow them or require them to spend money in ways less effective or efficient than they otherwise would?

I know that there are other pieces of legislation introduced by a few of my colleagues that would offer what we would call a clean extension of the CRF deadline, and I urge my Senate colleagues to support the immediate enactment of these legislative proposals to provide flexibility in fostering meaningful investments in our home States.

Around here, too often, it seems that if we can't do everything to solve a problem, we do nothing to solve a problem. I have never understood that attitude or approach. The things that we can agree on—and this is one, I think, on which we can, this extension of the deadline—we ought not wait for a larger package that continues to be negotiated between the White House and Speaker PELOSI or between Republican and Democratic leadership in the Senate or the Republican leadership with the Democratic leadership in the House.

Whatever the negotiations ongoing today to get us to a point in which we

are addressing what we generally call phase 4, another effort to improve the opportunities for us to provide relief to our constituents due to the pandemic—whatever all those machinations are—they will not happen quickly enough, and they certainly will not happen quickly enough to make certain that our local officials and their citizens know that they no longer would need to spend the money that we have provided them in the next 5 or 6 weeks.

By including the coronavirus relief fund in the CARES Act, Congress extended a hand to States, local governments, and areas in need across the country that are looking to adapt to the new realities of the ongoing pandemic. In the absence of an extension of the deadline, money will be misspent and will certainly not be spent in the most effective and valuable way.

I urge my colleagues not only to support the legislation that I have introduced, the RISER Act, but to work with others—all of us—to come to a point in which we are capable this week—if it doesn't get done this week, it probably means very little in an extension—to this week pass an extension beyond December 31 for the use of those CARES dollars in States across the Nation.

I urge my colleagues to join my legislation. I urge my colleagues to join to ensure that the hand we offered under the CARES Act won't be withdrawn way too soon. I am thankful for the opportunity to address my colleagues in the Senate.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. ERNST). The Senator from Iowa.

REMEMBERING ROGER JEPSSEN

Mr. GRASSLEY. Madam President, today I pay tribute to our former colleague and my friend, former U.S. Senator Roger Jepsen. Roger Jepsen passed away last Friday, at age 91, at Clarissa C. Cook Hospice House in Quad Cities, IA.

An Iowa native and an American patriot, Roger devoted his life in service to his family, faith, and community. He spent his youth on his family farm near Cedar Falls, about 5 miles from where I was born and grew up. I still reside within 4 miles of the farmhouse where I was born.

Regardless of the close proximity of us as young people, I didn't become acquainted with Roger until he represented Scott County in the Iowa Legislature. I wish I had known him earlier when we were neighbors, as children.

For 14 years, Roger served our country in the U.S. Army. He was a paratrooper in the 82nd Airborne Division, and then he later served in the Army Reserve.

Roger worked for 20 years in the life insurance business and was a member of the National Association of Life Underwriters. Along the way, Roger answered the call to public service and civic leadership. For more than two

decades, he climbed the ranks of elected officials in service to his community and the State of Iowa.

He started out as a county supervisor in Scott County, IA, and went on to represent his neighbors in Iowa Senate District 15. An active, grassroots leader in the Republican Party of Iowa, Roger served as a delegate to the national GOP convention of 1972 and 1980.

In 1968, he was elected as Iowa's 39th Lieutenant Governor, where he served with Governor Bob Ray for two terms. Until Iowa adopted reforms under a constitutional amendment in 1972, the office for Governor and Lieutenant Governor were on the ballot every 2 years in my home State.

In 1978, when I won reelection to Iowa's then Third Congressional District in the U.S. House of Representatives, Roger Jepsen flipped Iowa's U.S. Senate seat. He defeated incumbent Senator Dick Clark. At the time, political observers gave Roger scant chance of a victory that year, but on election day, Roger Jepsen pulled off the upset, beating his opponent by more than 26,000 votes.

In that same election, Roger returned both houses of the State legislature to Republican control for what would be Governor Ray's final term in office. In the previous legislative session, Iowa expanded its historic "right to work" law. For decades, this instrumental policy has enhanced Iowa's ability to attract businesses, create jobs, and grow wages across the State.

It was under attack in the last election. Iowa voters responded by expanding the Republican majority at the Iowa State House under a Republican administration led by Governor Kim Reynolds.

During his 6 years here in the U.S. Senate, Roger Jepsen solidified his pro-life, pro-family credentials. He was a fiscal conservative. He flexed steadfast support for the military, and he worked to put money back in the taxpayers' pockets.

In 1981, he voted to end "bracket creep" by indexing for inflation across-the-board tax rate cuts.

An outspoken advocate for rural America, Roger Jepsen fought to boost the economic recovery across the farm belt. He championed farm exports, expanded lending and tax relief for farmers.

He was chairman of the Joint Economic Committee and served on the Senate Agriculture and Armed Services Committees.

After losing his bid for reelection in 1984, President Reagan nominated Roger Jepsen to serve as Chairman of the National Credit Union Administration, where he served from the years 1985 to 1993.

Although he and his wife Dee retired to Florida, Scott County was what he considered his home. Roger and Dee devoted considerable time and effort to end religious persecution and promote religious liberty. Alongside Congressman Jack Kemp, they cofounded the

Christian Rescue Effort for the Emancipation of Dissidents, known as CREED, to promote religious freedom as a human freedom around the world.

Each time I return home by way of Cedar Falls, IA, I pass Jepsen Road. In fact, it intersects my street. Over the years, Roger's and my paths crossed many times in service to Iowans. Seeing that street sign reminds me that no dream is too big for an Iowa farm kid.

Roger and Dee celebrated 62 years of marriage in September. Together they raised 6 children.

Barbara and I extend our condolences to his family and loved ones. On behalf of the State of Iowa, we thank Roger for his service here on Earth as he is welcomed home into the hands of the Lord.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

CORONAVIRUS

Mr. CORNYN. Madam President, it is no secret that in parts of Texas and in cities across the country, COVID-19 cases and hospitalizations are on the rise. Dr. Angela Clendenin is an epidemiologist at Texas A&M University's School of Public Health, and she attributes this increase to what she calls pandemic fatigue.

After months of vigorous handwashing and mask wearing, it seems that people are becoming less and less vigilant. She said, if we continue in the behaviors that we are behaving in right now without regulatory intervention, we are going to continue in the direction we are headed. I guess that is one way of saying if we don't shape up, the present spread of the virus will continue with, perhaps, in some instances, dangerous, even fatal, consequences.

That is a path we should not head down and one that will put an even greater strain on our healthcare workers. I guess, as I think about it, there are two ways to approach this pandemic. One is to leave it to government to tell us what we can and cannot do, to engage in more and more lockdowns and deprivation of our individual liberty or we can take personal responsibility. Speaking for myself, and I hope others, I hope the personal responsibility route is the one we will take.

From staffing shortages due to the coronavirus exposure to short supplies of personal protective equipment, to a lack of critical equipment like ventilators, our frontline healthcare workers have carried on this fight in the face of tremendous challenges. Now, with cases climbing in parts of my State and around the country, these heroes are in dire need of another line of defense.

The public—meaning Congress—on their behalf has the power to provide

that help. Through the same simple steps we heard about since the beginning of the pandemic, we can stop or at least dramatically slow the transmission of COVID-19.

Again, it gets back to the basics we have all been taught and I think more or less most of us have been employing: washing your hands, wearing a mask, practice social distancing, and don't let the pandemic fatigue win.

We need to all remain vigilant and committed to these basic practices until the experts tell us that COVID-19 is no longer a threat—likely, a point after which the vaccine has been widely deployed. None of us knows exactly when that might happen, but we have been getting some great news this last week or so about scientific developments that have been funded by the efforts that we in Congress have taken together on a bipartisan basis.

On Friday, in my State, the Governor announced the Department of Health and Human Services will distribute a new COVID-19 therapy to hospitals across the State as early as this week. The antibody treatment is produced by Eli Lilly and will be critical in reducing hospitalizations. It is meant for those who are known to be at a higher risk of developing severe symptoms, like the elderly or those with underlying chronic illness. For those who are diagnosed with COVID-19, this drug may be effective in preventing the onset of severe symptoms. The antibody treatment received emergency use authorization from the Food and Drug Administration last week, and I am hopeful it will help stop or at least slow dramatically the alarming rise in hospitalizations that we have seen across parts of my State.

So far, about 80,000 doses are ready for distribution nationwide, and we should have that up to a million doses a day by the end of the year. While the quantity is limited at this point, every single dose could mean a life saved. This alone is cause for hope.

But the good news doesn't stop there. Last week, Pfizer announced its COVID-19 vaccine has been more than 90 percent effective in clinical trials. Just this morning, Moderna announced its vaccine candidate is nearly 95 percent effective—just incredible results. This is exactly why we invested billions of dollars in developing these life-saving drugs earlier this year. The funding that we have appropriated has supported not only research and development but manufacturing of vaccines and therapeutics. We wanted to be sure that distribution could begin as soon as these drugs were approved as safe and effective, and that is exactly the direction we are headed in.

We are on track to have tens of millions of doses of vaccine available by the end of the year, likely from at least two different drug makers. This historic investment has led to historic progress.

I could not be more proud of the men and women who have made this possible. I am incredibly grateful to the