



United States
of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 116th CONGRESS, SECOND SESSION

Vol. 166

WASHINGTON, MONDAY, DECEMBER 21, 2020

No. 218

Senate

The Senate met at 12 noon and was called to order by the President pro tempore (Mr. GRASSLEY).

PRAYER

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

Let us pray.

Beautiful Savior, Your mighty power makes us glad. We celebrate the victories You have given us in the past and trust You with our future.

Lord, You have been our dwelling place in all generations, and we are sustained by Your steadfast love. Today, surround our Senators with the shield of Your favor as they labor to keep our Nation strong. Inspire them to be obedient to Your commands, doing what You desire of them as You fill them with Your wisdom.

Lord, manifest Your power through their labors so that this Nation will fulfill Your purposes. May Your angels guard us in all our ways.

We pray in Your mighty Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The President pro tempore 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.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. YOUNG). The Senator from Iowa.

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak for 1 minute in morning business.

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

CORONAVIRUS

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, history will look back at 2020 and find many lessons and even some silver linings to unpack.

The loss of more than 300,000 American lives so far will be mourned for

years to come. Operation Warp Speed, which President Trump launched, turned out to be a historic public-private partnership. It has delivered a lifesaving vaccine in record time, shattering scientific benchmarks along the way. For the last 9 months, Americans have pulled together in shared sacrifice to do their part.

As the COVID-19 vaccine makes its way into the communities across our country as it is right now, I encourage my fellow Iowans to keep pulling together. When public health officials say it is your turn to get a vaccine, roll up your sleeve. I will be doing the same when my turn arrives.

Getting immunized is the only way we will beat the virus and get back to the normal way of American life. History will show Americans turned the page on the pandemic when all of us roll up our sleeves.

I yield the floor.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader is recognized.

CORONAVIRUS

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, yesterday leaders in the Senate and the House and the Secretary of the Treasury reached a major agreement that struggling Americans have needed for months.

We are going to pass another historic rescue package to help American families through this pandemic. We are going to pass full-year government funding so the Armed Forces and all Federal Departments have the resources and the certainty they need. And we are going to do both of these things as soon as possible.

Senate Republicans have been trying since July—July—to get more targeted, bipartisan relief into the hands of the American people. Back in July,

we proposed to send about \$1 trillion to priorities including a second round of the Paycheck Protection Program, direct checks for households, and funding for healthcare providers, testing, and K-12 schools—back in July.

Democrats said no. They said they would block anything short of their multitrillion-dollar leftwing wish list. Here was one headline that particularly underscores their view: “\$2 trillion or bust: Democrats draw red line in coronavirus spending battle.”

So, in July and in August, when Republican Senators tried to extend expiring Federal unemployment benefits, Democrats blocked us. Laid-off workers lost their benefits.

In September and again in October, as people kept hurting, the virus kept spreading, and schools tried to find footing, every Republican voted for a multihundred-billion-dollar package. Both times Democrats blocked the relief. Their view was all or nothing.

But a few days ago, with a new President-elect of their own party, everything changed. Democrats suddenly came around to our position that we should find consensus, make a law where we agree, and get urgent help out the door.

In a few days of hard work, we have assembled another historic bipartisan rescue package: just under \$900 billion of relief targeted toward our fellow Americans who need help the most.

I will begin where this pandemic will end: vaccinations. Thanks to the genius of science and the leadership of President Trump, Operation Warp Speed has produced safe and effective vaccines. Now, we need to distribute them nationwide.

This rescue package provides many billions more dollars to expand vaccine purchasing and vaccine distribution. Until we have won, we need to keep wearing masks and taking precautions. Even so, more Americans will fall ill, so this legislation continues to fund health providers and COVID testing.

• This “bullet” symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



Printed on recycled paper.

S7887