

debt for Federal student loan borrowers administratively using existing legal authorities under such section 432(a), and any other authorities available under the law;

(3) encourages the President of the United States, in taking such executive action, to use the executive's authority under the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to ensure no tax liability for Federal student loan borrowers resulting from administrative debt cancellation;

(4) encourages the President of the United States, in taking such executive action, to ensure that administrative debt cancellation helps close racial wealth gaps and avoids the bulk of Federal student loan debt cancellation benefits accruing to the wealthiest borrowers; and

(5) encourages the President of the United States to continue to pause student loan payments and interest accumulation for Federal student loan borrowers for the entire duration of the COVID-19 pandemic.

#### AUTHORITY FOR COMMITTEES TO MEET

Mr. TESTER. Mr. President, I have a request for one committee to meet during today's session of the Senate. It has the approval of the Majority and Minority leaders.

Pursuant to rule XXVI, paragraph 5(a), of the Standing Rules of the Senate, the following committee is authorized to meet during today's session of the Senate:

##### COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

The Committee on Foreign Relations is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Monday, February 8, 2021, at 6 p.m., to conduct a classified hearing.

#### AMAZON

Mr. BROWN. Mr. President, today, Amazon workers in Alabama will begin receiving ballots that will give them, finally, a real voice in their workplace by choosing to join a union.

Amazon would not be the massively successful company that it is and Jeff Bezos wouldn't be a multibillionaire without the hard work and the dedication of its hundreds of thousands of U.S. workers. They have put in long hours and risked their own health during this pandemic to meet the increased demand that we all know.

As of October, 20,000—think of this—20,000 Amazon workers, 20,000 workers at one company, Amazon, had contracted COVID-19. That is as of October. We know those numbers would be much higher today.

Because of their hard work, Amazon's profits have soared by more than 70 percent. The company's workers deserve to share in the success that they made possible.

Amazon claims to recognize the value of its workers. They call their workers "heroes fighting for their communities and helping people get critical items they need." Heroes, they call them.

If the company truly believed and appreciated that they were heroes, Amazon might back up its words with ac-

tion. That means letting these workers organize. It means stopping the corporate union-busting tactics that they have deployed against these workers.

Amazon, one of most powerful corporations in the world, unleashed all of that power to fight their own workers who are just asking for a voice on the job. They have harassed employees with anti-union propaganda, misleading text messages, websites, and fliers.

One Washington Post headline really said it all: "Amazon's anti-union blitz stalks Alabama warehouse workers everywhere, even the bathroom."

Workers have reported they don't get enough time for bathroom breaks in the warehouse. That is how intense the company's pressure is. When they are able to use the restroom, even there, workers are hit with anti-union propaganda fliers on the stall doors.

Amazon has repeatedly tried to block mail-in voting and force workers to hold the union election in person, putting its workers—remember, 20,000 already have been diagnosed back in October—putting its workers' health at even more risk, just to suppress the vote. It is all part of a pattern for Amazon.

In 2019, Amazon fired a Staten Island warehouse worker who called for unionization. They monitor employees' online communications. Last fall, we learned the company planned to spend hundreds of thousands of dollars on new software to monitor, their words, "threats" like unions.

It is little wonder Amazon is afraid of workers getting more power. So much of their business model is built on top of exploiting workers, often Black and Brown workers and women.

Instead of employing many drivers directly, they use what they call Amazon Flex drivers. Just like with other gig economy jobs, "Flex" is corporate PR speak for denying workers their rights as full employees.

They have failed to provide complete data on COVID-19 spread in the workplace, so we really can't find out whether the company is protecting its workers' health.

Amazon rolled back its tiny \$2-per-hour pandemic raise in June. It announced a \$2-an-hour bonus pandemic raise with great fanfare many months ago. Then they rolled it back in June, and then they announced a one-time bonus of \$300 per worker, not \$3,000 per worker, \$300 a worker from a company that brought in \$200 billion in revenue the previous year. I am sorry, \$280 billion—280,000 million—\$280 billion in revenue; they gave workers a bonus of \$300.

And Amazon is not alone. The Washington Post looked at the 50 biggest corporations and found that between April and September, these companies handed out more than \$240 billion to their stockholders through stock buybacks and dividends.

Companies like that are making more and more and more money. They

are giving it back to executives and stockholders in huge dividends and stock buybacks. Yet their workers are exposed to these health hazards at work, exposed to this virus. They come home always anxious and scared about infecting their families.

The workers risk their own health, often at rockbottom wages, to make those companies so profitable.

If even a global pandemic, where America's workers have been on the frontline, if even that will not get corporations to rethink their business model that treats workers as expendable, then we have to give workers more power on the job.

A grocery store worker said: You know, they say—told me, they say I am essential, but, really, I feel expendable because they don't pay me much, and they don't protect me on the job.

##### PRO ACT

Mr. President, so what do we do?

It should mean collective bargaining. It should mean unions. It is why I joined Senator MURRAY and many of my colleagues last week to reintroduce the Protecting the Right to Organize Act, the PRO Act.

It is a comprehensive overhaul of our labor laws to protect workers' right to stand together and bargain for fair wages, fair benefits, safer workplaces.

We know corporations have attacked and undermined worker protections for decades, made it harder and harder for workers even to stand a chance in organizing a union when they choose to.

And look what has happened to our economy, as corporations take away workers' power: Productivity goes up, corporate profits soar, executive compensation explodes through the roof, but wages stay flat, and the middle class shrinks.

Just go over that again. Corporate profits, workers' productivity goes up. Workers are working harder and more efficiently. Productivity goes up, corporate profits soar, executive compensation explodes, but wages stay flat, and the middle class shrinks.

Our bill would work to level the playing field, finally give workers a fighting chance against corporate union-busting tactics like we see right now today, last week, the week before, and today at Amazon.

It would strengthen the punishment against companies that violate workers' rights to organize and the companies that retaliate against union organizers.

It would restore to an economy rigged against workers by closing loopholes that allow employers to misclassify their employees as supervisors and independent contractors so they don't have to live under labor law.

We can't in this country, whether it is in Las Cruces or in Dayton—we can't have a strong, growing middle class without strong unions.

Union members earn 19 percent more, on the average, than similar workers in nonunion jobs. They have better healthcare. They are better able to