

Social Justice Watch 0330

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[Senate closing in on deal for \\$1.6 trillion rescue package](#)

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My favourite is when transphobes say "I identified as a dinosaur when I was six, kids that age are too young to know they're trans!".

Nah mate, you didn't identify as a dinosaur. You didn't cry yourself to sleep because you couldn't figure out why you had no tail. You didn't feel an inexplicable sense of shame at your lack of claws. When you saw yourself in a mirror in a dinosaur costume, you weren't upset about all the non-dinosaur bits you could still see. When others saw the costume, you weren't brought to tears by them treating you like a child-wearing-a-costume instead of a real dinosaur.

You were playing make-believe. Kids do that. Kids also have genuine insight into themselves as no external observer can, and we should be helping them to explore that so that they can make better choices.

If your child told you that they were hearing voices, you wouldn't care that they were too young to understand schizophrenia. If they said that they had a wrenching pain in their gut, you wouldn't rage about "liberal doctors brainwashing children". Yet if a kid says "It hurts when people say I'm a boy/girl." suddenly the idea of treating that symptom becomes a conservative bogeyman.

...



Reply



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FACT: The vast majority of patients do *not* regret their decision to have a safe, legal abortion. Stop stigmatizing other people's personal medical decisions.

#StopTheLies #StopTheBans



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AFP/GETTY

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ANIMALS | CORONAVIRUS COVERAGE

China promotes bear bile as coronavirus treatment, alarming wildlife advocates

China's National Health Commission published a list of recommended treatments, including injections that contain bear bile powder.

5 MINUTE READ

5 MINUTE READ



BY RACHEL FOBAR

PUBLISHED MARCH 25, 2020

Less than a month after taking steps to permanently ban the trade and consumption of live wild animals for food, the Chinese government has recommended using Tan Re Qing, an injection containing bear bile, to treat severe and critical COVID-19 cases. It is one of a number of recommended coronavirus treatments—both traditional and Western—on a list published March 4 by China's National Health Commission, the government body responsible for national health policy. This recommendation highlights what wildlife advocates say is a contradictory approach to wildlife: shutting down the live trade in animals

shutting down the live trade in animals for food on the one hand and promoting the trade in animal parts on the other.

Secreted by the liver and stored in the gallbladder, bile from various species of bears, including Asiatic black bears and brown bears, has been used in traditional Chinese medicine since at least the eighth century. It contains high levels of ursodeoxycholic acid, also known as ursodiol, which is clinically proven to help dissolve gallstones and treat liver disease. Ursodeoxycholic acid has been available as a synthetic drug worldwide for decades.

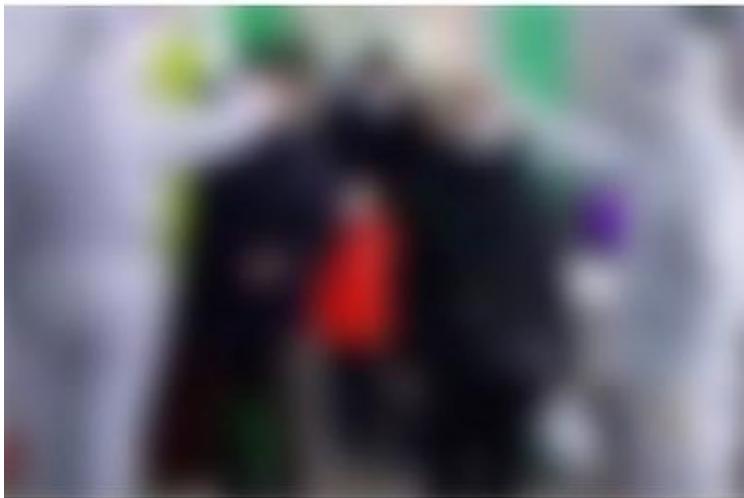
The World Health Organization says no cure exists for COVID-19, though some medicines, such as pain relievers and cough syrup, can treat symptoms associated with the disease. (Read about what scientists know and don't know about treating coronavirus.)

Traditional Chinese medicine

Traditional Chinese medicine practitioners typically use Tan Re Qing to treat bronchitis and upper respiratory infections. Clifford Steer, a professor at the University of Minnesota in Minneapolis, has studied the medical benefits of ursodeoxycholic acid. He knows of no evidence that bear bile is an effective treatment for the novel coronavirus. But, he says, ursodeoxycholic acid is distinct from other bile acids in its ability to keep cells alive and may alleviate symptoms of COVID-19 because of its anti-inflammatory properties and ability to calm the immune response.

Enacted in 1989, China's wildlife protection law sees wild animals as a resource to be used for the benefit of humans. In 2016, it was amended to further legitimize the commercial use of wildlife, asserting explicitly that animals can be used for traditional Chinese medicine. Humane Society

can be used for traditional Chinese medicine, Humane Society International's China policy specialist Peter Li wrote at the time.



China's government has recommended treating severe and critical cases of COVID-19... [Read More](#)

PHOTOGRAPH BY STR, AFP/GETTY

Although use of bear bile from captive animals is legal in China, bile from wild bears is banned, as is the import of bear bile from other countries. According to Aron White, wildlife campaigner for the Environmental Investigation Agency

Environmental Investigation Agency (EIA)—a nonprofit based in London, England, that exposes wildlife crimes—his organization learned first about the Chinese government's recommendations to treat COVID-19 via social media posts from illegal traders.

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“We were witnessing how this government recommendation was being coopted by the traffickers to advertise their illegal products as a treatment,” White says. Illegal bile from wild bears is produced in China, he says, and is also imported from wild and captive bears in Laos, Vietnam, and North Korea. The illegal trade persists even though Asiatic black bears, one of the species most commonly farmed for their bile, are protected from international commercial trade under the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora, which regulates cross-border trade of wildlife and wildlife products.

Wildlife advocates worry that China’s recommended use of Tan Re Qing injections, which contain goat horn powder and extracts from several plants

in addition to bear bile powder and gall

powder and extracts from several plants in addition to bear bile powder, will increase the trade in illegal wildlife products and justify animal abuse.

“There’s a consistent preference among consumers for the wild product, which is often regarded as more powerful or ‘the real deal,’” White says. “So, having this legal market from captivity doesn’t reduce pressure on the wild populations —it actually just maintains demand that drives poaching.”

At bear bile farms in China and across Southeast Asia, the animals may be kept for decades in small cages. Bile is routinely extracted by inserting a catheter, syringe, or pipe into the gallbladder. All methods for extracting bile are invasive and “cause severe suffering, pain, and infection,” according to Animals Asia, a nonprofit dedicated to ending bear bile farming. Neglect and disease are common on these farms, and consumers risk ingesting bile from sick bears, which

these farms, and consumers risk ingesting bile from sick bears, which may be contaminated with blood, feces, pus, urine, and bacteria, according to Animals Asia.



Bile is pumped from the gallbladder of a sedated Asiatic black bear. Because diseases... [Read More](#)

PHOTOGRAPH BY MARK LEONG, NAT GEO IMAGE COLLECTION

Another traditional medicine on the National Health Commission's approved list that could be in demand for use against COVID-19 is a pill called

距离中国全面禁止非法野生动物交易不到一个月，CDC针对新冠病毒的推荐用药中就加了一味含有熊胆的中药注射剂（痰热清），引起动物保护人士不满。[source](#)

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Matt Novak

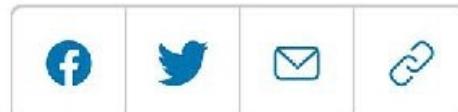
Today 7:00AM • Filed to: COVID-19 ▾



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People sit on a hill overlooking Dodger Stadium and downtown Los Angeles on March 26, 2020.

Photo: Getty Images

A 17-year-old boy in Los Angeles County who became the first teen believed to have died from



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洛杉矶郡一名新冠阳性的17岁少年去诊所被拒，因为没有保险。少年被告知，可以去同区域的公立医院急诊碰碰运气，结果在过去的路上心脏骤停，抢救六小时还是过了世。世上没有完美的医疗体系，美国的市场化机制有他的益处，但一个不照顾弱势群体的医疗体系肯定不会是我的选择。这孩子后来还被移出了新冠死亡名单，因为准确的死亡原因有待进一步考证 gizmodo.com/teen-who-died-of-covid-19-was-denied-treatment-because-1842520539 source

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<https://telegra.ph/Senate-closing-in-on-deal-for-16-trillion-rescue-package-03-22>|link

Telegraph

Senate closing in on deal for \$1.6 trillion rescue package

But several issues remain outstanding ahead of a critical procedural vote Sunday.

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YourTango

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Her memoir was released this month.

<https://youtu.be/qBwtCf2X5jw>

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Senate closing in on deal for \$1.6 trillion rescue package

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But several issues remain outstanding ahead of a critical procedural vote Sunday.



McConnell and Mnuchin

Socially distanced apart, Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell and Treasury Secretary Steve Mnuchin attend a meeting with a select group of Senate Republicans, Senate Democrats, and Trump administration officials in Washington. | Drew Angerer/Getty Images

Senate Republicans and Democrats have yet to reach an overall deal on a massive economic rescue package in response to the coronavirus crisis — but the two sides are getting closer. And Senate GOP leaders said Saturday they will press ahead with drafting portions of the bill, which will cost at least \$1.6

trillion, according to three GOP sources.

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell remains adamant about sticking to a Monday deadline to hold a final vote on the legislation, the most expensive economic rescue package in U.S. history. McConnell has set up a critical procedural vote for Sunday afternoon, and he will need Democratic support to continue moving forward.

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McConnell late Saturday evening said the Senate is "poised to deliver the significant relief that Americans need with the speed that this crisis demands" and is instructing committee chairmen to draft final legislative text.

A spokesperson for Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer (D-N.Y.) cautioned there is no agreement yet and that Democrats have yet to see several parts of the Republican draft.

"We look forward to reviewing their first draft and negotiating a bipartisan compromise," the spokesperson said.

Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin, McConnell, Schumer, Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.) and House Minority Leader Kevin McCarthy (R-Calif.) will meet in McConnell's office Sunday at 11 a.m. to discuss the legislation.

But there is still no guarantee a deal will be reached. A senior Democratic aide said Saturday evening that "Republicans abruptly pulled out of negotiations for reasons Democrats still don't understand."

A GOP official involved in the negotiations countered that Republicans have conceded to Democratic demands on key issues and that it's time to meet McConnell's time frame.

The two sides continue to squabble over boosting paid leave for sick workers and those caring for infected family members — a major issue for Democrats — as well as what kind of financial help the federal government can provide to distressed industries, such as the major U.S. airlines. The White House and Senate Republicans want several hundred billion dollars for impacted industries, said officials involved in the talks.

But there was significant progress during Saturday's negotiations on boosting unemployment insurance payments, a major source of contention between GOP and Democratic leaders on Capitol Hill. Senate Republicans have agreed to boost those payments by \$250 billion, a major win for Democrats, said two sources familiar with the discussions. This will come on top of \$250 billion in direct payments from the IRS to individual Americans, which President Donald Trump, Mnuchin and Senate Republicans have made their key priority.

Senate Republicans and Democrats have yet to reach an overall deal on a massive economic rescue package — but the two sides are getting closer. Confirmed U.S. Cases: 26,138 | U.S. Deaths: 323 Coronavirus cases, reported state-by-state 34 big thinkers' predictions for how coronavirus will change the world permanently. Do you work for a hospital? Tell us what you're seeing Read all coronavirus coverage »

And Senate GOP leaders and the White House conceded to a Democratic demand for tens of billions of dollars for hospitals and health-care providers as part of the rescue package. There also appears to be broad support for \$350 billion in loans to small and medium-sizes businesses that have been decimated as the U.S. economy grinds to a jarring halt in the facing of the growing coronavirus outbreak.

“What [McConnell] has instructed his committees to do is to finish drafting legislation that reflects agreements reached so far, and where the chairmen and the majority believe Democrats could be in a position to support by the time the vote occurs,” said White House Legislative Affairs Director Eric Ueland, a key Trump administration official involved in the high-level talks. “It’s critically important that Congress be in a position to act for the American people and the American economy on Monday.”

McConnell was hopeful about the prospects for an agreement, telling reporters: “I think we’re clearly going to get there.”

“Basically, we know the general contours of what this is going to look like,” added Senate Majority Whip John Thune (R-S.D.), as he left a closed-door GOP luncheon earlier in the day. Now it’s just a question of plugging in some of the policy, and figuring out where the numbers are.”

“The Democrats are getting some of the things they’ve asked for,” said Thune,

ticking off priorities like immediate relief to individuals, protections for health care workers, and shoring up small businesses. "They're getting what they wanted on unemployment insurance."

Senate Democrats have been tight-lipped about specific issues but generally said Republicans were making good-faith offers as they attempt to reach agreement.

"We've reached a point where the big issues — the really big important issues — are just interrelated, and we can make progress," added Sen. Ron Wyden (D-Ore.), one of his party's top negotiators on financial issues.

In a sign that negotiations were reaching a critical point, Pelosi spent part of Saturday flying back to D.C. Mnuchin spoke with Pelosi and Schumer during the afternoon.

"We're making very good progress. I'm optimistic we can make a deal," Schumer said late Saturday afternoon.

McConnell had originally demanded an agreement be reached by Saturday afternoon.

Mnuchin declined to comment on the talks, but told reporters that he's also spoken with President Donald Trump and Vice President Mike Pence.

"Everybody's working very hard," Mnuchin said just before 4 p.m. on Saturday.

Senate Republicans earlier tried to break the deadlock by delivering their latest concession to Democrats on one of the biggest remaining issues — \$250 billion more for unemployment insurance payments. The two sides huddled separately as they sought a way to incorporate the Democratic demands, such as longer-term benefits for furloughed workers.

"We have a good bipartisan agreement on enhanced unemployment compensations," said Finance Committee Chairman Chuck Grassley (R-Iowa).

As negotiations moved forward, the size and scope of the package appeared to steadily increase. National Economic Council Director Larry Kudlow said earlier Saturday that the price tag of the legislation was expected to exceed \$1.3 trillion, and that the total size of the package, including loans from the federal government, would likely exceed 10 percent of GDP — roughly \$2 trillion. That

would include a payroll tax holiday for small businesses.

During a Senate GOP lunch, Republicans discussed an idea from the Trump administration for possible specific assistance for General Electric and Boeing, but several pushed back on it, including Sen. Ted Cruz (R-Texas), according to two sources familiar with the meeting.

Cruz later tweeted his opposition to "a special carve-out" for the two companies, adding, "Millions are losing jobs; we don't need bailouts or corporate welfare—those companies should participate in the same liquidity programs as everyone else."

Inside the Trump administration, there is a strong desire to help both Boeing and GE, a major contributor to the Boeing supply chain. Both companies employ tens of thousands of workers, and the administration wants to prevent any major loss of jobs at the iconic firms.

In addition to providing the companies money or loans directly through the "Phase 3" package, Mnuchin is also trying to ensure the legislation gives both Treasury and the Federal Reserve the flexibility to loan the two companies additional funds, according to three sources familiar with the Hill negotiations.

Another issue still under negotiation is the Democrats' call for a "State Stabilization Fund," which would assist state governments with looming revenue shortfalls during the pandemic.

Democrats are optimistic about their ask on aid to states. In a tweet, Sen. Chris Murphy (D-Conn.) said Saturday that Republicans are now negotiating on the terms and amount of funding.

The debate over expanding paid leave may be the toughest remaining point of conflict.

The Senate pushed through the House's "Phase 2" relief package earlier this week which included new paid sick leave provisions. While the Senate approved the measure in a 90-8 vote, McConnell had to convince his caucus to support it and vowed to address shortcomings in this new, third stimulus package.

The discussions come after Senate Republicans introduced a \$1 trillion measure Thursday to salvage the economy by providing assistance to individuals, small

businesses and industries. Under the GOP proposal, individuals and families would receive \$1,200 and \$2,400 in direct cash payments based on their income. But some Republicans, including Sens. Josh Hawley (Mo.) and Mitt Romney (Utah), complained the proposal's structure — as written — would penalize lower income Americans who do not have a taxable income. Republican lawmakers and aides say this has been resolved.

Nancy Cook contributed to this report.

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