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## House of Representatives

The House was not in session today. Its next meeting will be held on Friday, August 14, 2020, at 2 p.m.

## Senate

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 12, 2020

The Senate met at 11 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable ROY BLUNT, a Senator from the State of Missouri.

### PRAYER

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

Let us pray.

O God, our refuge and strength, give us reverence for Your greatness. Guide our Senators around the pitfalls of their work, enabling them to have hearts sustained by Your peace. May they surrender their will to You as they trust You to guide their lives.

Lord, give them the wisdom to receive Your reproof, with the understanding that You chastise those whom You love for their good. Make their lives productive for the glory of Your Name.

Mighty God, protect the oppressed and helpless, preserving them from evil.

We pray in Your great Name. Amen.

### PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Presiding Officer 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.

### APPOINTMENT OF ACTING PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will please read a communication

to the Senate from the President pro tempore (Mr. GRASSLEY).

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,  
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,  
Washington, DC, August 12, 2020.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby appoint the Honorable ROY BLUNT, a Senator from the State of Missouri, to perform the duties of the Chair.

CHUCK GRASSLEY,  
President pro tempore.

Mr. BLUNT thereupon assumed the Chair as Acting President pro tempore.

### RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

### CORONAVIRUS

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, yesterday, I spoke about the disconnect between the discourse here in Washington and the pain and uncertainty that American families are feeling all across our country.

I spoke about the human toll of the Democrats' choice to play politics with billions and billions of aid and block it all over non-COVID-related wish list items.

It has been clear for some weeks that the Speaker of the House and the Senate Democratic leader are treating this crisis like an ordinary political game.

The New York Times says Speaker PELOSI is "playing hardball." POLIT-

ICO says she is "taking a huge risk . . . as she remains almost entirely unyielding in her demands."

More than 160,000 Americans have been killed by the worst infectious disease outbreak in more than a century. More than 16 million Americans are out of work. An entire school year for our kids is in limbo, but Democrats are playing political games like this were some run-of-the-mill typical negotiation.

Speaker PELOSI's own Democratic House Members call her proposal "Washington gamesmanship," "partisan gamesmanship," and "playing politics." Those are House Democrats I am quoting on the House Democratic bill.

Yesterday, literally a few minutes after I said on the floor that Democrats should stop treating this crisis like a game, the Democratic leader came to the floor to talk about who "ran down the clock," who "tossed up an air ball," and who "subbed themselves out of the game."

So, look, the Democrats aren't taking this as a serious issue. They aren't acting like this is serious, and the American people are hurting in the meantime.

Let's get outside the beltway and listen to how this crisis has impacted real American families and how the Democrats' stonewalling continues to hurt them.

Since we passed the CARES Act, I have been visiting healthcare facilities in my home State of Kentucky—places like St. Claire's Healthcare in Morehead and King's Daughters Medical

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



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Center in Ashland—always wearing a mask and social distancing, of course.

I have thanked the frontline workers and heard how the Senate's last rescue package has helped them save lives and stay safer themselves while doing it. That is because the CARES Act provided \$1.3 billion for Kentucky healthcare providers alone, on top of more than \$120 million we had already sent for testing.

But Kentucky's incredible nurses, doctors, and hospitals are not finished fighting the battle on behalf of their communities, and Congress must not be finished helping them do it. That is why Senate Republicans proposed major new investments in health providers.

We want to send tens of billions more to expand testing, to reimburse healthcare facilities for unplanned pandemic expenses, to speed the development and rapid distribution of COVID-19 treatments, and to find a vaccine to finish this fight once and for all.

That is what Republicans would like to do, but Democrats have about blocked all of it over non-COVID-related, liberal demands.

Let's talk about the PPP—the historic program from Chairman COLLINS and Chairman RUBIO that has kept Main Street alive and kept millions of Americans from losing their jobs.

This program has been transformational for Kentucky. Our small businesses and their workers have received more than \$5 billion of payroll support. As the director of the Dare to Care Food Bank in Louisville told me recently, PPP funding is what has allowed his facility to keep its entire workforce—precisely when our community needs were the greatest.

And I heard from the director of a Kentucky museum that “[t]he PPP program was the one hope that we had to keep our business alive.”

But these small businesses and non-profits are now nearing the end of that help. The PPP had to close its doors last Saturday for new applications, and many employers are exhausting the money they had already received. Our country is approaching another small business tipping point, and workers could begin getting pink slips instead of paychecks.

That is why Senate Republicans wrote up plans for another whole round of PPP—a full second draw for the hardest hit businesses. House Democrats left this out of their bill entirely and essentially turned their backs on those benefiting from PPP. But Republicans want to keep helping Main Street workers.

One woman-owned small business in Northern Kentucky shared:

We are grateful for the \$465,000 in the PPP. [But] we have used all of it for payroll and employee related costs . . . 18 weeks of expenses. We are seeking [more] financial help to keep our most treasured asset, our people, employed.

And the president of an inspection company in Louisville says this:

You have no idea how much this second draw on PPP will help us. We were actually in the process of figuring out how we were going to make it through to our fall work season. . . . If we get this, we could make it into our season with no layoffs.

Republicans want to get more aid to these workers, but Senate Democrats have blocked every bit of it over non-COVID-related liberal demands.

Let's talk about our university presidents who are worried about testing and funding in the fall. Our K-12 school boards and superintendents want legal protections so they can reopen.

So Republicans proposed billions for education—actually, even more than House Democrats in their bill. But now Democrats are blocking it all over unrelated, liberal demands.

Republicans want another round of direct checks—direct checks to households across Kentucky and across America.

I just heard from one constituent who said:

With my first one, I was able to get an eye exam and new glasses. . . . I appreciate all you can do. Some of us are hurting and need help.

I want to put more cash in her pocket right now, but Democrats are blocking every penny over unrelated, liberal demands.

So do you see the pattern? Kentuckians need more help; Americans need more help. The American people are not done fighting this virus, and Republicans are not done crafting policies to help them. But the difference between now and March is that Democrats seem to be finished being reasonable.

The Speaker of the House and the Senate Democratic leader have cut all their colleagues—all of them, all of their committees—out of negotiations. They are doing this alone, and they have declared that none of the priorities I have named will see a single dime unless—the two of them have declared none of the priorities I have named will see a single dime unless millionaires in Brooklyn and San Francisco get a massive tax cut, States get a trillion-dollar slush fund to cover budget problems long before the pandemic, and we tax essential workers to pay unemployed people a higher salary to stay home.

Republicans wanted to reach agreement on all these issues where we could find common ground and fight over the last few issues later. But the Speaker and the Democratic leader say nothing can move unless every one of these unrelated, far-left items tags along.

These two individuals are letting the wish lists of wealthy coastal elites stand between every working family in America and the additional help they deserve.

So maybe in a few moments the Democratic leader or somebody on the other side will try again to explain how this is all some big political game.

Well, Kentuckians know differently. They need results. All of our States

need results. And Republicans will fight until we actually get an outcome.

#### RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

#### MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will be in a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

The Senator from Virginia.

#### VICE PRESIDENTIAL NOMINATION

Mr. KAINE. Mr. President, I rise today to speak about the latest coronavirus emergency aid package, but before I do, as a matter of personal privilege, I want to offer some comments in praise of a colleague.

Just as we gather together, regardless of party, to mourn when a colleague dies or be together with a colleague who is undergoing a challenge, I think it is good to gather together and acknowledge when something positive happens to a colleague, regardless of our political affiliation.

This is the first opportunity on the Senate floor to offer a word about Senator KAMALA HARRIS, one of our colleagues, who, in a historic move, was asked by another former Senate colleague, Vice President Joe Biden, to join him as his preferred nominee to be Vice President of the United States.

I have come to know Senator HARRIS in her 4 years in the Senate, as many of us have, through her service on especially the Judiciary Committee and the Intelligence Committee.

Her public service track record is a significant one worthy of praise, from her work as a district attorney, first a line prosecutor, and then the elected district attorney in San Francisco, where she focused on trying to keep her community safe, to serving as California's attorney general, broadening the portfolio to include environmental justice and consumer protection, and now her work in the Senate since 2016.

What I find so compelling about Senator HARRIS, in addition to her track record of public service during a very long career, is her personal story. Raised as the child of two immigrants, a Jamaican father and an Indian mother, as so many in this country raised as children of immigrants, she developed a passion to serve and a patriotic love of country.

She is the first African-American woman nominee ever to be on a ticket. She is the first person of South Asian descent ever to be on a ticket. And in the year 2020, when we are commemorating the 100th anniversary of the amendment that guaranteed women the right to vote, I can think of no

greater way to celebrate a centennial than for one of our colleagues who is a woman to have a chance to break a glass ceiling that still has existed, whereby no woman in this country has ever been a Vice President or President.

We are so good at so much in this country. In fact, we are so good at many things with regard to women in this country, but we are sort of uniquely bad in electing women to higher office. In Congress right now, 24 percent of Congress is women, and that ranks us 76th in the world in terms of our percentage of women in a national legislative body. We are tied with Afghanistan, but we trail Iraq and Mexico and many other nations.

So regardless of how it all works out between now and November, and regardless of our own political affiliations, this is a good day, I believe, for the country and a good day for the Senate when 1 of the 100 is recognized in such a way and introduced to the American public with an opportunity to serve at a significant level.

#### CORONAVIRUS

Mr. KAINE. Mr. President, returning to the latest coronavirus emergency aid package—currently, the package doesn't exist. There have been no bipartisan negotiations on it since last Friday. That is disappointing to all of us who are here, ready and willing to negotiate and vote for a strong bipartisan relief package.

The House of Representatives passed its strong package back on May 15, now nearly 3 months ago. Today is August 12. There was some hope that maybe COVID-19 cases were ticking downward. At the end of May, there was some hope that maybe the economic devastation was reducing, but COVID cases did not tick down over the summer as some had hoped. In fact, they have ticked up in many parts of the country, and the Senate has not taken any votes on the House bill or indeed on any bill. That is disappointing.

More than that, it is disappointing for millions of Americans who are in the midst of hard times right now. They are worried about their own health or the health of their loved ones. They are worried about whether they will receive unemployment benefits or how they will make rent or mortgage or how their children will get an education. We know in this body we can transcend politics as usual to address the coronavirus because we did so in March by passing the CARES Act, even as Members of the body, including me, were getting coronavirus as we were having those negotiations. Even as staffers were getting it, even as Senate spouses were getting it, we stayed at the table and found a bipartisan bill that helped us deal with the challenge for a few critical months.

But we are here debating this again because the magnitude of the crisis is not a crisis of a few months. No, it is

such that the aid provided thus far is running out while Americans' hardships continue. That is why it is essential that we not give up and that we stay here as long as it takes to come through for the American people.

I have heard some in Congress and, indeed, some in this body say about more Federal aid for the coronavirus response say: I just don't see the need for it. Indeed, the majority leader has candidly acknowledged that approximately 20 Members of the Republican caucus will not vote for more aid. Well, I want to make the case first that there is need for it, and the need is undeniable because the circumstances that people are living in are dire.

Last Friday, we found out that the unemployment rate in July was 10.2 percent, which is a number that is higher than at any point during the 2008, 2009 recession. The President called these "Great Jobs Numbers!" But I don't see anything great about 1 in 10 Americans who are in the workforce not being able to find work.

More than 30 million Americans are collecting unemployment benefits, and last week their benefit checks were cut by more than 50 percent. In Virginia, just as an example, unemployed workers are now receiving a maximum—a maximum—of \$378 a week. That is not enough to pay rent, let alone rent, groceries, childcare, electric bills, and many other costs that families face every day.

Because they lost their jobs and other income, millions of Americans are now at risk of eviction or foreclosure. The \$600 Federal unemployment benefit and Federal eviction moratorium were holding this off for many, but with those relief measures expiring, families are unable to continue paying their August or September bills.

One estimate is that 12 million evictions will be filed by October, and 12 million is essentially the combined population of about 6 or 7 States. There could be that many evictions filed by October. Just in Virginia there was a State-imposed eviction moratorium that lapsed for 5 weeks, and just in those 5 weeks, nearly 10,000 evictions were filed, potentially forcing people out of their homes.

Three in ten Virginia renters surveyed a couple weeks ago said that they were uncertain how they could pay August rent, and it was more than half of all African-American renters surveyed who said that was the case. Housing instability is difficult at any point in time, but imagine losing your housing during a pandemic. What are people supposed to do during a pandemic? The advice is, if you can stay home and don't go out and don't be with others, that will help keep your family safe. But how can you quarantine at home if you are in danger of losing your home?

Like the majority leader, who quoted from constituents in Kentucky, I am hearing from Virginia constituents every day.

From Allison in Henrico:

I have now exhausted my savings account and have rent due, groceries to buy and bills to pay. I am now desperate for immediate help.

From Rhys in Mechanicsville:

I have three children, one with significant special needs. My wife cannot work now due to covid-19 and the school closures. I am behind on numerous bills, including mortgage, utility, and other bills.

From Dominique in Fairfax:

My rent is now 3 months behind as well as my other bills and I am receiving letters [threatening] evictions and services being turned off.

Unfortunately, these examples are now not aberrations, but they are common. We all know people—we all know people—who are at risk of losing their home or being hungry or losing healthcare or their savings being depleted because of the absence of work.

So we have to make sure that people are not removed from their homes in the middle of a health crisis. We need to make sure they can continue to pay bills until the health crisis is sufficiently addressed and the economy gets back to where it was.

Schools and colleges across the country are trying to reopen right now. It doesn't matter if it is in person, online, or a hybrid model, we want them to reopen safely right now, and this is the time to provide schools with the resources they need to deliver quality instruction, not punish them for following public health guidance and data.

Working families are struggling to find childcare options. This is critical to reopening the economy. Childcare providers themselves are struggling. Virginia, according to national surveys, is at risk of losing 45 percent of its licensed childcare capacity; that is, 130,000 childcare slots in Virginia without the additional support they would need to help them stay viable. If we lose childcare capacity, that will have a significant consequence in terms of the ability of people to go back to work so that the economy can start to grow again.

On the nutrition front, we are facing an unprecedented rise in food insecurity as thousands of Virginians and millions of Americans have newly enrolled in the SNAP program. The Brookings Institute estimates that nearly 14 million children are living in food-insecure households—14 million children. That is nearly six times the number of children who were food insecure just as recently as 2018, and nearly three times as many who were food insecure at the peak of the great recession in 2008 and 2009.

I bet all of my colleagues have experienced this because we are all out in our States talking to folks. Food banks have been slammed with demand they have never witnessed before, and it has been harder for food banks to get grocery access because grocery store shelves have also been ravaged because people are going to grocery stores while restaurants are closed.

What do food banks do with increasing demand and fewer donations from grocery stores? The Capital Area Food Bank purchased 100 semitruck loads of food in April, which is triple what the food bank purchased in all of 2019. Just in 1 month, they tripled their purchases compared to 2019. The Blue Ridge Area Food Bank, which serves the western part of Virginia, saw the number of new families seeking food assistance quadruple from last year, just as of May.

Americans are in a dire state. Their basic needs are at stake. We Democrats want to address that hardship. We did address that hardship in the Heroes Act, which we passed in mid-May. We want to keep people from losing their jobs, being evicted, and going hungry.

I know there are many Republicans who share these same goals, but the proposals that have been on the table in this body are simply inadequate. There are areas that we agree on. Aid to small business is important. Broadband is important because as people telecommute or get telehealth or get educational content online, they have to have access to broadband. Testing is important. Childcare is important to open the economy. These are important priorities I believe we can come together on, but the Republican plan that the Senate GOP introduced in this body, which the majority leader again acknowledges that at least 20 Members of the caucus will not support, has large cuts to unemployment aid, no State and local government aid to prevent layoffs of first responders and vital programs and services.

The majority leader characterized State and local government agencies as a “slush fund.” I was a mayor. I was a Governor. I know what is happening to State and local budgets, and when the revenues to State and local governments decline, there is about one place they can go, and the one place they can go is furloughs, waivers, salary cuts, and cutting personnel.

The overwhelming majority of first responders in this country work for State and local governments. It is never a good time to cut police, fire, EMT, ambulance, healthcare workers—never a good time—but the worst time to do it is in the midst of a global health pandemic. It is not a slush fund; it is a necessity that the communities where people live and work have basic services to get through this challenge.

The Republican proposal has inadequate education aid, no aid for the eviction tsunami that is facing us to provide rent or mortgage assistance, no nutrition aid in the SNAP program or otherwise to help the 14 million kids who, today, are living in food-insecure households.

The Republican proposal did include a comprehensive liability shield to prevent anyone from suing if their employer's negligence causes a virus outbreak. I thought it was interesting that so often on the other side of the aisle in this body, when this prospective bill

has been talked about, that has been in the front of the line as if the worry about lawsuits is the biggest concern that the American people have right now. No one in Virginia, when they tell me about their concerns, is putting worries about lawsuits up at the top of the list. We are talking about food, hunger, healthcare, and housing.

The liability shield proposal in the GOP goes even further than protecting against liability; it wipes out States' abilities to pass safety regulations. Virginia became the first State in the country to do an emergency temporary standard to provide guidance to public places and employers about safety standards that they could use on the job. It is good to get advice about safety standards because most businesses don't have an NIH or CDC or a health department, so advice about standards that should be followed in workplaces is a great idea. Virginia became the first State in the country to do that. The Republican liability shield would not only give people liability protections, but it would take away the ability of the States to do what Virginia did to try to create lifesaving protections for workers and customers. That is unacceptable—unacceptable.

Democrats offered to meet halfway. We knew when the Heroes Act passed—I mean, we have been around the block a few times. It wasn't as if Senate Republicans were just going to say: That is a good idea. We will just vote for it.

That is not the way things work. The Senate Republicans would have their proposal just as the House Democrats have their proposal. The two proposals have dramatically different pricetags. The Senate proposal, together with the White House, came in the neighborhood of \$1 trillion and the House proposal came in the neighborhood of \$3 trillion.

There is nothing magic about these numbers, but it is important to understand that willingness to compromise is something Americans expect of us right now. Democrats said: OK, you have a package that is worth \$1 trillion, and we have a package that is worth \$3 trillion. Let's split the difference. We will have to decide how to compose the \$2 trillion package, but let's split the difference. The White House refused. The White House got an offer to meet halfway and said: That is not what we are going to do. We insist on the skinny version.

The skinny version is inadequate to meet the challenge of the moment. This is the worst economic contraction in the 145 years that we have had measured quarterly economic growth in this country. This is the worst pandemic that the United States has dealt with since the Spanish flu of 1917 and 1918. A narrow bill isn't enough.

If you don't like the Democratic bill because you think the pricetag is too big, how about meeting us halfway? That is the way negotiations so often happen. After the White House rejected the notion of meeting halfway, the President issued Executive orders that he claims break through the logjam.

Like many things the President does, though, an analysis of the Executive orders demonstrates there is little substance there. The President proposed a deferred payroll tax collection. That doesn't actually give Americans more money; it just gives them a larger tax bill next year. Because it is a deferral, the President cannot lift the obligation off either the employers or the employees. It is also very confusing to employers to suggest: OK, you should defer, but it is likely to start back up again. That is very, very hard for employers, especially small employers, to figure out.

We all know that the payroll tax is the main pillar of Social Security, as every generation pays into the system while they are working so they can enjoy retirement with dignity in their senior years. President Trump has said that this isn't just a deferral, but if he has his way and is reelected, he is going to permanently cancel the tax. That would undermine retirement security for all future generations.

The Executive order with respect to housing did actually nothing. It just ordered agencies to look into delaying evictions and foreclosures, but no assistance and no dollars for those facing eviction or for those facing foreclosures. Look into “can you delay them.”

Governors are already saying that the Executive order dealing with unemployment aid is unworkable. It would be very difficult for them to reconfigure their UI systems to do what the President has asked them to do and asked them to help pay for in the Executive order. Even if States could figure out how to launch a completely new system, the benefits would run out in 5 weeks.

On the surface, the Executive order with respect to student loan relief looks like an extension, but if you dig into it, that is not what it is. The order still leaves out 8 million Federal student loan borrowers, and it doesn't even mention whether borrowers' credit ratings and credit scores will be protected if they take advantage of what is offered to them under the EO.

What about the millions of students who are struggling to financially find a way to go back to college, or the schools that are trying to find a way to still make sure students get an education when they reopen, or the working families that are struggling to find childcare? School boards and superintendents around the country have come with a proposal saying that to open schools safely would cost about \$175 billion, and that is what Democrats have put on the table. That is not addressed at all in the Executive orders, even as we stand at the threshold of schools reopening.

In sum, the President's Executive orders address virtually none of the hardships, solve virtually none of the hardships, and lift virtually none of the burdens that Americans are suffering through right now. We are having hard

times. We are having hard times, and it is our duty to try to address that hardship.

Democrats are willing to compromise. When we say, "Hey, we have a plan but we will meet you halfway in your plan," and the White House says, "No," you know, what are we supposed to do? What are we supposed to do? A skinny version isn't sufficient for the magnitude of the crisis.

The Senate Republican proposal has some elements that we support, but it leaves so many others unaddressed that it is not adequate. The Republican White House has rejected compromise. President Trump's Executive orders are partly illegal, partly unworkable, and completely insufficient. It doesn't have to be this way because there are many areas on which we can find agreement.

I know many in this body are hearing from their home States' Governors, mayors, local governments, colleges and universities, school boards and housing authorities, food banks, hospitals, and the chambers of commerce. You are hearing the same thing that I am hearing from Virginians.

So, as I conclude, it doesn't have to be this way. We can put together a good bipartisan deal, but it can't be a "White House my way or the highway." It has to be a willingness to meet and find compromise between a Democratic proposal and a proposal that is acceptable to at least some on the GOP side and the White House.

Any large compromise in a divided government is bound to be imperfect. I am reminded of a quote from FDR during the Depression years. You never really had to use quotes from the Depression because the magnitude of the Depression was different than what I have experienced during most of my life, but now quotes from the Depression, I think, bear some revisiting. Here is what FDR said as the administration and Congress, at the time, were doing everything they could to figure out a way to help out needy Americans: "Better the occasional faults of a government that lives in a spirit of charity than the consistent omissions of a government frozen in the ice of its own indifference."

By now, everybody knows somebody who has gotten COVID-19 or somebody who has gotten sick or even died or somebody who has lost a job or somebody who is worried about rent or food. We all know those people, and many of us have experienced this in our own families. Are we going to help or are we going to be frozen in the ice of our own indifference? Let's surprise the Senate. Let's work together and get this done.

With that, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. BOOZMAN). The Senator from Nevada.

#### CORONAVIRUS

Ms. CORTEZ MASTO. Mr. President, you know, as I sit and listen to my colleague from Virginia, I can't agree

more. Now is the time, really, for us to come together to do what the Senate traditionally does best, and that is working on the best interests of the people across this country who are struggling right now.

Compromise is not a bad word. It is time for us to get in a room and really do the job that the American public expects us to do, and that is looking out for their best interests at a time when we have a healthcare pandemic. Now, keep in mind that this is a once-in-a-lifetime pandemic—once in a lifetime. So that requires us to come together and really focus on how we help Americans across this country who are struggling right now. They shouldn't be penalized.

We have asked them to stay home and shelter in place because we are trying to address how we do the research that is necessary for a vaccine. Hopefully, one day, we will have that vaccine. We need to ramp up the testing that is needed so everybody can feel safe and comfortable knowing whether they have this virus or not or the antibody, but we are not there yet because more work needs to be done, particularly by this Congress.

The American public has heard us, and they are sheltering in place, they are staying home, and they have shuttered their businesses. Now, more than ever, this country needs the Senate to act.

The House has done its job 2 months ago. They worked a comprehensive package, and I say "comprehensive" because we can't just pick and choose winners and losers here. This isn't what this is about. This is about making sure we are bringing relief and helping those across this country. Everybody is impacted. We have promised them: If you do what we say and we help stem the spread of this virus, we are going to have your backs, and we are going to take care of you.

I will say that we have failed at that. This administration has failed. We have failed at that promise. I know when we all go to our offices or we go home to our States, we are hearing from our constituents. We get emails, we get calls, and we get letters. I know you all feel the same as I do, and we read them and we listen to them. I don't know of one State in this country right now where somebody is not suffering from this pandemic who needs our help.

I know that is why I am here, because we all took the oath. We said we are going to be here to work in the best interests of our States and this country and to make sure that those individuals across this country who pay our salaries—those taxpayers—expect us to do our jobs and work. And that is what I am asking for right now.

You know, I have been to the floor of the Senate this week to talk about the struggles that I see in my State. We all get letters, and I do want to focus today on one. There are so many, and that is why a comprehensive package is

necessary. Right now, I would love to talk to you about what I am seeing in my home State when it comes to our seniors and those who are in need right now with funding to help nursing homes.

Let me just start with letters because I think this is how it starts with all of us—calls into our offices and letters coming from our constituents. There are two calls that I received. One of them was from a daughter who called in for her father, who is in a VA nursing home in Boulder City, NV, and because he isn't showing symptoms, he isn't getting tested. With so many cases there, how is this possible? Where are the tests? This is a daughter who is concerned for her father, knowing that if we just get people tested, there is that comfort in knowing whether or not you have this virus and whether you should be quarantined or how we protect you, particularly those in nursing homes.

Then, another call I received was from a mother. She is also a certified nursing assistant at a nursing home, and she is telling me that many there quit because they don't have the proper PPE. They want to work, but they don't want to expose themselves. So what are we doing right now to address all of these needs?

And, listen, there is so much. It is overwhelming. I know it. That is why we were sent here for the hard decisions, not the easy ones, to make sure we are all working in the best interests of the people in our States. I know you all feel the same way.

I have to tell you this. There are thousands of Nevadans that know the anxiety that comes because there is a spouse, a parent, or a grandparent in a nursing home, and they are unable to visit with them or hug their loved ones for fear of giving COVID-19. You have seen it. You have heard it, and I have heard it. Too many loved ones have lost their loved ones because of this virus, and they were not able to be there.

Do you know who was there with them in the nursing home? Those incredible heroes on the frontlines, who are sacrificing their own health to be with them, for those who passed away because of COVID-19. There are so many factors that raise a coronavirus risk for nursing home residents. The majority of the residents, as we all know, are seniors. Many have underlying conditions. They live in closed quarters, and they share common spaces. And we also know this: Residents and staff of these facilities shouldn't be an afterthought. They are a core part of our communities and our healthcare system. They are the elders, and they are the keepers of our stories. We have to do more to protect them.

We need to protect the workers in these homes, too, many of whom belong to communities of color and who are struggling to provide care to a population with unique needs.

The reason why I bring this up is because there is legislation out there to

do just what I am talking about and what we need in our communities. It is not something new. It has already been introduced. My colleague BOB CASEY introduced the Nursing Home COVID-19 Protection and Prevention Act to get nursing and long-care facilities in Nevada and across this country more PPE, the testing that they need, and the staffing to help the staff and those who are in those communities.

These homes need support to slow the spread of the virus and to respond rapidly when it crops up, using all we have learned from combating this virus so far. The bill funds teams of nurses and other critical staff to lend emergency help at nursing homes with outbreaks and to bring the best practices to bear in helping sick residents.

This bill ensures folks in my home State and across the country are being taken care of and that families have peace of mind that there is accountability for providers and protections in place for workers.

I am hearing from family members and loved ones with those in nursing homes in my State. I am hearing from caregivers and healthcare workers. I know all of you are as well, and one thing that comes from all these people is a feeling of being forgotten. No one—no one—in America should feel forgotten right now. It is time for us to come together.

We need to make sure nursing homes follow guidelines and that, if they fail to do so, they will be held accountable. We also must arm them with the tools they need to face a virus that has been relentless in attacking seniors. We should make sure that the next coronavirus package that we should be negotiating and working on right now does everything it can to support the most fragile in our communities because they are also some of our most precious.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The senior Senator from Missouri.

Mr. BLUNT. Mr. President, I think the President of the United States has done the things he can do within his authority to try to address the issues before us, but the truth is, his authority just doesn't go far enough.

Now, I have frequently questioned the President's view of how broad the Presidential authority is, but in these actions he took in the last few days, I looked at them carefully, and I think he had the authority to do what he did, but he would probably be the first to admit that the authority he has doesn't solve the problem the way it needs to be solved.

It is time that the Congress stepped up and did its job. You know, in this debate with the President, there is the article I view of the government. There is a reason that the legislative branch is article I. There is a reason it is our job to pass laws, and there is a reason that it is the President's job to execute those laws. Occasionally, the President has to act quicker on some emergency

basis than the Congress, and within the fairly narrow ability he has to act on this issue, he has tried his best to step up where the Congress has failed to step up.

My good friend from Virginia just said: Well, the House bill is \$3 trillion, and the Senate bill is \$1 trillion. We should figure out how to compromise at \$2 trillion. Now, I believe in compromise. I think it is the essence of democracy, but compromise actually has to be based on some principle of the issue you are dealing with. You know, if the House bill had been \$5 trillion, I guess the logic would be that we compromise at \$3 trillion. If they had known that, their bill would have probably been \$5 trillion.

When the bill was passed, it was described by more than one reporter as a Democratic wish list or the ultimate campaign platform having everything in it. It was described by a whole lot more than one reporter that about a third of their bill had nothing to do with COVID, and another third of their bill is about the big question of what we can do to help State and local government.

Let's put that issue aside for a minute. It is an issue that clearly the House feels strongly about. Clearly, there are challenges to governments, particularly at the local level, I think, and that has to be dealt with in some way and maybe not at the \$871 billion level or whatever they have suggested. But that is a different issue that I will, first of all, concede is very much part of the discussion and should be.

But if you take out the third of the bill that has nothing to do with COVID—let's get that off the table. We could have a debate about whether people who are in the legal marijuana trade should get access to banking, but I think you have to work really hard to make that a COVID issue. We could have a debate about whether the Federal Government should require every State in the country to allow ballot harvesting, but I think that is very hard to make a COVID-19 issue.

A third of the bill, according to many people who analyzed the bill when it came out, has nothing to do with COVID. So let's set aside the other third of the bill that deals with State and local government, our giving State and local government what we don't have to replace money they don't have. I am not going to say that some element of that will not be in a final bill, but let's talk about the things we all know need to be in the first bill, which, in the House bill, were about \$1 trillion.

How do you compromise with the House when you agree with them on a number and they change the number?

Getting back to school is a critical part of what ought to be happening right now. By the way, back-to-school money the schools get in December will not be nearly as helpful as back-to-school money the schools get in August. They need the money now. We

need to see kids back to school, whether it is distance learning, which takes some assets and planning that districts need to do more on, or in-person learning where that is possible, where you have more expenses for probably more bus routes so you don't put as many people on the same bus, more expenses for delayed starting times, and more expenses for social distancing in classrooms. They need that money now.

In their bill, the Heroes Act, for elementary, secondary, and higher education, the House put in \$100 billion. We looked at that carefully. I chair the committee that does that appropriating. I think we know as much in our committee as anybody in the Senate about some of the needs that are out there. We thought the number was \$105 billion. As soon as our bill came out, the House decided, no, we really need \$400 billion. How do you meet somebody in the middle when they keep changing where the middle is?

The Heroes Act, which Members on the other side of the aisle have repeatedly said we should pass and pass immediately, had \$100 billion. We had \$105 billion. You would think that would have been good enough. We might have argued some about the language, but there is not much difference on the language. The argument is that Republicans never spend enough, according to Democrats, and the Democrats seem to have no limit on what they are willing to spend, according to us.

For childcare, there is a critical need for people to get both back to school and back to work. The childcare system is intensely stressed as part of what is going on—people who lose their jobs and take their children out of childcare; people who would prefer, after they have figured out how to do this a different way, not to put their kids back in childcare for a little while. I haven't talked to anybody who thinks the childcare system would have more than 50 percent of the kids willing to come back who were there before. So how do you still make childcare work? Do you double the childcare cost to make up for the fact that 50 percent of the kids aren't there? Of course not. That doesn't work at all.

The House put in the Heroes Act \$7.5 billion for childcare; we put \$15 billion for childcare. Then the House decides: Well, no, we really need \$40 billion or \$50 billion for childcare. It is pretty hard to compromise in the middle if the middle was somewhere between \$15 billion—and I think, hopefully, our number would have prevailed—and \$7.5 billion, and then suddenly the middle is somewhere between \$50 billion and \$15 billion.

Let's be serious here. Let's get this job done. Let's get kids back to school. Let's get people back to work. Let's get childcare back for kids. Let's do what we can to restore the healthcare system that has been incredibly

stressed during this, and let's quit acting like there is this vast disagreement, when the disagreement is way more apparent than real.

If you look at the third of the bill that dealt with COVID-19 that the House passed, we are very close. We are a little ahead of them on testing. Testing absolutely is essential, in my view, to get kids back to school and to get people back to work. Until we get well into the vaccine period, having the vaccine and getting that vaccine to people, testing is going to continue to be critical. We have money for vaccines and vaccine distribution that I think exceeds the House bill money. We could talk about what is really not a very big difference in a \$1 trillion bill or something a little more than that.

We have said in our bill that, on testing, on vaccines, and on other things, we are going to set some priorities. We said the Federal Government priority is to be sure that everybody gets that test in whatever way they can get it as quickly as they can get it. We said nursing homes, childcare centers, elementary and secondary education, and colleges and universities would be Federal priorities. Employers are going to have to help with some of the workplace priorities, but we think those are the right Federal priorities, and we put it in our bill.

Back to work: You have to have childcare, again, to get back to work. A second round of PPP: Again, something the Senator from Virginia agreed we need to do.

Healthcare provider assistance: We ask our healthcare providers to do the two hardest things you could possibly do at the same time; one was stop all of the income you can possibly stop—stop the so-called elective surgeries. By the way, some elective surgeries get less elective the longer you wait until you have them, and we are seeing some results of that right now. I think there was some logic to stop putting people into the hospital, if you didn't have to, or having them in the surgeon's facility, if you didn't have to, until we knew what was happening here—and not only stop the income but stand ready for the worst epidemic your community may have ever had to deal with or may ever have to deal with at any time in the future. So maintain your full readiness, stop your income. We need to come back now for the third time and provide money for providers. Again, money now is much more valuable than money 90 days from now.

Telemedicine: We finally have woken up to what the Federal Government should have been doing for a decade and embrace telemedicine as part of normal office visits that don't have to happen in the office as part of behavioral health.

Our bill says that CMS, which determines how Medicare money is spent, can't go back on what they have allowed in the last few months, ever. And on some of the things they have allowed, they can't go back for a signifi-

cant period of time to see how this works.

Broadband: We could deal with this. If we are going to have telemedicine and telebehavioral health, that kind of medicine, as well as other kinds of medicines, you need to have access to broadband. Kids who are learning remotely have to have the same opportunity as other kids who are learning remotely and need to have access to broadband. They need it as soon as they can get it, whether that is assistance to get hooked up, which is a little easier than just access. We have been working hard in this Senate and in our State legislature in my State to get the Missourians who don't have access to high-speed broadband to get that access.

There are areas here that are areas we need to be dealing with. Most of them, you have to really work hard to pretend there is a disagreement. Sure, you can decide that your education category was really only 25 percent of what you really needed, but I think our House friends know that is not right, and we know that is not right.

This is probably not the last bill we will pass, if it turns out we are incorrect on our \$100 billion or \$105 billion, but \$100 billion right now to schools trying to get started is worth more than what \$200 billion will be in May.

Let's give people the help they need when they need it. Let's quit arguing about whether the President has inadequate tools to do what everybody knows needs to be done. Certainly, that is true. That should be true; that under the Constitution, the Congress has to do its job.

Compromise is more than some middle number between an outrageous number and a number that may turn out to be not quite big enough. Let's get serious. Let's get back to work. Let's do our job. Let's get back to school, the country back to work, the country back to childcare, and do those things we need to do to restore both the healthcare system and, more importantly, the health of every American we can possibly help.

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

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

#### VETERANS MENTAL HEALTH CARE IMPROVEMENT ACT

Mr. CASSIDY. Mr. President, I rise today to speak to a very important piece of legislation, which quietly passed this Chamber last week. It included several provisions I authored and offered based upon my experience as a physician that specifically provides mental health support to America's veterans.

We all agree, we owe the men and women who fought and fight for this country a tremendous debt of gratitude for the sacrifices they made to preserve our freedom. It is dangerous, and our servicemembers answer the call. Many carry scars from injuries sustained during that service.

But there are scars that we cannot see. Service can take a physical toll but also a mental one. Too many veterans struggle with mental health issues and suicidal thoughts. About 17 veterans per day from all of our wars put together take their own lives. For comparison, 22 servicemembers were killed in combat in Afghanistan throughout all of 2019. We are losing thousands more veterans at home than we are losing fighting men and women in the field. That is something to ponder.

We must do a better job of leading the mental health needs of veterans. Thankfully, this Chamber took a big step forward last week when we passed the Commander John Scott Hannon Veterans Mental Health Care Improvement Act.

The bill improves outreach to veterans and offers new mental healthcare options in five major ways: First, the bill bolsters the VA's mental health workforce to serve more veterans. It gives the VA direct hiring authority for mental health professionals. The VA can offer scholarships to mental health professionals to work at vet centers, and it provides for at least one suicide prevention coordinator at every Veterans' Administration Hospital.

It improves rural veterans' access to mental healthcare by increasing the number of locations where veterans can access VA telehealth services. It also offers grants to non-VA organizations that provide mental health services or alternative treatments to veterans.

The bill strengthens support and assistance for servicemembers transitioning out of the military by automatically giving every servicemember a full year of VA healthcare when they leave the military.

By the way, this came to my mind: It turns out that most suicides occur within 6 weeks of one of our soldiers or sailors or marines leaving the service; within 6 months of that departure is when they tend to commit suicide. But it is about 6 months before they first access VA services. We have to have this kind of transition point tightened and one that makes sure they all know they have VA benefits for that first year.

The Veterans Mental Healthcare Improvement Act also studies and invests in innovative and alternative science-based treatment options. It invests in research on the impact of living at high altitudes, on veterans' suicide risk, and on identifying and treating other risk factors for mental health illness.

It holds the VA accountable for its mental healthcare and suicide prevention efforts. It does this by examining



how the VA manages suicide prevention resources and how the VA provides care and information sharing for veterans seeking mental healthcare from both VA and community providers.

This bill takes a strong, evidence-based approach to meeting veterans' needs that haven't always been given priority. It is encouraging to me that is bipartisan. At a time when we don't appear to agree on very much, we are able to deliver for our heroes.

I am proud to have worked with my Democratic colleagues to write bills that were included in this package. Senator TESTER and I partnered on the Promoting Coordination for Veteran Suicide Prevention Act. This bill, this amendment, ensures that a thorough review of veterans who die by suicide within 1 year of separation from the Armed Services is conducted jointly by both the Department of Defense and by the VA.

As I mentioned, most suicides occur within 6 months of separating from service. If that is the case, then the Department of Defense can do a review of what are those risk factors and have a warm handoff to the Veterans' Administration Hospital. And because we made automatic that first year of service within the VA, that warm handoff can be taken without any impediments of is there coverage or is there not.

There is also going to be a partnership between the mental health and suicide prevention experts in both the VA and DOD that will contribute to improved information sharing and help further close the gap in ensuring high-quality, seamless care between these two Departments, focusing on the serviceperson who has now become a veteran.

Senator TESTER and I also worked together on the VA Research Approval Efficiency Act. This provision authorizes the Veterans Administration to leverage accredited commercial institutional review boards for use in connection with VA-sponsored clinical research. Getting the VA commercial options for approving clinical trials will add much-needed efficiencies and begin to reduce the disparity with academic and other institutions that, today, lead in clinical trial administration.

If we know that our treatments for those with mental illness often need to be improved, we want to give our veterans access to those improved treatments as soon as possible, but we also want to make sure that those treatments suit the needs of the veteran. You can only do this by encouraging that research activity with full consent of the veteran—full consent—by which she or he may participate in these trials for her benefit, his benefit, but also for the benefit of us all. This reform enables the VA to increase the caliber care it delivers to veterans in a variety of clinical areas.

Senator SINEMA and I introduced the Improving Mental Health Care for Veterans Act. This provision requires VA and DOD to establish a joint clinical

practice guideline for treatment of serious mental illness. This common-sense approach builds on an already robust library of clinical practice guidelines that serve to standardize and reinforce treatment procedures in other areas.

Just as a point, if someone is found to be well-controlled in a certain medical regimen but then they transition to another different care with a different formulary, then all the hard work to find just the right clinical pharmaceutical treatment program to keep the person balanced now has to be changed because the second department has a different formulary—a different set of drugs with which they wish to treat—all the good work done here is lost there.

We wish to eliminate that possibility by making sure there is a common set of clinical guidelines so that somebody with stress is passed off and it is seamless, both in terms of the clinical care, but also the medicines which they may take.

The passage of the Commander John Scott Hannon Veterans Mental Health Care Improvement Act is the culmination of a lot of hard work from both Democratic and Republican Senators. It now goes to the House for consideration. I urge the House to swiftly pass this legislation so that President Trump can sign it into law.

This bill will have a direct, positive impact in the care the VA delivers to American veterans. They answered the call to serve our Nation; now, Congress must answer the call to better serve them.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. CASSIDY). Without objection, it is so ordered.

## VETERANS

Mr. BOOZMAN. I want to take a second to thank the Presiding Officer for the great work that he is doing on the Veterans' Affairs Committee. As the Senator just spoke earlier, he is working hard to take these bills and improve them. Everyone is working together, and we certainly appreciate the fact that the Senator has so much experience in a variety of different ways and has added so much the committee. We are very thankful for that.

I rise today to recognize the significant steps that the Senate recently took to improve the mental healthcare of veterans and save lives with the passage of the Commander John Scott Hannon Veterans Mental Health Care Improvement Act. This moves us one step closer to paving a new path forward in suicide prevention and imple-

menting a new strategy that, I believe, will give hope and purpose to the men and women who live with these invisible injuries. More than 50,000 organizations nationwide provide suicide prevention services for veterans. These nonprofits and community organizations play a vital role and have taken the lead to build effective programs.

I have heard from veterans how organizations like the one based in Rogers, AR, Sheep Dog Impact Assistance, are encouraging them to live their best life. I have also seen how outdoor therapies like Rivers of Recovery are supporting the mental health needs of veterans and how veteran service organizations are stepping up and addressing mental healthcare in their communities.

We have so many organizations in Arkansas and throughout the country that are doing a great job in this capacity. In Mount Home, AR, the Disabled American Veterans chapter changed its approach to outreach after the region experienced the highest veteran suicide rate in the State, one of the highest in the Nation. Members enhanced their contact with veterans in the area. This connection has saved lives and reversed the suicide rate in Northern Arkansas.

It makes sense that we harness the ideas and successes of this DAV chapter and other advocates into sound policy. That is why I joined with Senator MARK WARNER to champion a new strategy that authorizes the VA to provide grants to nonprofits in their communities, establishing a framework to coordinate these efforts and expand outreach to more veterans. Additionally, this legislation will enable the VA to establish greater partnerships with communities to better measure the effectiveness of ongoing suicide prevention programs.

I appreciate the leadership of the VA Committee Chairman JERRY MORAN, Ranking Member JON TESTER, and the assistance of them and their staffs in working with me and Senator WARNER and our staffs to include our proposal, the IMPROVE Well-Being for Veterans' Act, in the comprehensive mental healthcare package, again, that we just passed in the Senate. I especially want to thank Rosie Heiss, Amanda Want, and Pat McGuigan, members of my staff who spent countless hours and worked with numerous groups to find a solution to help advance this idea.

The VA estimates around 20 veterans commit suicide each day. That number has remained roughly unchanged despite a tremendous increase in funding. Interestingly, only 6 of those 20 veterans are receiving healthcare services in the VA. By sharing information and collaborating with veteran-serving nonprofits and other community organizations, we can expand our network and provide the help the veterans need and, ultimately, capture more veterans into our VA system.

VA Secretary Robert Wilkie called this approach "key" to unlocking the



veteran suicide crisis. Hopefully, he is right. I applaud the Senate for advancing this bill and look forward to working with my colleagues in the House of Representatives to quickly approve this legislation so that we can reassure veterans that their best days are ahead of them.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. BOOZMAN). Without objection, it is so ordered.

#### NATIONAL SEERSUCKER DAY

Mr. CASSIDY. Mr. President, today I rise in recognition of seersucker manufacturers and enthusiasts across the United States. I wish everyone a Happy National Seersucker Day. This uniquely American fashion has a storied history dating back to 1909. The first seersucker suit was designed by Joseph Haspel at his Broad Street facility in New Orleans, LA. Louisiana is proud to have played an important part in introducing the country to seersucker apparel.

This lightweight cotton fabric, known for its signature pucker, has been worn and enjoyed by Americans across the country during the hot summer months. Mr. Haspel said it best: "Hot is hot, no matter what you do for a living."

In the 1990s, Seersucker Day was established by Members of this Chamber to honor this unique American fashion. I proudly resumed this tradition in 2014 in the U.S. House of Representatives and continued this tradition in the U.S. Senate. This year, I wish to designate June 13 as the seventh annual National Seersucker Day. I encourage everyone to wear seersucker on this day to commemorate this traditionally American clothing.

#### ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

##### TRIBUTE TO THE TREASUREBELLES

• Mr. DAINES. Mr. President, this week I have the honor of recognizing the women of the TreasureBelles out of Treasure County for their efforts to promote Montana ag in their community.

The TreasureBelles are made up of over 20 women who have made it their goal to promote and highlight the importance of beef through various efforts to integrate agriculture into different community organizations and events.

The TreasureBelles enjoy hosting Ag Day at the school in Hysham each Spring, feeding Lions Club members each month, serving food at the annual

StreetFest, and rallying community members together to donate beef for student lunches.

The TreasureBelles are also proud members of the Montana Cattlewomen Association and the American National Cattlewomen Association.

It is my honor to recognize the TreasureBelles for their commitment to Montana ag, and I applaud their efforts to serve their fellow Montanans in the Treasure County community. ●

#### MESSAGE FROM THE HOUSE

At 11:02 a.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mr. Novotny, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House has passed the following bill, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H.R. 7617. An act making appropriations for the Department of Defense for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2021, and for other purposes.

#### MEASURES REFERRED

The following bill was read the first and the second times by unanimous consent, and referred as indicated:

H.R. 7617. An act making appropriations for the Department of Defense for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2021, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Appropriations.

#### REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

The following reports of committees were submitted:

By Mr. WICKER, from the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation, with an amendment in the nature of a substitute:

S. 999. A bill to provide for Federal coordination of activities supporting sustainable chemistry, and for other purposes (Rept. No. 116-251).

By Mr. WICKER, from the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation:

Report to accompany S. 2525, A bill to require the Director of the National Institute of Standards and Technology to conduct a study of personal protective equipment worn by firefighters to determine the prevalence and concentration of per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances, and for other purposes (Rept. No. 116-252).

By Mr. WICKER, from the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation, with an amendment:

S. 2597. A bill to require the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration to make certain operational models available to the public, and for other purposes (Rept. No. 116-253).

By Mr. WICKER, from the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation, with amendments:

S. 2775. A bill to improve the cyber workforce of the United States, and for other purposes (Rept. No. 116-254).

S. 2805. A bill to improve transit-oriented development financing, and for other purposes (Rept. No. 116-255).

By Mr. WICKER, from the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation, without amendment:

S. 3132. A bill to extend the Undertaking Spam, Spyware, And Fraud Enforcement With Enforcers beyond Borders Act of 2006, and for other purposes (Rept. No. 116-256).

#### INTRODUCTION OF BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

The following bills and joint resolutions were introduced, read the first and second times by unanimous consent, and referred as indicated:

By Mr. MARKEY:

S. 4523. A bill to regulate large-scale emissions of methane and natural gas, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Mr. CARPER:

S. 4524. A bill to amend titles XIX and XXI of the Social Security Act to provide coverage of comprehensive tobacco cessation services under such titles, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mrs. BLACKBURN:

S. 4525. A bill to ensure that health care providers do not incur additional Federal income tax liability due to receipt of assistance through the Provider Relief Fund during the COVID-19 pandemic; to the Committee on Finance.

By Ms. HIRONO (for herself, Mr. CASEY, Ms. HARRIS, Mr. BROWN, Ms. ROSEN, Ms. CORTEZ MASTO, Mr. SANDERS, Mr. BOOKER, Ms. BALDWIN, and Mr. BLUMENTHAL):

S. 4526. A bill to ensure that COVID-19 related Federal programs and assistance provide for the translation of informational materials relating to awareness, screening, testing, and treatment for COVID-19 into priority languages; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

#### ADDITIONAL COSPONSORS

S. 549

At the request of Mrs. GILLIBRAND, the names of the Senator from Minnesota (Ms. KLOBUCHAR) and the Senator from Hawaii (Ms. HIRONO) were added as cosponsors of S. 549, a bill to modernize voter registration, promote access to voting for individuals with disabilities, protect the ability of individuals to exercise the right to vote in elections for Federal office, and for other purposes.

S. 624

At the request of Ms. KLOBUCHAR, the name of the Senator from Nevada (Ms. ROSEN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 624, a bill to amend the Help America Vote Act of 2002 to require States to provide for same day registration.

S. 1791

At the request of Mrs. GILLIBRAND, the names of the Senator from Delaware (Mr. CARPER) and the Senator from Rhode Island (Mr. REED) were added as cosponsors of S. 1791, a bill to prohibit discrimination on the basis of religion, sex (including sexual orientation and gender identity), and marital status in the administration and provision of child welfare services, to improve safety, well-being, and permanency for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer or questioning foster youth, and for other purposes.

S. 2561

At the request of Mrs. SHAHEEN, her name was added as a cosponsor of S. 2561, a bill to amend the Lacey Act Amendments of 1981 to clarify provisions enacted by the Captive Wildlife Safety Act, to further the conservation

of certain wildlife species, and for other purposes.

S. 2579

At the request of Ms. HIRONO, the name of the Senator from Minnesota (Ms. SMITH) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2579, a bill to direct the Director of the Office of Science and Technology Policy to carry out programs and activities to ensure that Federal science agencies and institutions of higher education receiving Federal research and development funding are fully engaging their entire talent pool, and for other purposes.

S. 2886

At the request of Mrs. SHAHEEN, her name was added as a cosponsor of S. 2886, a bill to prohibit the use of animal testing for cosmetics and the sale of cosmetics tested on animals.

S. 2898

At the request of Mr. INHOFE, the name of the Senator from Maryland (Mr. VAN HOLLEN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2898, a bill to amend title 5, United States Code, to provide for a full annuity supplement for certain air traffic controllers.

S. 3814

At the request of Mr. BENNET, the name of the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. MENENDEZ) was added as a cosponsor of S. 3814, a bill to establish a loan program for businesses affected by COVID-19 and to extend the loan forgiveness period for paycheck protection program loans made to the hardest hit businesses, and for other purposes.

S. 3979

At the request of Mr. WICKER, the name of the Senator from North Dakota (Mr. CRAMER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 3979, a bill to amend title 10, United States Code, to authorize the Secretary of Defense to temporarily waive cost-sharing amounts under the TRICARE pharmacy benefits program during certain declared emergencies.

S. 4012

At the request of Ms. HIRONO, her name was added as a cosponsor of S. 4012, a bill to establish a \$120,000,000,000 Restaurant Revitalization Fund to provide structured relief to food service or drinking establishments through December 31, 2020, and for other purposes.

S. 4014

At the request of Mr. CARDIN, the name of the Senator from Delaware (Mr. CARPER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 4014, a bill to provide for supplemental loans under the Paycheck Protection Program.

S. 4078

At the request of Mr. WYDEN, the names of the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. MENENDEZ) and the Senator from Ohio (Mr. BROWN) were added as cosponsors of S. 4078, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to improve the low-income housing credit and provide relief relating to the coronavirus emergency, and for other purposes.

S. 4152

At the request of Mr. HOEVEN, the name of the Senator from Hawaii (Ms. HIRONO) was added as a cosponsor of S. 4152, a bill to provide for the adjustment or modification by the Secretary of Agriculture of loans for critical rural utility service providers, and for other purposes.

S. 4358

At the request of Mr. BENNET, the name of the Senator from Minnesota (Ms. SMITH) was added as a cosponsor of S. 4358, a bill to amend title XIX of the Social Security Act to allow States to provide coverage under the Medicaid program for vaccines and treatment for COVID-19 for uninsured individuals without the imposition of cost sharing requirements, and for other purposes.

### AMENDMENTS SUBMITTED AND PROPOSED

SA 2648. Mr. GRASSLEY (for himself and Ms. ERNST) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 2499 proposed by Mr. MCCONNELL to the bill S. 178, to condemn gross human rights violations of ethnic Turkic Muslims in Xinjiang, and calling for an end to arbitrary detention, torture, and harassment of these communities inside and outside China; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 2649. Mrs. BLACKBURN submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 2499 proposed by Mr. MCCONNELL to the bill S. 178, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 2650. Mr. ENZI submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 2499 proposed by Mr. MCCONNELL to the bill S. 178, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

### TEXT OF AMENDMENTS

**SA 2648.** Mr. GRASSLEY (for himself and Ms. ERNST) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 2499 proposed by Mr. MCCONNELL to the bill S. 178, to condemn gross human rights violations of ethnic Turkic Muslims in Xinjiang, and calling for an end to arbitrary detention, torture, and harassment of these communities inside and outside China; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

#### SEC. \_\_\_\_ RENEWABLE FUEL FEEDSTOCK REIMBURSEMENT PROGRAM.

(a) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

(1) ELIGIBLE ENTITY.—The term “eligible entity” means an entity located in the United States that produces renewable fuel used as transportation fuel (as those terms are defined in section 211(o)(1) of the Clean Air Act (42 U.S.C. 7545(o)(1))).

(2) ELIGIBLE FEEDSTOCK.—The term “eligible feedstock” means renewable biomass described in section 211(o)(1)(I) of the Clean Air Act (42 U.S.C. 7545(o)(1)(I)) that is intended to be used to produce the renewable fuel described in paragraph (1).

(3) SECRETARY.—The term “Secretary” means the Secretary of Agriculture.

(b) ESTABLISHMENT OF PROGRAM.—Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the Secretary shall use such sums as are necessary of the funds of the Commodity Credit Cor-

poration to carry out a program to provide payments to eligible entities to reimburse the eligible entities for purchases of eligible feedstocks that were made during the period beginning on January 1, 2020, and ending on March 31, 2020.

(c) PAYMENT AMOUNT.—The amount of a payment under subsection (b) shall be an amount equal to 75 percent of the purchase price of eligible feedstock paid by an eligible entity.

(d) PROOF OF COST.—The Secretary shall determine the documentation that an eligible entity shall provide to the Secretary to demonstrate the purchase price and quantity of eligible feedstock purchased by the eligible entity to receive a payment under subsection (b).

(e) AGREEMENTS.—To be eligible to receive a payment under subsection (b), an eligible entity shall enter into an agreement with the Secretary, as determined by the Secretary.

(f) REPORT.—Not later than 180 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall submit to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry of the Senate and the Committee on Agriculture of the House of Representatives a report on the payments made under subsection (b), including an identification of each eligible entity that received a payment and the amount received.

(g) REGULATIONS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 30 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall promulgate such regulations as are necessary to carry out the program established under subsection (b).

(2) PROCEDURE.—The promulgation of the regulations and administration of the program established under subsection (b) shall be made without regard to—

(A) the notice and comment provisions of section 553 of title 5, United States Code;

(B) chapter 35 of title 44, United States Code (commonly known as the “Paperwork Reduction Act”); or

(C) the Statement of Policy of the Secretary of Agriculture (36 Fed. Reg. 13804 (July 24, 1971)) relating to notices of proposed rulemaking and public participation in rulemaking.

**SA 2649.** Mrs. BLACKBURN submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 2499 proposed by Mr. MCCONNELL to the bill S. 178, to condemn gross human rights violations of ethnic Turkic Muslims in Xinjiang, and calling for an end to arbitrary detention, torture, and harassment of these communities inside and outside China; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

#### SEC. \_\_\_\_ TAX TREATMENT OF PROVIDER RELIEF FUND PAYMENTS TO HEALTH CARE PROVIDERS.

(a) TAXABILITY.—Notwithstanding any other law, for purposes of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986—

(1) the amount of any CARES Act Provider Relief Fund payment shall be excluded from the gross income of the recipient of such payment; and

(2) no deduction shall be denied or reduced, no tax attribute shall be reduced, and no basis increase shall be denied, by reason of the exclusion from gross income provided by this subsection.

(b) CARES ACT PROVIDER RELIEF FUND PAYMENT.—For purposes of this section, the term “CARES Act Provider Relief Fund payment” means any grant or similar assistance

provided by the Secretary of Health and Human Services under the provider relief fund established through the Public Health and Social Services Emergency Fund under the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (Public Law 116-136), including any additional amounts appropriated to such fund under the Paycheck Protection Program and Health Care Enhancement Act (Public Law 116-139) or any other provision of law enacted after the date of enactment of such Act.

**SA 2650.** Mr. ENZI submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 2499 proposed by Mr. McCONNELL to the bill S. 178, to condemn gross human rights violations of ethnic Turkic Muslims in Xinjiang, and calling for an end to arbitrary detention, torture, and harassment of these communities inside and outside China; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

**SEC. \_\_\_\_ . PANDEMIC UNEMPLOYMENT ASSISTANCE.**

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 2102(a) of the Relief for Workers Affected by Coronavirus Act (contained in subtitle A of title II of division A of the CARES Act (Public Law 116-136)) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (3)—

(A) in subparagraph (A)—

(i) in clause (i), by striking “and” at the end; and

(ii) by inserting after clause (ii) the following:

“(iii) provides documentation substantiating employment or self-employment or the planned commencement of employment or self-employment not later than 21 days after the later of the date on which the individual submits an application for assistance under this section or the date on which the individual is directed by the State Agency to submit such documentation, except that—

“(I) such deadline may be extended if the individual has shown good cause under the applicable State law for failing to submit such documentation; and

“(II) the documentation described in this clause shall not be required if the individual

previously submitted such information to the State agency for the purpose of obtaining regular or other unemployment compensation; and”;

(B) in subparagraph (B)—

(i) in clause (i), by striking “or” at the end;

(ii) in clause (ii), by striking the period at the end and inserting “; or”; and

(iii) by adding at the end the following:

“(iii) an individual who does not provide documentation substantiating employment or self-employment or the planned commencement of employment or self-employment under subparagraph (A)(iii).”;

(2) by redesignating paragraphs (4) and (5) as paragraphs (5) and (6), respectively; and

(3) by inserting after paragraph (3) the following:

“(4) DOCUMENTATION SUBSTANTIATING EMPLOYMENT OR SELF-EMPLOYMENT OR THE PLANNED COMMENCEMENT OF EMPLOYMENT OR SELF-EMPLOYMENT.—The term ‘documentation substantiating employment or self-employment or the planned commencement of employment or self-employment’ means documentation provided by the individual or included in the State agency records substantiating employment or self-employment and wages earned or paid for such employment or self-employment, or such information related to the planned commencement of employment or self-employment.”.

(b) APPLICABILITY.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Beginning not later than 30 days after the date of enactment of this Act, each State shall require that documentation substantiating employment or self-employment or the planned commencement of employment or self-employment (as defined in section 2102 of the Relief for Workers Affected by Coronavirus Act (contained in subtitle A of title II of division A of the CARES Act (Public Law 116-136))) be submitted by any individual who applies for pandemic unemployment assistance under section 2102 of the Relief for Workers Affected by Coronavirus Act (contained in subtitle A of title II of division A of the CARES Act (Public Law 116-136)) on or after the date of enactment of this Act.

(2) PRIOR APPLICANTS.—Any individual who applied for pandemic unemployment assistance under section 2102 of the Relief for Workers Affected by Coronavirus Act (con-

tained in subtitle A of title II of division A of the CARES Act (Public Law 116-136)) before the date of enactment of this Act and receives such assistance on or after the date of enactment of this Act shall submit documentation substantiating employment or self-employment or the planned commencement of employment or self-employment (as defined in such section 2102) not later than 90 days after the date of enactment of this Act (or earlier if required by the State) or the individual will be ineligible to receive pandemic unemployment assistance under such section 2102.

**ORDERS FOR THURSDAY, AUGUST 13, 2020**

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today, it adjourn until 11 a.m., Thursday, August 13; further, that following the prayer and pledge, the morning hour be deemed expired, the Journal of proceedings be approved to date, and the time for the two leaders be reserved for their use later in the day; finally, that following leader remarks, the Senate be in a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

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

**ADJOURNMENT UNTIL 11 A.M. TOMORROW**

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, if there is no further business to come before the Senate, I ask unanimous consent that it stand adjourned under the previous order.

There being no objection, the Senate, at 12:51 p.m., adjourned until Thursday, August 13, 2020, at 11 a.m.