

of governance, with the limited duties and powers of the federal government spelled out clearly in our Constitution. Over the years the federal government has crept into the responsibilities of the states, but the 10th Amendment stipulates that if those duties are not listed they are the responsibility of the states. We are partners and all have to play our respective part. I think the Congress, in passing three response bills in twenty-three days, has done its part.

I am also a capitalist and believe that free markets provide the highest quality goods and services at the lowest cost. I also believe in risk and reward—the power of individuals or groups raising capital and assuming risk with the hope of earning a return on that investment. Notice I say “hope” because in a free market a return is not guaranteed. During the financial collapse of 2008 I voted against the Troubled Asset Relief Program (TARP). I did so because the market collapse was due to bad management and those responsible should have borne the cost. I also believed allowing this to occur would speed up the recovery.

This market involvement is fundamentally different. For me and many conservatives this is a takings debate. The government—whether federal, state or local—is forcing businesses to freeze economic activity. In essence, the government is depriving businesses of income they would otherwise be free to earn. What we have done in the third coronavirus bill is attempt to keep the employee and employer afloat until economic activity can resume, and to compensate those who have been ordered to forgo the fruits of their investment and labor.

As a retiring Member I have the ability to step back and observe the big picture while still having access to some inner rooms, or in this case some inner (and many) conference calls. The crying and gnashing of teeth has occurred on both sides. Whether it was Republicans attacking Speaker PELOSI for delaying the process with her attempt to jam in Green New Deal inspired provisions, or Democrats attacking Congressman MASSIE who thought it was not too much to ask for a recorded vote on an unpaid-for \$2 trillion spending bill that would immediately increase the national debt to \$25 trillion.

Members were thrown into a real quandary by the looming request for a recorded vote on this bill. Some were hunkered down in D.C. Most, like myself, were hunkered down in our home districts. Many Members would make a long drive to D.C. while others would risk air travel. To some it was an impossible commute with the limited time. I have the concern of an elderly parent living with me. Emotions were running high for everyone.

I think that what we observed is Congress working at its best. A recorded vote was requested by Congressman MASSIE, which was his right. Democrat Whip CLYBURN and Republican Whip SCALISE did their jobs and counted to ensure that a quorum of 216 Members were present. If my inside information is correct, 130 Democrats along with 120 Republicans were present. But while the Rules of the House dictate that any Member may ask for a recorded vote, his or her request must be supported at least one-fifth of a quorum. No one joined Congressman MASSIE in support of his request.

Mr. Speaker, the bill will pass by voice vote and signed into law that same day. Members

were also given the opportunity to include in the RECORD how they would have voted, should a recorded vote have been ordered. I would have voted yes.

MIDDLE CLASS HEALTH BENEFITS TAX REPEAL ACT OF 2019

SPEECH OF

HON. BEN MCADAMS

OF UTAH

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, March 27, 2020

Mr. MCADAMS. Mr. Speaker, as I continue to receive treatment in a Utah hospital for COVID-19, I am not able to vote on H.R. 748, the Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security (CARES) Act. Had I been present and able to vote, I would have voted ‘aye’. This bill is certainly not perfect and raises significant concerns about fiscal responsibility and appropriate use of taxpayer dollars.

Nonetheless, we have a responsibility to protect the health and economic well-being of our state and our country. This bill provides critical support for working families, our front-line health care providers, community workers, state and local governments, and Utah small businesses and their employees. Coronavirus remains a danger to our lives and our livelihoods. I am proud to have championed a key oversight provision—a Treasury Department Special Inspector General for Pandemic Recovery—to track and account for disbursement and spending of taxpayer dollars. I will work to ensure we fix problems as they arise and focus on doing what is best for Utahns.

I believe we will get through this by giving communities, health care providers and local governments the tools they need to respond quickly and efficiently to what’s happening on the ground with maximum flexibility and accountability. I believe in Utahns and I believe in Americans; everyday heroes will help us overcome and as a Representative, I must do my part to get urgently needed resources to Utahns.

MIDDLE CLASS HEALTH BENEFITS TAX REPEAL ACT OF 2019

SPEECH OF

HON. KEN BUCK

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, March 27, 2020

Mr. BUCK. Mr. Speaker, America is facing a very serious public health crisis that also has the potential to affect the long-term health of our economy.

The people on the front lines fighting the spread of COVID-19—our doctors, nurses, first responders, and other health professionals—need help. Congress should be stepping up to ensure America’s health care system has access to needed personal protective equipment—like masks and face shields—and testing supplies to identify those infected and to help stop the spread of the virus. Businesses and employees affected by this virus also need help. Congress should be providing short-term financial assistance such as loans and in the form of a tax holiday. I recognize these needs and fully support action to pro-

vide resources to stem the damage being caused in the present crisis.

There is no question that this crisis is a direct result of the Chinese government’s cover up of the dangers posed by COVID-19. The Chinese government failed to heed the early warnings of medical professionals, going so far as to persecute individuals like Dr. Li Wenliang, who was among the first to raise concerns, forcing him to sign a confession that his concerns were false. China ordered destruction of early research samples of the virus. The Chinese government also denied World Health Organization (WHO) investigators access inside the country’s borders and they withheld critical information. The Chinese Communist Party falsely denied the evidence of human-to-human transmission. Contrary to WHO guidelines, Chinese officials manipulated statistics by failing to report infected individuals who tested positive for the virus if they exhibited mild to no symptoms. China’s authoritarian government also allowed up to 5,000,000 people, including potentially tens of thousands of infected individuals, to leave Wuhan and travel across the globe, spreading the virus. The reality is that China was more interested in saving face than stopping the problem before it became a global pandemic. China was more interested in waging an international public relations campaign than getting the necessary help from the world community.

The United States and countries across the globe are now dealing with the fallout of China’s deceit and misdeeds. We are wrestling with how to address a public health crisis, contain this deadly virus, and respond to unprecedented economic fallout. To address the current situation, Congress must act responsibly and thoughtfully but also with urgency. We must work together to support doctors, nurses and other health professionals. We need to also help suffering families, assist businesses and non-profits that have been ordered to close, and to set the stage for yet another American comeback.

Nearly every American has been affected by this virus. All levels of government have asked our citizens to stay home. Government has asked businesses to shutter their doors, and for America’s health care professionals to courageously work longer hours, sometimes without the necessary supplies to protect themselves. Americans are tired, fearful, and distancing themselves from friends and neighbors when what they truly desire is community. The American people have been told this was necessary and that if they made these sacrifices we could “bend the curve” and stop the spread of the virus.

While President Trump and Republicans have been trying to lead, and the American people have been doing their part, Democrats have engaged in political games. The House Democratic Whip told his colleagues that this crisis was a “tremendous opportunity to restructure things to fit our vision.” In the Senate, all but one Democrat voted to hold up debate on this bill for several days, simply to extract as many political concessions as possible. In response to the tremendous and patriotic sacrifices by the American people, Democrats have played politics. They saw a crisis that they did not want to let go to waste and chose to exploit the American peoples’ fear and misery for political gain. That is unconscionable.

Today, we finally reached the point where we could debate the merits of this bill in the

House and fulfill our Constitutional responsibility. Every Member's duty was to read the bill, evaluate its merits, and then vote his or her conscience. I concluded that, if I were given the chance, I would vote against this bill. History and experience tell us that the provisions in this bill will do long-lasting damage to the economic well-being of millions of American families and small businesses, delaying a future economic recovery and harming the people most in need of help.

This bill repeats the mistakes of the past. It contains the same kind of flawed provisions that the Democrat-controlled Congress enacted in 2008 to deal with the mortgage crisis. America cannot afford another slow growth decade like we had under President Obama. Yet that is exactly the kind of future this bill is poised to give us. I want to put a stop to the damage that COVID-19 is doing, including to our economy, but this bill will only prolong the economic recovery.

Many provisions of this bill recognize that economic stability depends on employment stability. This bill, however, contains provisions unrelated to fighting the disease, and worse, incentives that will lead to more, not fewer, layoffs. The people most likely to be affected will be primarily middle-class families and lower wage earners.

The bill incentivizes layoffs by providing for "unemployment insurance (UI) on steroids," or regular unemployment benefits together with \$600 per week above the traditional benefit level. One of the perverse incentives of this bill is that it would leave many employees financially better off if they were laid-off than if they continued working. On the one hand, Congress is incentivizing small businesses to borrow billions of dollars from the Small Business Administration to keep people employed while simultaneously creating counterincentives that will encourage unemployment. That makes no sense.

I support policies that will encourage job stability. Our economic recovery will be hastened if people have a job ready and waiting for them once we get past the current health crisis; it will help people maintain their health insurance; it will give people hope; and a ready workforce will help avoid supply chain disruptions and shortages of critical supplies needed to fight this virus.

This bill also contains provisions that will unnecessarily extend the recovery of America's capital markets. Currently, the markets are down about 30-percent from their all-time highs from just a few weeks ago. In this next economic recovery, we must focus on bringing stability to capital markets as we rebuild the job market. This bill, however, contains provisions that will deny this needed stability. Section 4003 prohibits businesses that utilize the lending and loan guarantee programs from engaging in stock buybacks and issuing dividends—not only during the term of the loan but even after the loan has been repaid. Allowing stock redemptions and dividends could help calm volatility in the capital markets. Congress should not discourage these kinds of actions. We need to help bring stability back to the stock market.

Other provisions give a green light to union organizers while preventing a business from speaking out against union activities. Businesses that access government loans in the short term, including so that they can pay their employees, are being given a long-term

"stand-down" order by Congress when it comes to this issue. Businesses that will be affected by this are currently in crisis and Congress' response is to put its thumb on the scale in favor of labor, a Democrat constituency that funnels millions into Democrat campaign coffers.

These provisions also lose sight of the fact that many businesses that utilize these programs will do so not because of their own mismanagement or malfeasance but because government told these businesses to shut their doors. Or, in some cases, because patriotic business owners took out a loan to retool or ramp up production to manufacture critical medical supplies like ventilators, hospital masks and testing kits even when that is not their normal business.

It makes no sense to punish these companies with these kinds of restrictions but especially after the loan has been repaid. If we tie the hands of business for years to come, we should not expect a full and robust economic recovery. These restrictions are unreasonable. They may discourage companies from taking out loans. This, in turn, will put people out of work, harming American families and small businesses.

Dating back to Greek times, physicians swore the Hippocratic Corpus. It was an oath, a code of medical ethics, in which a physician pledged to "help the sick and abstain from all intentional wrong-doing and harm. . . ." That obligation is sometimes summarized as, "First, do no harm." As Congress considers this legislation, we would do well to follow the Hippocratic Oath ourselves. We should not pass a law that includes extraneous spending or that would further impose economic harm on struggling American families and small businesses.

Finally, I want to make this point. It is often said that "crisis reveals character." The response of the American people to this crisis says a lot about their character. Over and over again, Americans have demonstrated that they are strong, independent, entrepreneurial, resilient, patriotic, and compassionate and that they are willing to sacrifice to get our nation through. I am encouraged by their spirit.

What the present crisis reveals about Congress, however, is tragic. The simple truth is that Congress has failed to plan and budget for an emergency such as an economic recession, a natural disaster, a national security threat, or a public health crisis. Every member of Congress knows that, once every few years, we will be called on to respond to a disaster. Yet, Congress fails to plan properly. Our budget does not include any reserves to deal with these emergencies.

Accordingly, when faced with a crisis, Congress rushes to pass an emergency spending bill—like this one—that adds billions and billions or trillions more to the deficit. Today's bill spends nearly \$6 trillion when we factor in the anticipated response of the Federal Reserve. This spending is on top of the already projected annual deficit of \$1.083 trillion and a national debt of \$23.6 trillion. Congress cannot keep doing this. Congress needs to cut spending, balance the budget, and establish an emergency fund so that we can deal with these crises responsibly.

I also want to note an additional way in which Congress has failed in its Constitutional responsibilities. The House of Representatives is a co-equal to the Senate. While the Senate was working this past week, the Democratic

House leadership had members sitting at home. Speaker PELOSI should have convened the House on Monday. This would have made it possible for the House to engage in a full debate, to deliberate, and even propose better ideas. That did not happen. Instead, this bill, which is the single largest supplemental spending bill in U.S. history, will pass without a vote of the full House—with every member voting.

MIDDLE CLASS HEALTH BENEFITS TAX REPEAL ACT OF 2019

SPEECH OF

HON. PRAMILA JAYAPAL

OF WASHINGTON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, March 27, 2020

Ms. JAYAPAL. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 748, the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act. On Thursday, the United States gained the unfortunate distinction of being the country with the largest number of known COVID-19 cases in the world. As people across the country struggle to stem the COVID-19 pandemic, this bill is an urgently needed \$2 trillion disaster-relief package that delivers immediate support to individuals, families, and small businesses across the country, while also providing worker-centered relief for some industries.

My home state of Washington has been reeling from the spread of COVID-19, with over 3,200 cases and 147 deaths as of last night. I am so proud that we have one of the finest public health systems in the country, but it is under siege—as are our healthcare institutions, our economy, and my constituents. I have been focusing my efforts wholly and completely on ensuring that we in Congress do everything in our power to deliver a response from the Federal government that matches the enormous scale of this crisis.

This bill is an important step in that direction, though we will certainly need to do even more. The CARES Act puts \$100 billion into ensuring hospitals and healthcare providers can cover COVID-19-related costs and \$200 million to prevent the spread of COVID-19 in nursing homes. Importantly, after years of disinvestment in the Strategic National Stockpile, the CARES Act adds \$16 billion to the Stockpile to provide essential personal protective equipment for our frontline workers and emergency responders.

This bill also includes a critical priority for me: the largest expansion of unemployment insurance in decades to ensure that most workers get nearly 100 percent of their pre-layoff wage without traditional restrictions. It also creates a special Pandemic Unemployment Assistance program to provide relief to those who may be ineligible for regular unemployment benefits, like gig workers and people who are self-employed.

Because people are suffering right now, I believe we must include direct cash support to individuals. I had advocated for double the amount that is in the bill, for monthly instead of a one-time payment, and for everyone to be included. We were not able to get that. However, the CARES Act delivers \$1,200 per adult and \$500 per child in cash relief to the vast majority of everyday people to immediately help put cash in people's pockets to pay those mounting bills.