

Brother—the brooding, omnipresent Federal Government—knows better. It can be trusted. Trust Big Brother. Sure, he is going to spy on you, but his intentions are good. Sure, he is going to spy on you, but he is really just hoping to go after the bad guys so that you don't have to worry about the fact he is spying on your neighbor, on your constituents, on innocent Americans.

Even if I am wrong—let's say, for a minute, that somehow I am mistaken in concluding that any of this will ever be abused—you can't really get around the fact that it has been abused. We know of circumstances in which it has been. We know that the President of the United States has himself been the target of abuse under this.

Yet set that aside for a minute. Even under the absurd proposition that none of this will ever be abused again and that PELOSI and NADLER and SCHIFF have somehow found the magical formula that will forever guarantee these expiring provisions from being abused again, why wouldn't you still want to make the bill better? Why would you be willing to let those provisions go dark? Why would you be willing to postpone the consideration of other pressing business before the U.S. Senate? Is it really that important to shut out of debate your opponents who happen to disagree with you? What does this say about the next thing we will consider or the next thing after that?

This doesn't end well. We know it doesn't end well. It never, ever works to push U.S. Senators to the point that they are told they are not entitled to their own opinions; that to the extent they have them, they may express them but only in a brief period of time; and that they then have to run off and be good little boys and girls and let the adults take over. No. I know that this is the way it has been working for a while, but it is not going to anymore. It is not going to anymore because the American people are demanding more. They are demanding better. Things sometimes have to get a little worse before they get better. Unfortunately, that is the position in which we now find ourselves. They have gotten worse, but they have gotten worse in a way that the American people are now noticing and are going to say: Don't do this anymore. Don't lock us out of the process. Don't tell us we don't matter. Don't tell us that our own elected Senators can't have a voice and that they won't get a vote and that they cannot debate it.

The President of the United States has been targeted unethically, unlawfully, unscrupulously by the deep state. We have the opportunity to fix that, to make sure it doesn't happen to this President or any future President or any U.S. citizen regardless of how rich or poor or powerful or powerless. We must fix it. Shame on all of us if we don't. Our oath to uphold, protect, and defend the Constitution of the United States requires this. The American people deserve more, and they deserve better, and we must provide it.

(Mrs. FISCHER assumed the Chair.)
The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. BRAUN). The Democratic leader.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST— SCHUMER BILL

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, in a moment, Democrats will ask the Senate's consent to take up and pass several measures that would immediately help American workers and American families cope with the impacts of coronavirus, including paid sick leave for workers, emergency unemployment insurance, and much needed assistance to States overburdened by Medicaid costs, known as FMAP.

These provisions are all included in legislation that will soon be passed by the House. Many of these policies have already been enacted by other countries dealing more successfully with the coronavirus than our country is.

These policies are targeted directly at the workers and families impacted by its spread. They are not going to the big, wealthy corporations or powerful people or wealthy people. They are going right at the workers and families—average working people who need the help.

Now, the Republican leader this morning called these provisions "an ideological wish list." President Trump referred to them as "goodies."

If helping a construction worker who is laid off as a result of the virus is part of an ideological wish list, then God help those who believe that. If giving infected workers paid sick leave is a goody, then God help those who think that. If making sure our States, localities, hospitals, and first responders are compensated for their efforts is ideological, is a goody, those who believe those things have lost touch with the needs and aspirations of the American people, and they need to talk to some real people who have been impacted by the coronavirus, instead of sitting in their ideological towers.

With the comments made by the President and the Republican leader, they have revealed their own ideology—that even in a time of public crisis and need, the President and the Republican leader are more willing to entertain corporate tax cuts and bailing out industries than helping American workers and families.

The Senate should pass these bills today. The Republican leader should not be sending the Senate home for the weekend without taking action to help people who are or will soon be really hurting.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of the Schumer bill that is at the desk, that the bill be considered read three times and passed, and the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Senator from Nebraska.

Mrs. FISCHER. Mr. President, reserving the right to object, this concept is under discussion, and it is a centerpiece of negotiations between the House Democrats and Secretary Mnuchin, which are ongoing.

This Chamber will be in session next week to ensure that we are taking needed actions to appropriately respond to the coronavirus.

I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The Democratic leader.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST— S. 3497

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of S. 3497, submitted earlier today; that the bill be considered read three times and passed and the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Senator from Nebraska.

Mrs. FISCHER. Mr. President, reserving the right to object, this concept is also under discussion and the centerpiece of negotiations between House Democrats and Secretary Mnuchin, which are ongoing.

This Chamber will be in session next week to ensure that we are taking needed actions to appropriately respond to the coronavirus.

Therefore, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The Senator from Washington.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST— S. 3415

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, this is simple. We need people who are sick to stay home if we have any hope of slowing the spread of this virus, but, today, one in four private sector workers in our country cannot stay home from work without losing a day's pay or potentially a job.

We have got to fight this virus with everything we have—every single one of us—and that means we have to have policies in place that help people make the right choices for themselves, their families, and their communities.

Our bill will give all employees 14 paid sick days immediately—today, not next week, not the week after, today—in public health emergencies like this one, in addition to allowing them to accrue 7, meaning it would help workers and communities right now.

I urge Senate Republicans: Treat this like the public health crisis it is. Allow parents, families, businesses, communities to have the peace of mind to know that we are acting today and take this urgent needed step. This is nothing short of a chance to save lives and buy desperately needed time to fight this virus. Please don't waste it.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee be discharged from further consideration of S. 3415—this is a bill that will allow Americans to earn paid sick time so they can address their own health needs and the health needs of their families—that the Senate proceed to its immediate consideration, the bill be considered read a third time and passed, and the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Senator from Nebraska.

Mrs. FISCHER. Mr. President, reserving the right to object, we have a paid family leave provision in law already, and the rules are in place from Treasury. We received those in September. I worked on this provision during tax reform, and I would certainly be happy to work with the Senator from Washington and my colleagues on the other side of the aisle in a bipartisan manner to extend the program that we have in law already that will help families. This is a public health emergency. It is ready. It is there. We need to work on it together.

Therefore, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST— S. 3372

Mrs. FISCHER. Mr. President, I rise today to call up and pass legislation to keep the American people safe.

The number of coronavirus cases in the United States is now over 1,000, including 10 confirmed cases in my home State of Nebraska.

In China, there are over 80,000 cases and over 3,000 people have died. The Hubei Province, which contains the city where the virus originated, has been under lockdown since last January, quarantining an unprecedented 56 million people. Italy, a country of 60 million people, is completely shut down. The World Health Organization has now declared that this outbreak is a pandemic, meaning it will likely spread to all countries on Earth.

Dr. Fauci echoed this yesterday in his testimony before the House Oversight and Reform Committee. We will see more cases, and things will continue to get worse.

As the virus spreads, our healthcare providers and emergency responders are at the forefront of this health crisis. When someone tests positive for this disease, our emergency responders are the first ones there transporting them to the hospital. At the hospitals, medical personnel, doctors, nurses, and technicians are all working around the clock to provide lifesaving care and treat this illness. These people—our healthcare providers and emergency responders—need access to the proper equipment so they can stay healthy.

We can take action right here right now to make sure that that happens.

I introduced this bipartisan bill with the senior Senator from Arizona. It would update our current law to ensure healthcare workers and first responders have access to respiratory protective devices, specifically, standard N95s.

Under current law, the Federal Government can give targeted liability protection to people and entities to make, distribute, and administer certain drugs and protective equipment that are needed in a public health emergency. While surgical N95s are eligible for this protection, standard N95s are not. That doesn't make sense, and it doesn't make sense for two reasons.

First, these devices are the same when it comes to protecting against airborne contaminants like we are dealing with for coronavirus. Second, the CDC has issued guidance listing standard N95s among the recommended products for use in this emergency. That makes it more difficult for the people and entities supplying, distributing, and manufacturing this equipment to do so, and we need to change that.

We need to make sure that these devices are readily available, and this legislation has bipartisan support in this body, and it has bipartisan support in the House. It was introduced by my colleague from Nebraska, Congressman DON BACON.

The White House supports it. Vice President PENCE said on Tuesday this legislation is "important . . . to ensure that our healthcare workers are properly protected and outfitted."

I mentioned that this bill has bipartisan support. I want to be clear that our hard-fought progress on this legislation would not have been made if it weren't for the tireless work of my good friend, the senior Senator from Arizona. So I thank her for her efforts and her partnership.

We know that coronavirus is moving fast, and we owe it to America's healthcare providers and our first responders who are fighting to stay ahead of this.

Therefore, I ask unanimous consent that the Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee be discharged from further consideration of S. 3372 and the Senate proceed to its immediate consideration. I ask unanimous consent that the Fischer substitute amendment at the desk be agreed to; the bill, as amended, be considered read the third time and passed; and that the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Senator from Hawaii.

Ms. HIRONO. Mr. President, reserving the right to object, I certainly appreciate what my colleague from Nebraska is trying to do. We are all working to do what we can to make sure our medical professionals, facilities, and the public have all the necessary equip-

ment they need to address this pandemic.

My concern with my colleague's proposal, as I understand it, is that it would provide immunity for respiratory manufacturers from this point forward. Yes, this is a public emergency and we need to respond accordingly, and we certainly need to make sure that respirators are widely available, but let's do this with safety in mind.

I think we can come up with a bill that provides a more tailored approach to what my colleague is trying to do. For example, the House coronavirus package includes language which tracks the COVID-19 emergency countermeasures declaration issued by HHS which would extend countermeasure protections through 2024, rather than it be open-ended. I hope my colleague will work with me to expand access to this important equipment, but for now I must object.

I certainly would like to count myself as among those who will provide bipartisan support for this measure, but, for now, because it is totally open-ended, I must object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The Senator from Nebraska.

Mrs. FISCHER. Mr. President, this bill is something I think we should all agree upon. Other medical device facilities, manufacturers, currently have this protection when there is a public emergency. They currently enjoy this protection, but this thin band of manufacturers, this thin band that provides these N95s which our healthcare providers need—and I talked to my first responders and firemen who were here this week and told them about this bill, and they said: We need this. We are transporting people to hospitals.

In Omaha, NE, the Omaha Fire Department has picked up flights of American citizens who were flown from China to be at Camp Ashland, a National Guard facility between Lincoln and Omaha, and quarantined there. Fortunately, all were healthy, all were fine.

Omaha also received 15 people from a cruise ship, and all those people were not fine. These first responders, these firemen from Omaha, transported them to a world-renowned facility, the University of Nebraska Medical Center, but they did not have the proper protection because we are arguing over something that other medical device providers currently have protection on during a public health crisis.

I understand that my friends on the other side want to make progress on this issue and on other issues, but that shouldn't stand in the way of getting this done. There is a shortage of respirators, and the U.S. Senate has an opportunity to fix it. We have an opportunity to ensure the American people stay protected and healthy during this public health crisis, but my colleagues on the other side just stopped this from moving forward, and the