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Senate

The Senate met at 3 p.m. and was called to order by the President pro tempore (Mr. GRASSLEY).

PRAYER

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

Let us pray.

Eternal God, as our Nation faces this national state of emergency, we pause to thank You with our whole hearts for the gift of this day. In spite of challenges that often seem insurmountable, You remain our hope for the years to come. As our Senators strive to meet the challenge of the coronavirus, validate their efforts with Your Divine blessings.

You are the righteous judge who knows even the motives of our hearts. May Your providential purposes be fulfilled in our Nation and world. Touch this land we love with Your healing hands.

We pray in Your powerful Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The President pro tempore 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.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. HAWLEY). The Senator from Iowa.

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak in morning business for 1 minute.

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

CORONAVIRUS

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, on Friday, President Trump declared a national emergency concerning the novel coronavirus disease outbreak. This proclamation frees up additional resources to further efforts to contain and combat the virus.

Over the weekend, my Governor of Iowa, Kim Reynolds, confirmed Iowa's first case of community-spread COVID-19, which was in Dallas County, Iowa.

It is very important to continue to take commonsense precautions. Stay home if you are sick, wash your hands, avoid large gatherings, and heed the advice of health officials. Extra caution now will save lives later.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The 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 President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.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. Without objection, it is so ordered.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader is recognized.

CORONAVIRUS

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, the new coronavirus has spread from China throughout the world, and it is challenging our Nation in new ways. Across our country, daily routines are being disrupted, families are grappling with school closings and changes to childcare, major American companies and institutions are literally modifying how they do business, and a growing number of Main Street small businesses face the possibility of significant disruptions as more and more communities begin to "hunker down," as Dr. Fauci put it, on the advice of public health experts and local leaders.

As an aside, I have noticed that a lot of the discussion in the media has focused on individuals who may be temporarily transitioning from office work to working from home. So I want to especially acknowledge the many other

hard-working Americans for whom telework is not an option. Now, more than ever, we are reminded who really keeps this country running: the hard-working men and women who grow things, who make things, who drive trucks and move goods across the country, who mine coal or otherwise produce domestic energy and, literally, power our communities, who run the stores and shops we rely on, who serve our communities as police and first responders, and, of course, especially the dedicated frontline healthcare professionals, who work tirelessly to heal and protect all the rest of us.

To all Americans—but, most especially, to those hard-working people whose efforts are going to get our country through this challenge—I have one message: The Senate stands with you. We stand with American workers and families, we stand with American businesses, and we stand with the public health experts and the heroic frontline medical professionals whom our Nation seems poised to lean on as heavily as we have at any point in recent memory.

The Senate is committed to meeting these uncertain times with bold and bipartisan solutions. That is what we did a little more than a week ago, when the Senate passed billions of dollars in emergency funding for health and small businesses with an overwhelming bipartisan vote and put it on the President's desk. That is what we are going to keep doing this week, particularly if the House of Representatives can actually complete its work and transmit a finished product of its relief over to us. And it is what we are going to keep doing in the days and weeks ahead.

With respect to the House-passed legislation, I understand the House chose to proceed with their planned 1-week recess, despite not having finished processing their bill. As of this afternoon, we are still waiting for the House to reach a decision on possible technical corrections and to submit a final

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



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product to us here in the Senate. We cannot consider the legislation until we get it, but I know that Senators on both sides have spent the last several days carefully studying the House proposal, and I know that all of us are eager to act quickly to support American workers, families, and small businesses.

Even more broadly, Senate Republicans are absolutely convinced that the House's bill can only be the beginning—just the beginning—of Congress's efforts to secure our economy and support American families. This is a unique challenge—a unique challenge. Unlike in any other tough circumstances, our short-term goal is not simply to bring economic activity right back to normal starting tomorrow. Instead, our task is to secure the historically strong foundation of our Nation's economy and support Americans during this period when public health may require that some normal activities simply be scaled back.

I have spoken with countless colleagues and committee chairmen over the last several days. We agree there are three major areas where the Senate must continue to develop bold and bipartisan action:

No. 1, we will need to take further steps to assist individual Americans and families with financial challenges in the weeks and months ahead.

No. 2, we will need to further significant actions to secure our Nation's economy—particularly Main Street small businesses—and safeguard our historically strong economic foundation through this period.

No. 3, we will need further steps to ready our healthcare system and support our Nation's medical professionals.

The Senate majority is already working toward next steps on all three of those fronts. I hope further bold action can be just as bipartisan and collaborative as the process by which we passed the first set of additional funds. We must work with each other in the bipartisan spirit this moment demands—and with the administration and the House—to deliver results for our country.

USA FREEDOM REAUTHORIZATION ACT OF 2020

Mr. MCCONNELL. Now, Mr. President, on one other important matter, late last night, several critical authorities that law enforcement uses to keep Americans safe lapsed into expiration. Barring Senate action, these important tools, which help protect the homeland from terrorists and counter foreign intelligence activities on U.S. soil, will remain offline.

Fortunately, in the weeks leading up to this deadline, the Attorney General engaged in extensive bipartisan talks with Members of the House—of both parties—to try to reach a solution. The resulting legislation, which the House passed last week by large margins

within each party, strikes a key balance. It reauthorizes the tools which our national security requires, while also imposing a number of new reforms which basic accountability demands.

We can't let the relative success of these tools at preserving the safety and security of our country mislead us to believe they are unnecessary. It is just the opposite. Terrorist organizations still search constantly for opportunities to strike on American soil. Hostile foreign intelligence services—whether Chinese, Russian, or Iranian—still seek to conduct operations within our borders, to recruit assets and agents among our population.

These threats will not wait around if the United States delays restocking our toolbox, so the Senate should not wait to act. I sincerely hope that even our colleagues who may wish to vote against the House bill will not make us prolong this brief lapse in authorities and that we will be able to get these tools back online this week.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is closed.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

USA FREEDOM REAUTHORIZATION ACT OF 2020—MOTION TO PROCEED

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to consideration of the motion to proceed to H.R. 6172, which the clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

Motion to proceed to Calendar No. 440, H.R. 6172, a bill to amend the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act of 1978 to prohibit the production of certain business records, and for other purposes.

Mr. MCCONNELL. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

CORONAVIRUS

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, first let me thank the staff who are here today under these difficult circumstances—here at the desk, the Sergeant at Arms, the doorkeepers, the police officers, and the many others who are here today. We thank them, as always. They are the unsung heroes of the Senate.

Now, as the Senate returns this week in a time of extraordinary challenge for our country, COVID-19, known as the coronavirus, continues to spread rapidly. In less than a week, the number of confirmed cases in the United States has grown from around 1,000 to well over 4,000. The actual number of cases is probably higher.

Here in the Capitol, public tours are suspended, and much of our staff is working from home. In a further effort to limit interactions, Senate Democrats will not be holding our regular caucus lunch, which will instead be conducted by conference call.

In my home State of New York alone, there are nearly 1,000 confirmed cases. The State is doing everything in its power to treat those afflicted, to prepare for future cases, and to limit the spread of the virus. Residents in the tristate area—New York, New Jersey, and Connecticut—are now under new restrictions on gatherings at bars, restaurants, and other public places.

I urge everyone to stay safe and to listen to the advice of public health experts. Practice good hygiene, follow the recommendations issued by State and Federal governments about public gatherings, and please—please—stay home if you feel sick.

As these important safeguards go into effect, there will be economic consequences. Businesses will face shortfalls. Employees will not be able to work. Families will bear the responsibility of childcare as school closures mount. For millions of families who live paycheck to paycheck, for parents who have to choose between keeping their jobs or taking care of their kids, and for so many others—the small business owner who has no liquidity even though it was a healthy business a few weeks ago—these are all very, very difficult times. The Congress and the Federal Government as a whole must take steps immediately to provide relief to those American workers, families, and businesses.

Last Friday, the House of Representatives passed legislation to provide for free coronavirus testing, extensions of paid sick leave, food assistance for schoolkids and the elderly, and assistance to States overburdened by Medicaid costs and expanded unemployment insurance. The Senate should take up this bill and pass it immediately by consent—today. We cannot wait.

It was my preference to keep the Senate in session over the weekend so that we could have passed this bill already, but Leader MCCONNELL—regrettably and almost inexplicably—decided to send everyone home and then call them back today. Many Members on my side of the aisle were extremely upset by Leader MCCONNELL's decision. There should be no further delay in passage of this legislation because, surely, we must move on to other necessary measures to address the coronavirus and its widening impact on the medical, economic, and social fabric of this country.