

our healthcare professionals, from doctors and nurses to sanitation staff, who risk exposure every day to ensure that Americans receive the care they need.

When we have come through this outbreak, all of us will want to be able to look back and say that we did everything we could to help keep our fellow Americans safe and slow the spread of this disease. The best way to do that is by following the guidelines that we have been given—washing our hands frequently and thoroughly, practicing social distancing, avoiding large gatherings, and staying home when advised. Some of these measures may be inconvenient, but they are a small price to pay to flatten the curve and limit the disease's spread.

While anyone can be hit hard by the coronavirus, there are a lot of people who are especially vulnerable to complications—from elderly Americans to the many individuals who have pre-existing conditions. Let's do everything we can to protect our fellow Americans and prevent our hospitals and our healthcare professionals from being overwhelmed with cases.

I am confident that, if we pull together and look out for each other, our Nation will emerge from this challenge stronger. I look forward to working with my colleagues here in Congress to ensure that our Nation has the resources it needs to combat and defeat this disease.

I was encouraged to hear our Senate Democratic leader speak about his willingness to work with the Republicans. Obviously, to do anything here in the Senate requires 60 votes, which means we have to have bipartisan cooperation. We have a legislative vehicle, as I mentioned, that contains a number of features that are helpful, I think, in terms of addressing the crisis that we are experiencing, not only on the healthcare front but on the economic front with regard to the hardships that are being experienced by millions of Americans.

There is more that we need to do, and those discussions, as I mentioned, are underway, and I am hopeful that we will be able to come to a conclusion, to a resolution, that would be good not only for those Americans who have been hurting economically and who, perhaps, are not working and are not able to get to work, but for those businesses that have shut down—our small businesses that create the majority of jobs in this country—and for, certainly, the healthcare professionals, who, as I said, are on the frontlines every single day. We need to take every step we possibly can to ensure that we protect people from the spread of the disease and ensure that they continue to sustain their economic livelihoods in the midst of this crisis.

Many of the things that are being discussed and worked on that will require collaboration with the Democrats and the House of Representatives will need to be approached in a bipartisan way. We need to recognize that the

need is great and that the absolute necessity of cooperation is greater than ever. I look forward to working with our colleagues here this week as we move forward in a way that will, hopefully, lead to some very positive results and will address the very critical needs being felt by families all across this country as a result of this coronavirus disease.

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. TESTER. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. LOEFFLER). Without objection, it is so ordered.

CORONAVIRUS

Mr. TESTER. Madam President, I rise today at a pivotal time for our Nation. It is quiet today in Big Sky Country. Over the last 36 hours, we have seen schools, restaurants, bars, gyms, ski resorts, and churches close. Thousands of children are home from school, many unsure where their next meal will come from, and parents are without childcare.

There are no test kits to test for coronavirus to speak of—a few, but not nearly enough, and inadequate medical supplies in Indian Country.

Thousands are concerned about what it means for their paychecks. Seniors are worried about their health. Businesses are forced to make very, very tough choices.

Millions of Americans are depending on us here in Washington, DC, to act and to act quickly. The House jumped into action and began negotiating with the administration on a bill to address some of the most pressing and immediate concerns of the coronavirus. A deal was struck, and the House passed the bill with an overwhelming bipartisan majority.

And what happened in the Senate? Well, last Thursday, the majority leader sent us home. Business as usual.

What we should have done—we should have stuck around and done the people's work. But, instead, my friends in the majority decided we should operate as business as usual and take off Friday, take off the weekend, and go home.

Well, this is not business as usual. If the majority leader would have listened to the CDC, he would have heard that what he did last Thursday was contrary to the recommendations they have made to avoid groups, to avoid airports. We did just the opposite.

Millions of Americans are waiting for the Senate to act. What we are here to consider today, which we should have considered last Saturday, is an important start toward providing needed relief. It provides free testing, sick leave, unemployment insurance for those los-

ing their jobs through no fault of their own.

We could have done this several days ago, but, instead, we continue to wait. We continue to wait as we have watched athletics shut down—the NCAA, baseball, hockey, basketball, NBA—restaurants, Broadway, schools close. The list goes on and on, and we continue to languish here in the U.S. Senate, supposedly the greatest deliberative body in the world. We do this while 4 in 10 Americans struggle to cover an unanticipated expense of \$400. Let me say that again: 4 in 10 families are \$400 away from financial crisis.

This bill ensures that a hotel employee in Billings can stay home if she is feeling ill without sacrificing that \$400 for rent, groceries, or childcare.

A quarter of a million Americans go without medical care for fear of the cost. This bill ensures that no one is going without healthcare or coronavirus tests for fear of the expense. More than that, the bill would increase the amount of funding for Montana's Medicaid Program to cover additional Medicaid expenses.

Many kids in Montana rely on lunch that they get at their schools as the primary source of nutrition for the day. This bill will allow those students to continue to get lunch even if the schools are closed.

Seniors who are homebound rely on meal delivery services such as Meals on Wheels. Missoula Aging Services is already preparing to use its allotment of millions of dollars in additional revenue for senior nutrition, for providing more meals for seniors who are following recommendations to stay home.

This pandemic is already causing significant impacts to our economy. We know that all too well. This is why this bill addresses unexpected unemployment and helps small businesses cover paid sick leave for those who need it.

Under this bill, low-income pregnant women and mothers with young children who lose their jobs due to COVID-19 will be able to access food assistance. All of these are commonsense, bipartisan solutions that the Senate has delayed for no good reason.

On the farm, when there is work to be done, especially when it is time-sensitive work, you don't take a break. You get the job done. I call on my colleagues not to waste another moment—to hold a vote and get the job done.

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. CORNYN. Madam 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. CORNYN. Madam President, across our country, we are seeing cities, schools, businesses, and other organizations take the necessary and serious precautions to keep the American people safe from the spread of the coronavirus. School districts, colleges, and universities are canceling in-person classes, churches are moving services online, professional sports teams are hitting pause on their regular season, airlines are canceling flights, and many Main Street businesses are closing their doors.

I know that all of this is a little disorienting and certainly alarming. But while these measures aren't normal, it is a sign that we are heeding advice from the experts, people like Dr. Fauci and organizations like the Centers for Disease Control. It is a sign that we are doing what we can to prevent or at least slow down community spread. It is a sign that we are standing together and making progress, ultimately expecting that we will get through this together. The difficult decisions that need to be made by elected officials, business owners, and community leaders when they decide to shut down normal parts of our daily lives—these are not easy decisions for them to make.

Despite the public health benefits these closures will provide, we are also expecting other serious—mainly economic—consequences. Our economic engine is being brought to a halt as people are staying home rather than producing, and small businesses and their employees in particular are feeling the impact.

Jason Phillips is a manager at Zoli's Pizza in Fort Worth, TX, and he has been in the service industry for more than 20 years. Still, he said he has never been in a situation quite like this one. He said this past Saturday that Zoli's Pizza had about half the number of customers they have come to expect.

Steven Startz has experienced a similar struggle. Last November, he opened a new restaurant in New Braunfels, TX, just north of San Antonio, called Le Citron European Cafe and Bistro. The first year for any new restaurant is bound to be tough. As luck would have it, a week after they opened, an oven broke, and it had to be replaced. But nothing has prepared Steven for the months of February and March, what they would bring. He was hoping, as you might imagine, for an uptick in tourists, which would mean more business, but instead a pandemic has kept everybody at home. Rather than a positive bump in the business, revenue for his young restaurant is down 60 percent. As a result, he has had to cut staff, and he hasn't hired replacements for the employees he has recently lost.

This is an all-too-familiar struggle for millions of Americans who are unable to go to work during this pandemic and are facing serious economic uncertainty about their future. Those in the service industry—especially

those who rely on tips—are among the hardest hit.

I am glad to say that soon the Senate will take action to provide additional relief. As the Presiding Officer knows, we passed an \$8.3 billion emergency package to help fast-track discovery of a vaccine and to make sure that our healthcare sector is prepared for what is coming at it, or at least better prepared.

The House has now passed the Families First Coronavirus Response Act, which we are in the process of taking up and will hopefully finish this week, and then I expect there will be a third installment—a stimulus package that Treasury Secretary Mnuchin will be up here on the Hill talking about today to try to help employees and employers and entire industries survive this economic trauma.

The Families First Coronavirus Response Act will help protect both the physical and financial health of our country by supporting workers and their families impacted by the virus. It will remove financial barriers for Texans who need access to coronavirus testing, regardless of income or insurance coverage.

This is one of the things I talked to Governor Abbott about in particular. He said that there are two things that Texas needs. He said it is more testing and it is more protective equipment, personal protective equipment—PPEs, as they are called—in order for this testing to take place.

While it is still true—according to the Centers for Disease Control—that you should not be tested unless you are experiencing symptoms and referred by a healthcare provider, it is clear that more testing is going to be needed, and indeed we have heard from the President and the Vice President and the administration in general that we expect a huge ramping up of the capacity to test people so they can know whether they are positive and they need to stay in isolation or possibly need healthcare treatment or whether, like the President and one of our colleagues here, Senator GRAHAM, they are negative, and obviously the peace of mind that comes with that. This legislation removes all financial barriers for that testing.

For those who have private insurance, it requires that all plans cover the cost of testing, including the cost of a provider, an urgent care center, and emergency room visits in order to get tested. As I said, right now, CDC protocol calls for a healthcare provider to make a diagnosis based on symptoms that would then lead to a test.

Those are the same zero-cost measures that would apply to those covered by Medicare, Medicaid, and TRICARE.

It also requires the National Disaster Medical System to reimburse the cost of testing for patients who are uninsured.

In short, the bottom line is, no one will have to pay to be tested for the coronavirus, period.

This legislation also includes a range of provisions to provide financial security for those who are unable to work, and that is because they are protecting the public health. It will create a new Federal emergency paid sick leave program for those impacted by the coronavirus. That means that any Texan—any American who is diagnosed, quarantining, or caring for a dependent who was impacted by this virus will be able to take 14 days of paid sick leave. And many Texas workers will be able to access 12 weeks of paid leave for virus-related long-term absences. These protections include workers who stay home to care for their loved ones, including staying home with their kids due to school closures.

This bill also makes changes to unemployment insurance. It will temporarily waive requirements for workers to prove they are actively searching for work during the public health emergency response, and it will provide \$1 billion in emergency grants for States to support processing and paying unemployment insurance benefits. In other words, we know that people are staying home because their employers have told them their businesses have been shut down. Even though they are not sick, they are suffering financial loss. The purpose of this is to make sure that through the vehicle of unemployment insurance, they do get some money so that they can take care of their necessities and keep putting food on the table.

This bill also takes serious steps to strengthen food security for those who are struggling with reliable access to healthy meals. This is one of the things I heard from a friend of mine out in West Texas just today concerned about the food banks that provide a safety net for people without access to regular, healthy food. This bill actually will send \$400 million to local food banks, which are supporting those low-income families across the country, including in places like West Texas.

We know that older Americans are the most vulnerable when it comes to the coronavirus, and many are afraid to leave their homes at the risk of getting sick. This legislation provides a quarter of a billion dollars for the senior nutrition program to provide home-delivered meals to low-income seniors. It also provides half a billion dollars for Federal food stamps. It provides flexibility on work requirements, so those who lose their jobs or aren't able to work can receive assistance when they need it the most.

I mentioned the food banks and the school lunch program. Last week, the U.S. Department of Agriculture approved a request from Texas with regard to school lunches. Millions of Texas students are currently eligible for free lunch programs, but, obviously, when the schools close, they don't get access to that nutrition. But thanks to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Texas schools can continue to serve