

might use the private right of action to sue the employer and say: I want you to pay the gap between the \$132,000 and whatever I made.

You may say, I am not too sympathetic to the employee who makes that much money. Yet I am not talking about being sympathetic to the employee; I am talking about being sympathetic to the employer who may not have any money. Remember, this is a Washington mandate, and Washington should pay for it. Through technical changes this past weekend—and it said so in the information I just read—the Treasury Department has amended the bill to try to make that clear, and I hope that it is successful.

No. 3 is with regard to layoffs, and I mentioned the restaurant industry. There are 15 million people who work in the restaurant industry. If they are not laid off now, they are going to be mostly all laid off before very long. Unfortunately, none of those men and women who have been laid off are eligible for this sick leave because you are going to have to work for 30 days for this small business, for this company with fewer than 500 employees, in order to be eligible for the paid sick leave.

I am afraid, as a result of this, many employers who are worried about this provision may have an incentive to lay off more of their employees. The truth is that one doesn't need much more incentive because you are a restaurant and have been told by the local health board to close down. You don't have any money coming in, and you can't pay your employees anyway, so you don't have any choice. My point is that this is a very limited benefit in the restaurant industry and, probably, in many other industries because it does not help the laid-off employee.

Finally, there has been a lot said with regard to the smallest companies—those with fewer than 50 employees—in that they can apply to the Secretary of Labor and he will make you exempt from the mandate. I think that is a good idea because this is the small mom-and-pop diner or it might be the kennel that I just talked about that might have three or four employees and that is not accustomed to dealing with all of this Washington legalese and its requirements and regulations. It is not geared up for that.

As I read the language in the law, it is a much narrower exception than that, so I am going to attempt to amend the law that passed today in order to broaden the exception so the Secretary of Labor has more authority to waive the mandate for businesses with fewer than 50 employees.

As I said, there are a number of important benefits in the bill that we passed today, especially on testing. We have seen a great increase in the number of available tests over the last few weeks. The Governor of Tennessee said yesterday that we have sufficient testing. Well, that is for today but maybe not for tomorrow or the next day.

One of the greatest steps forward has been to finally allow commercial test-

ing to be used. I mean, why shouldn't the Mayo Clinic or the Cleveland Clinic be able to go ahead and develop tests and move ahead with them? Now, they can. While we have done a great deal, there is a great deal more that we must do.

I am convinced, even if we do as Senator MCCONNELL has said and pass our phase three legislation this weekend, which would include loans to small businesses, direct payments to individuals, and stabilizing payments to airlines, for example, and maybe to other industries, that there is more to do.

My guess is that the next step after that—phase four, let's call it—will be to look to our State employment compensation systems and make sure they are able to handle the large numbers of people who are losing their jobs because the government is shutting down the economy in order to contain the disease.

I voted for the Johnson amendment today, which was to the bill for which I later voted, because I thought it was headed in the right direction. Rather than Washington's issuing mandates, I would rather Washington work with the States in an existing program and make sure that States have sufficient funding on top of their own funds to deal with the large numbers of auto-workers, restaurant workers, and workers at the small kennel that has two or three employees. In addition to that, I believe the figure in the weekly fund is going to have to be higher than the \$327 that it is in Tennessee.

This is unprecedented. We are closing down the economy in order to contain the disease. Because we are doing that, we governments at all levels are going to have to pay the bill.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. CRAMER). The Senator from Delaware.

#### CORONAVIRUS

Mr. COONS. Mr. President, the Senate of the United States has just acted. It has taken up and passed a roughly \$104 billion package of assistance that will go out to American families, to American workers, to our healthcare system, to our States, and to our communities. I want to take a few minutes to talk about this important step we have just taken and where we have to go next.

The Delawareans I have heard from today and this week and this month are worried, and they are anxious. They have been up all night and are trying to figure out how they are going to care for their children who are home from school and need support and instruction and how they are going to care for their parents who are vulnerable and elderly and sick. They are concerned about our hospitals and our healthcare system and its capacity.

They are anxious because they are frontline workers, they are first responders, and they are volunteer firefighters, nurses, and orderlies, who are

exposed every day and concerned. They are just average citizens asking: How can I get a test and where?

I have heard from the presidents of our major universities, the head of our hospital system, our Governor, and my colleagues in our congressional delegation. We have talked repeatedly to our director of public health, our secretary of health and human services, and I have heard from business owners, large and small, who run everything from coffee shops and diners to restaurants and hotels in our State. There is a lot of anxiety and concern.

The folks in my State want to know that we here in Washington are going to put the partisan bickering aside, find answers, and get resources out to deal with this significant public health emergency.

And so I hope folks take some encouragement from today's actions. It passed 90 to 8. Very little passes in this Senate 90 to 8, and I have very rarely seen a bill of this size, scope, and magnitude that goes from an idea to bill text, to enactment in such a short period of time, but this moment demands it.

Let me talk through, also, the priorities that are reflected in the Families First Coronavirus Response Act, because the name reflects the priorities.

Hubert Humphrey, who is a former leader in the United States in our political community and system, once said, "The moral test of our government is how it treats those who are in the dawn of life, the children; those who are in the twilight of life, the elderly; and those who are in the shadows of life, the sick, the needy and the handicapped."

I am pleased that the package just passed here in the Senate takes important strides to take care of exactly those folks. Children home from school, who need support for learning remotely, and those, in particular, who rely on school lunch programs for their one good, stable healthy meal a day, will be able to continue to get school lunches delivered, either through their schools or at home. There are significant resources in this bill for that. Those who are on the frontlines of this crisis, the individuals who are cleaning offices and cleaning hospital rooms and cleaning Amtrak cars and public buses, those who are putting themselves directly at risk by cleaning the spaces we all count on for our society, frontline workers, people who are in our first responder community, people who are working in our hospital emergency rooms—this provides support for them.

And for anyone who is concerned about the cost of access to testing, this bill makes clear that testing for COVID-19, for this dreaded disease caused by the novel coronavirus, will have a test for free, including those without health insurance.

There are some big pieces in this bill that I will briefly mention. There is paid emergency leave for workers at companies below 500 employees for 2

weeks of sick leave and up to 10 weeks of additional paid family and medical leave. We just had a disagreement over exactly how that is going to get paid for and how it is going to get compensated and on what timeline, and we are going to work out those details.

My office's website will have an accessible, readable summary of what is in this bill up later tonight.

The larger point was that we thought it essential that folks who we want to stay home, but who are maybe living paycheck to paycheck, know that they will get paid sick leave so they can stay home and we can slow the spread of this disease.

There is also an increase in funds from the Federal Government to States for Medicaid, because a lot of our States are going to see increased costs as folks move to Medicaid as the place they get healthcare as they move to unemployment. One hundred million dollars in additional resources will go to the State of Delaware alone to provide support for those who may be newly dependent on Medicaid.

Then, last is an expansion of unemployment benefits—26 weeks of unemployment benefits, including temporary unemployment caused because of COVID-19.

There are more details as to how this temporary unemployment insurance will work, but it will last longer and have a higher level of benefit and be more flexible than previous versions of Federal unemployment insurance, and it is being delivered in partnership with States.

So those are the biggest pieces of this bill. It is just \$104 billion, but the bill we are already hard at work on will be an order of magnitude greater, likely more than \$1 trillion. If what we have seen in terms of anxiety and concern from families up and down my State and all over our country is any indication, we must take this up quickly and enact it.

There are small business owners, whom I have heard from today, who want to keep employing the folks who work for them but have lost half of their business since our Governor took the bold and necessary step of closing our restaurants and bars to all except drive-through and delivery service. Ten percent of the folks who work in Delaware work in restaurants and hospitality. Folks who want to keep their people on payroll but have no work for them to do face a very hard choice.

We need to find ways that we can both defer the payments that are necessary for students, for homeowners, for businesses, for those who have outstanding payments on SBA loans or on federally guaranteed mortgages or on bank loans where we can work out some way to provide temporary relief, and then individual payments that will help students, that will help heads of households, and that will help individuals.

So there are a lot of different pieces that are being debated and discussed

here in the Senate—support for Amtrak, a priority for me because I commute by Amtrak and it is one of the biggest modes of transportation on the east coast; support for the airline and hospitality industries because they employ hundreds of thousands of people and have seen their business drop off sharply; support for long-term structural changes to how we provide access to healthcare, access to skills and training for our workforce, and access to higher education.

I have heard very concerning stories from the folks who lead some of the most important nonprofit and faith and educational institutions in my State, and they are looking to us for bold and decisive leadership.

Last, we must not forget those on the margins of our society—people who are homeless, people who are incarcerated, people who are uninsured, people who are undocumented. If we want to make sure that we make our country safe, we need to practice not just good hygiene, not just social distancing, but we need to refrain from moral distancing. We need to remember the words of Hubert Humphrey, and we need to be reminded exactly why people look to this Federal Government for prompt action and for significant resources: It is because they look for us to be able to make sure that we see all Americans and that we know that we are all in this together.

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.

Mrs. BLACKBURN. 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

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Mr. President, I have so appreciated the comments of my colleagues today as they have come to the floor and they have talked about how they are approaching what is happening with this coronavirus pandemic and what they are hearing from the citizens of their States.

I know each of us is spending our day listening to the people in our States and listening to their concerns and hearing them say: As you look at how you are going to address this, don't forget about us. Don't forget about us—whether it is independent contractors who are working in the music industry or television producers—I was talking to one last night; they lost \$9,000 worth of production work this week—or theme park owners who are trying to figure out how they are going to work through this or the CEO of one of our Nation's airlines earlier today. People are looking to us to make certain that we address this situation in a way that is going to stabilize it and that is going to provide assistance.

As we have worked through this, one of the things I think sometimes is just

a really good thing to do is to stop and kind of take stock of where we are and how it is going to be best to move forward.

I think it is important to realize that we have already directed resources to the coronavirus pandemic. There is the coronavirus supplemental, which was an \$8.3 billion piece of legislation. That may seem like a lifetime ago to some of those in our States. It was a couple of weeks ago. That money is already making its way out. Tennessee received \$10 million this week in order to work on public health needs around the coronavirus.

We also had our President move forward without hesitation to do the national emergency declaration. That freed up \$50 billion of resources. That is money that is going to our States and our localities to help with the response for this, to get those resources where they need to go.

Of course, there was legislation that passed today, and in that, I supported the Johnson amendment. I do fully believe that working through this with our unemployment insurance and our employment security system is the way to go. I have supported the payroll tax holiday. I am one of those who have always said: Why should we have to pay the government to hire somebody? So the payroll tax holiday made sense to me. The Johnson amendment that I cosponsored makes sense to me, that we could do it because we could more quickly get resources to individuals, from the Federal Government to the taxpayer, to the individual. That is what we need to do at this time.

Tennessee is very blessed. We have had a very low unemployment rate. But what we have seen in the last 2 or 3 weeks is that unemployment claims have quadrupled, and we expect this is going to continue as workers, independent contractors, sole proprietors, and small businesses see their income stream or their revenue stream go from something healthy to zero. That has happened literally overnight, just within a few days as the economy started to shut down.

What we hear from people is, look, this is not something we have done, it is something that has been done to us, and we are being asked to close our doors and to change the way we operate. So they repeatedly say: Don't forget about us, and do not give us mandates we cannot afford, because what we need is assistance to bridge that gap.

When we talk about mandates that you can't afford, Tennesseans are very concerned about the paid family leave provisions that are in the legislation today. What I have heard repeatedly—repeatedly—whether it is someone who runs a nursing staffing company or a furniture store or a small manufacturing company, is that the tax credit provision is not going to work with cash flow. They mention that repeatedly. So my hope is that we can come together on a bipartisan basis and we