

through this turmoil—not some brandnew program with a long lead time but an existing program that has been tested.

The second major pillar of our legislation will be even more straightforward: direct financial help for Americans. Senate Republicans want to put cash in the hands of the American people. Chairman GRASSLEY and a number of our colleagues are finalizing a structure that will get assistance to individuals and families as rapidly as possible. This is no Washington process with a thousand cooks in the kitchen, no piles of forms for laid-off workers or busy families to fill out—money for people from the middle class on down, period.

For laid-off Americans, this infusion would complement unemployment insurance and could be put toward immediate needs during this crisis. For Americans who are still working, the money would provide extra certainty in this uniquely uncertain time and help remind everyone that temporary shutdowns at bars and restaurants do not mean all commerce has to halt. For retirees, the money would complement Social Security and help seniors navigate the unusual routines that have suddenly become necessary for their own safety.

This is a form of additional tax relief that we want to push to taxpayers right away. It is not an ordinary policy, but this is no ordinary time. The American people need help, and they need it fast. This will deliver it.

Now, we believe this rapid assistance is crucial, but, more broadly, we need to keep as many Americans as possible on the job and connected to their employers. The small business relief will help, and so will a number of additional tax relief measures, which will be designed to help employers maintain cashflow and keep making payroll, preserving employment and protecting economic foundations.

That is also why the third pillar of our proposal involves targeted lending to industries of national importance. Chairman SHELBY, Chairman WICKER, and Senator THUNE are leading this component.

Just like small businesses, entire sectors are being crushed—crushed—by public health guidance, which is obviously through no fault of their own. For example, our Nation needs airlines. Yet they have ongoing maintenance costs that do not disappear just because the government has chased away all the customers. We cannot expect this key industry to mothball itself overnight, then dust off in weeks and months and pop right back online as the Nation will need and expect.

So let's be clear about something. From small businesses to key sectors, we are not talking about so-called bailouts for firms that made reckless decisions. Nobody is alleging a moral hazard here. None of these firms—not corner stores, not pizza parlors, not airlines—brought this on themselves. We are not talking about a taxpayer-fund-

ed cushion to companies that made mistakes. We are talking about loans, which must be repaid, for American employers whom the government itself—the government itself—is temporarily crushing for the sake of public health.

The fourth piece of our proposal goes to the heart of this crisis: the health of the American people. Chairmen ALEXANDER and GRASSLEY will be rolling out proposals to get resources on the frontlines of our fight against the virus itself because, to be clear, nothing I have laid out so far will represent a typical economic stimulus in the way that we think of that term.

Nobody—nobody—expects that employment figures or the stock market or GDP growth will bounce right back to where they were a few weeks ago. No policy and no amount of money could return things to normal overnight.

There is an underlying medical reality that is driving this disruption. In the words of one journalist, this is primarily “a health crisis—with an economic crisis strapped to its back.”

So, yes, our proposal will immediately help American workers, families, and businesses. Yes, it will help position our economy to thrive once again after this public health menace is behind us.

This may not be the last economic legislation we pursue, but, fundamentally, we have to beat back this virus. We have to beat back this virus. That is why our proposal will go even further to remove barriers to care, speed innovation, fund the hospitals and health centers that will treat patients, and expand healthcare workers' access to the tools they need, including respirator masks.

Immediately after we pass this legislation, Congress must begin a bipartisan, bicameral appropriations process to address the administration's new supplemental funding request, so we can keep funding healthcare and other priorities.

I think every American shares the sense that the last several days have felt more like several months. Just last Saturday, our Nation had fewer than 3,000 confirmed cases, and 58 Americans had lost their lives. Already, the number of cases has nearly tripled. Tragically, so has the number of deaths. The crisis is moving fast; our health system is under strain; and our economy is hurting.

The legislation I have just laid out will not be the last word. As I said, we will need to turn right away to a bipartisan appropriations process. This is not Congress's last chance to legislate, but it is critical that we move swiftly and boldly to begin to stabilize our economy, preserve Americans' jobs, get money to workers and families, and keep up our fight on the health front.

That is exactly—exactly—what our proposal will do. These are not ordinary policies. This is no ordinary time. The American people are strong. They are brave. There is no doubt the Amer-

ican people will come through this battle and then soar to new heights on the other side.

The American people will win this fight against this virus. The Senate's job is to give them the tools they need, and we are not leaving until we do our job.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam 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 MINORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic leader is recognized.

CORONAVIRUS

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, in the space of less than 24 hours, yesterday, the number of coronavirus cases in my dear home State of New York has more than doubled. The spread of the virus has been rapid and the consequences severe. The coronavirus is slowing our economy to a near standstill, promoting widespread layoffs and the likelihood of a deep recession that will be painfully felt in households from coast to coast, from New York to California and every other State.

We are living in a time of public emergency—in our healthcare system, in our economy, and, indeed, in our society itself. Separated from one another, we are going to have to pull together in spirit. The American people have to sacrifice their routines. They don't want to, but we have no choice if we want to stay healthy and arrest the spread of the disease.

Our healthcare workers and our first responders every day are being asked to perform daunting and heroic tasks for which we all are already in their debt.

The anxiety, the fear, and the confusion that New Yorkers and Americans feel today is palpable, but I would remind them that there has never been a challenge too great for our country to overcome. I remember the dark days after 9/11. So many were prepared to write New York City off the map. They said no one would live or do business in the southern part of Manhattan. They said the whole city and its suburbs would never come back.

But we did come back, strongly, more resilient than we ever were before. We can and will do it again—in New York and throughout the Nation. But we must act urgently and boldly now, during what may still be the early days of this crisis.

Regarding the business before the Senate right now, yesterday we passed the second phase of legislation to respond to the coronavirus, which included important provisions to extend

paid sick leave, unemployment insurance, and provide free—free, no copays, no deductibles—coronavirus testing for all Americans. That bill was a first step. I am glad it is now done. I am glad it got support from both sides of the aisle—I believe 90 votes on passage—and the aid will begin to flow.

Now, Leader MCCONNELL has just outlined and will soon announce plans of what the Senate Republicans believe should be included in the third phase of legislation to confront the coronavirus. We are ready and eager to look at what Republicans put together and to work with them, but we believe that, whatever proposal emerges—and it will be bipartisan—it must be a workers-first proposal.

Workers first—that is our motto in what we are proposing. That means help for all workers: service workers, industry workers, factory workers, office tower workers, small business workers, gig workers, freelancers, bartenders, retail workers, airline attendants, and so many more.

We owe a great deal of gratitude to the working people of America, whether they be blue collar or white collar; whether they work in high office towers, on the farms, or in a local drug store; those who clean our buildings and streets; those who are still working to collect the garbage and keep the power on; and, of course, our healthcare workers, who are risking everything to keep the rest of us safe.

Workers first—that is the motto that I have and I believe Speaker PELOSI has, as well, as we Democrats seek input into the joint, bipartisan package that will be put together. Our goal is to make sure that no one—no worker, no family, no one—loses a paycheck or goes into financial ruin as a result of the coronavirus. That will take strong, bold, immediate action.

That is why we must work so quickly but carefully, as well, to put together a bipartisan package. I spoke with Secretary Mnuchin several times. I think he is of that view. I have heard that Leader MCCONNELL has said he will sit down with our Democratic Senators to come up with a bipartisan package. That is what we must do.

So let me outline a few of our priorities. First, if there is going to be a bailout of any sort of industry, worker priorities and worker protections must be included. Corporations should not get a bailout and then be allowed to fire employees or cut their salaries, cut their benefits.

The airline industry just spent billions and billions in stock buybacks in the last 2 years, liquidity that would come in handy at a time like this. If there is a bailout, there need to be conditions to make sure the interests of labor are given priority and that corporations can't buy back stock, reward executives, or lay off workers.

We cannot repeat the mistake that was made in 2008 when the big boys and the big girls benefited, and no one else did—workers first.

Second, phase 3 must include a massive infusion of resources for our healthcare system, for hospitals and medical supplies. America needs a Marshall Plan for public health and public health infrastructure. In the wake of World War II, America helped rebuild a continent. Right now, we need to rebuild our health infrastructure on a continental scale. We need a Marshall Plan for our healthcare system.

Without a massive commitment from this Congress, our healthcare system will not be able to handle this crisis. There are not enough workers, not enough supplies, not enough beds, not enough State and local funding. There is a major concern that, as this virus spreads, countless Americans will not be able to access or afford treatment if they get the coronavirus.

It goes from the very big—we need lots of ventilators—to the smaller. A hospital in New York told us that they didn't have enough nasal swabs to conduct the coronavirus test. Healthcare workers in Washington State are fashioning homemade masks out of vinyl, elastic, and double-sided tape. The need for ventilators, which will save the lives of those who are afflicted by the disease in a severe way, is desperate.

Yesterday, President Trump finally took our suggestion and invoked the Defense Production Act, but what is happening now? We don't know. Who is in charge? Which factories are being asked to make the ventilators, and which factories are being asked to do other things as well? We need that kind of information, but just as important as the information is the urgency of getting these things done.

Machines like ventilators can be the difference between life and death. According to one projection, it is possible that up to 960,000 Americans will need a ventilator during the coronavirus pandemic. Right now, only 160,000 are available, and only 12,700 are in stockpiles.

The President must direct a massive mobilization to ramp up ventilator production. He also must do so to acquire new hospital space. We will be short of beds, particularly ICU beds. The Army Corps must be involved in helping to build temporary hospitals that can take on the new burden. We are on the verge, unfortunately, if we don't act quickly, of repeating the heart-breaking collapse of the hospital capacity experienced in Italy. That must not be allowed to happen.

I was glad yesterday that President Trump heeded the call by Democrats on the Defense Production Act, but we need to go further. The President must make this an urgent responsibility.

We need a Marshall Plan for our healthcare system, and that also means getting new workers involved. We are going to be short doctors and nurses. We have to make sure those in the healthcare system can get to work. The New York subway system is still needed to carry them there, and in

many other cities they depend on one form of mass transit or another.

The next legislation that we are putting together must include a historic commitment to supporting our healthcare system and our fellow Americans who get sick. We cannot get this wrong. The stakes are too high.

And third, phase 3 legislation must address the plight of workers and families struggling with the economic ramifications of the virus. Millions and millions of American workers have been laid off. They didn't do anything wrong—neither did the owner of their business—but there are no people coming into the restaurants and the stores and the shops. There may be no customers for businesses that provide services or goods. Storefronts are closed. The service industry is shedding jobs. Small businesses, small businesses owners who have devoted their lifetime to building their businesses are on the brink of collapse. The gears of American manufacturing are grinding to a halt. There are millions of American workers home at night, home during the day. They are doing the right thing, but now they have no income, no idea where the next paycheck will arrive or when they can return to work. We must step up to the plate immediately and help these suffering workers who don't have a paycheck and are worried about how they are going to pay the rent, the mortgage, buy the food, the necessities, the medicines they and their families need. Congress must help them.

We should enact a new form of unemployment insurance. We call it "employment insurance." It is really unemployment insurance on steroids—assistance until these already employed Americans can get back to work. Existing unemployment insurance has a lot of failings. It doesn't cover enough people to meet this crisis. So many who work part time, who are gig workers, and for many other reasons are not covered by unemployment insurance—our new employment insurance must cover them all.

Second, the payments must be full. The payment should be equal or come as close to equaling as possible the salaries they got. Most people who get unemployment insurance don't get close to the percentage they need to live on.

And third, it must be quick and easy. In many States—some by design—it is very hard to get employment insurance. You have to go through the whole rigmarole. That must end.

Our new employment insurance—an unemployment insurance on steroids—must have full payment so lost salaries are totally made up for, it must be quick and easy to access, and it must be broad-based. Democrats will ask for that as one of our most important asks because that goes to the people who need help; that goes to the people who are not getting their salaries because they have been laid off or furloughed. That is the most immediate and quick thing to deal with the problem right at the level where it exists.

Another must for us is paid sick leave. Senators MURRAY and GILLIBRAND have important legislation on this issue and want to get this done.

And for small businesses, there must be liquidity. Many of these businesses are great businesses. They were doing fine until 2, 3 weeks ago, but no customers are coming in the door or calling on the phone. In addition to paying their workers through our employment insurance, we must see that these businesses have liquidity to pay their insurance bills, to pay their mortgages, to pay their problems, and deal with that so when, God willing—and I am confident it will happen—this crisis leaves us, they will be able to open their businesses stronger than ever before.

There are many other things we want to get done. Today, Senator WARREN, Senator MURRAY, Senator BROWN, and I are announcing a bill to cancel—cancel—student loan payments during the duration of the coronavirus and to provide a minimum of a \$10,000 payoff for all student loan borrowers. This is a problem that has been going on for too long. It is exacerbated by the crisis. We have to help the students and those with big loans on their backs. That legislation—something like it—should be in phase 3 of legislation.

There are many other things that must be done. As we Senate Democrats a couple of days ago announced a \$750 billion package—well, there are other things that are in there, and there may be other things that have to be added, but we have to look at this crisis in its totality and address it.

Some have proposed—I have heard this coming out of the administration and from some of my colleagues—an alternative to these policies: a one-time cash payment of \$1,000. That might help families cover rent, groceries for a month, but then what? If we are going to do this kind of payment plan—first, it cannot be a substitute for the things I have mentioned. It must be in addition. I think there is a general, unanimous view on our side that should be the case.

But second, if we are going to do it, it has to be bigger, more generous, and more frequent than some that I have heard proposed from the other side. We all know that workers and families need assistance, and they are going to get it. Democrats want to get that assistance as quickly to the American people as possible, and I believe our Republican colleagues do as well. But those who want to limit that assistance to a one-time payment of around \$1,000 given to everybody, for people who make \$1 million and people who make \$500 a week, that doesn't make sense.

The pandemic requires bold, structural changes to our society's safety net to give people a lifeline for months, not just weeks. It requires the kinds of things I have mentioned. If we are going to go this route, it has to be bigger, more generous, more frequent.

I have taken time to lay out these ideas on the floor because—thus far, at least—Senate Democrats have not been included in discussions with Senate Republicans about phase 3. Leader MCCONNELL is putting together his own plan. He is talking to his chairman and his Members, and then, he has said, he will present it to Senate Democrats or even House Democrats.

As I have said before, if we want to get this done quickly, the best way to do it is to have a four-corners negotiation: House and Senate, majority and minority. If we do it in each step, obviously—knowing how the Senate and the House work—it will take much longer. We have to move quickly.

Make no mistake about it, our entire caucus wants to work in a bipartisan way to get this done quickly. What we are prescribing are some of the things we think would do the most good.

In reference to that, we are living in a time of emergency. The typical legislative process takes too long and will not work. I believe all parties should be in the room from the get-go so that any final product can pass as swiftly as possible. We are all interested in coming together as quickly as we can. Time is of the essence. Let us come together, construct, and pass this bill as soon as we possibly can.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The assistant Democratic leader.

CORONAVIRUS

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, I come to the floor today to thank Speaker PELOSI, Leader SCHUMER, and all of my colleagues who help support the Families First Coronavirus Response Act. That measure was signed yesterday by President Trump. As I understand from Leader MCCONNELL, work is underway on a third coronavirus package in the form of an economic stimulus to provide more support to families, businesses, and to the healthcare community, including our hospitals.

This morning, I spoke to the Governor of Illinois—we have been speaking on almost a daily basis, sometimes almost several times a day—and asked him about the State of the situation in our home State of Illinois. Unfortunately, we are still desperate for testing kits. Illinois has about 5,000 more kits that were provided yesterday by a private company at the urging of our Governor, but we have never seen the number of test kits that we believe are necessary to measure the current state of this coronavirus in our home State of Illinois. The official count—and I might add that word “official”—is that we have had 288 Illinoisans infected and 1 fatality. I believe that the number of infections in the official report grossly understates the exposure in my home State of Illinois. Once more tests are administered and we receive the results, I am afraid we are going to see a dramatic increase in that number of reported infections in the State.

One hundred and twenty-eight new cases were announced yesterday in our State. It is the largest single 1-day increase since we have been reporting. We have 2 additional counties that have now been touched out of the 102. We are now up to 17 counties with the infections. An additional 20 people at the DuPage County long-term care facility tested positive, bringing it to a total of 42—30 residents and 12 members of that staff—in that one facility.

Forty-one thousand unemployment insurance claims were filed in Illinois in the past 2 days. To put that in perspective, during the same 2 days last year, 4,445 were filed. That is roughly 10 times the number of unemployment claims that have been filed this year. As I mentioned, that is 10 times the level of the same 2-day period a year ago.

The Department of Labor reported this morning that 281,000 people filed unemployment insurance claims nationwide last week, and that number is likely to grow. Oak Park—just to the west of Chicago—is the first town in Illinois to issue a shelter-in-place order for residents, which will last until April 3. Mayor Lightfoot for the city of Chicago announced the city would temporarily suspend debt collection practices and nonsafety-related citations, as well as penalties for late payment.

I might add that we learned last night that two Members of the House of Representatives have tested positive for the virus: Representatives MARIO DIAZ-BALART of Florida and BEN MCADAMS of Utah. Both developed symptoms last Saturday, just hours after voting on the coronavirus response bill with hundreds of other Members.

I have joined with Senator ROB PORTMAN of Ohio in proposing that we take into consideration the fact that we have critically important work to do in the Senate, but gathering in groups, as we have done historically, poses a health risk not just to us as Members and our families but to the staff as well as their families, the staff in the Senate and their families. We ought to be more thoughtful in terms of our own families and the people who work in the U.S. Senate. Yes, do our job, but do it in a sensible and thoughtful way.

Senator PORTMAN and I are exploring possibilities for remote voting by Members of the Senate. Why is it required that we be physically present on the floor, closer to one another, than perhaps we should be at this moment during a public health crisis? Senator PORTMAN and I, on a bipartisan basis, are trying to find a way to achieve this goal and to still protect the integrity of the voting process in the U.S. Senate. Yes, it is new. Yes, it is different. Yes, it reflects the 21st century and reflects a challenge, the likes of which we have never seen. Tomorrow that challenge may be another public health crisis, some other national emergency, or maybe even a terrorist attack.