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Senate

The Senate met at 12 noon 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.

Heavenly Father, give our lawmakers wisdom and spiritual eyes to see You at work. Remind them that, in everything, You are working for the good of those who love You.

Guide our Senators to strive to please You by living blameless, holy, and disciplined lives.

As they battle this coronavirus pandemic, may they not forget the marginalized.

Lord, give our lawmakers a hunger for Your words and a desire to apply Your knowledge in their daily work.

We pray in Your merciful 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.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SASSE). The majority leader is recognized.

CORONAVIRUS

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, the eyes of the Nation are on the Senate. For days now, we have been engaged in intense, bipartisan talks to build emergency relief legislation on a historic scale, to push resources to our healthcare heroes and American workers and families.

Democrats and Republicans sat down together. We crafted this version of a proposal together. This compromise package would push tens of billions of dollars to hospitals and healthcare providers. It would send direct checks to millions of American households—direct checks. It would massively expand unemployment insurance in this crisis. It would stabilize industries to prevent mass layoffs. And, crucially, it would deliver historic relief to small businesses to help Main Street employees from being totally crushed—crushed—by this pandemic.

But, yesterday, when the time came to vote on these urgent measures, our Democratic colleagues chose to block it. So why are the American people still waiting? It is a good question to ask. I hear the markets are not doing well today. They would like to ask the question of us: Why not move? Why are Democrats filibustering the bipartisan bill they helped write?

It is an appropriate question to ask this morning as the country waits on us. So let me give the American people a taste of the outstanding issues we woke up to this morning. Here are some of the items on the Democratic wish list over which they chose to block this legislation last night: tax credits for solar energy and wind energy, provisions to force employers to give special new treatment to Big Labor, and—listen to this—new emissions standards for the airlines.

Are you kidding me? This is the moment to debate new regulations that have nothing whatsoever to do with this crisis? That is what they are up to over there. The American people need to know it.

Democrats will not let us fund hospitals or save small businesses unless they get to dust off the Green New Deal. I would like to see Senate Democrats tell New York City doctors and nurses who are literally overrun as we speak that they are filibustering hospital funding and more masks because

they want to argue with the airlines over their carbon footprint.

I would like to see Senate Democrats tell small business employees in their States, who are literally being laid off every day, that they are filibustering relief that will keep people on the payroll because Democrats' special interest friends want to squeeze employers while they are vulnerable—squeeze these employers while they are vulnerable.

I would like to see Senate Democrats tell all the American seniors who have seen their hard-earned retirement savings literally melt away, as the markets track toward their worst month since 1931, that they are continuing to hold up emergency measures over tax credits for solar panels—tax credits for solar panels.

Even with the Federal Reserve announcing even further extraordinary steps today, the markets are tanking once again, as I said, because this body can't get its act together, and the only reason it can't get its act together is right over here on the other side of the aisle.

So these are just a few of the completely nongermane wish list items that they are rallying behind, preventing us from getting this emergency relief to the American people right now, eleventh-hour demands the Democrats have decided are more important than Americans' paychecks and the personal safety of doctors and nurses.

So remember what one of Speaker PELOSI's top lieutenants in the House said a few days ago—and this is a direct quote: This is a tremendous opportunity to restrict things to fit our vision—to fit our vision. That was the Democratic whip in the House, just laying it out there. It reminds me of the definition of a Washington gaffe: when a politician in Washington tells you what he really means.

We heard something similar here on the Senate floor last night—just last night. Here was one of our Democratic

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colleagues: "How many times are we going to get a shot at a trillion-dollar-plus program?" Right here on the floor last night: "I don't know how many trillion-plus packages we are going to have." In other words, let's don't waste this opportunity to take full advantage and get our whole wish list done.

They ought to be embarrassed. In fact, I have heard from some of them who are embarrassed, talking like this is some juicy political opportunity. This is not a juicy political opportunity. This is a national emergency.

We had days of productive, bipartisan talks to get to this point. Senate Democrats sat down with Senate Republicans and negotiated furiously to get to this point. The bill now contains a huge number of changes that our Democratic colleagues requested, including major changes. We were this close—this close.

Then, yesterday morning, the Speaker of the House flew back from San Francisco, and suddenly the Senate's serious bipartisan process turned into this leftwing episode of "Supermarket Sweep"—unrelated issues, left and right.

I will tell you what would really lower our carbon footprint. If the entire economy continues to crumble, with hundreds of thousands more Americans laid off because Senate Democrats will not let us act, that will lower our carbon footprint all right. Every single American outside of Washington knows this is no time for this nonsense.

A surgeon in Fresno, CA, says: "We are at war with no ammo." "We are at war with no ammo." That is a surgeon in Fresno. An intensive care nurse in New York City says: "If we don't get the proper equipment soon, we're going to get sick."

Democrats are filibustering more masks and aid for hospitals. Every day, more Americans wake up to the news that their jobs are gone—their jobs are gone. Democrats are filibustering programs to keep people on the payroll, and they are filibustering a huge expansion of unemployment insurance, which they themselves negotiated and put into the bill. Hundreds of dollars extra per week for laid-off workers on top of existing unemployment benefits, and Democrats are blocking it?

This has to stop, and today is the day it has to stop. The country is out of time—out of time. When the Democratic House passed their phase 2 bill, even though Senate Republicans would have written it very differently, we sped it through the Senate and passed it quickly without even amending it. I literally told my colleagues to "gag and vote for it," for the sake of building bipartisan momentum, because Republicans understand that a national crisis calls for urgency and it calls for bipartisanship.

It is time for that good faith to be reciprocated. It is time for Democrats to stop playing politics and step up to the plate. The small businesses in their

own States deserve it. Their own States' emergency room doctors deserve it. Their own constituents who have lost their jobs deserve it.

In my home State of Kentucky, the Governor has effectively paused commerce across the State, and our unemployment system crashed due to demand. Kentuckians need help now, and we aren't alone. I have heard the pleas from healthcare workers in New York and Seattle. I have listened to the small business owners crying out in Brooklyn and Chicago.

Why does only one side understand that this is urgent? Why are these hard-hit cities' own Senators happy to keep this slow-walking going on indefinitely? Is that really something these folks on the other side are comfortable with—indeinitely slow-walking all of this? How can half the Senate not rise to the occasion? At a time when everybody else in the country is pulling together, they are pulling us apart.

The examples are all over the country that we ought to look to: healthcare heroes, to neighborhood volunteers, to national industries. Everybody is unifying and pitching in. What about here in the Senate?

It is time to get with the program. It is time to pass historic relief that we have built together. The country doesn't have time for these political games. They need progress.

So we are going to vote in just a few minutes, and I assure you the American people will be watching.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. DURBIN. Yes, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The assistant Democratic leader objects. Objection is heard.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic leader is recognized.

CORONAVIRUS

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, every time we hear the majority leader come out, it is a partisan screed. I am in my office with the President's Secretary of Treasury, the President's congressional liaison, getting things done. We Democrats are trying to get things done, not making partisan speech after partisan speech.

In the past 24 hours, we got word that a Member of this Chamber, Senator PAUL, has tested positive for coronavirus, and the husband of another Member, Senator KLOBUCHAR, also tested positive. He is in the hospital. I want to let them know—both of them—that the Senate is thinking of them and praying for their speedy recovery, as we are for tens of thousands of American families who are confronting the same situation right now.

Whether you are afraid for a sick family member, an older relative in the hospital, or struggling without work, income, or the knowledge of when your isolation might end, our thoughts are with you right now. These are trying times for all of us, but the scourge of this disease will pass. The American people, as always, will prevail.

As the number of confirmed COVID-19 cases in the United States eclipses 35,000, the Senate continues to negotiate what will likely be the largest emergency funding bill in American history. As I have mentioned, we have had almost continuous discussions with Secretary Mnuchin. He left my office at about 12:15 last night and was there at about 9 o'clock this morning. The White House congressional liaison, Eric Ueland, has been in and out of the office as well. We are very close to reaching a deal—very close. Our goal is to reach a deal today, and we are hopeful, even confident, that we will meet that goal.

We have been working on a few outstanding issues that are no surprise to everyone. From the very beginning, Democrats have insisted on a Marshall Plan for our medical system, more money for hospitals, community health centers, nursing homes, and urgent medical supplies, such as gloves and masks, ICU beds, testing kits, ventilators, and PPE. Since our negotiations, the numbers have gone up dramatically because the hospitals and our healthcare workers need the help.

We are fighting hard and making progress on funding for State and local governments. They are propping up local healthcare networks virtually on their own. Their revenues are dramatically declining. Many towns and villages across America—the smaller ones in particular—might go broke pretty soon if we do nothing. If we can help the big corporations, we can help our local towns and villages and the taxpayers they represent.

On unemployment insurance, the bill has moved in the direction we have outlined. The original bill has the unexpanded employment benefits last only 3 months. We need to make it longer because the dislocation caused by this crisis will not be over in 90 days, and people who lose their jobs need help. It says to every American who loses his or her job—the Democratic plan that is now in the bill: You will get your full pay from the Federal Government. You can be furloughed by your employer. That means you will keep your benefits, health and otherwise. And it means that you will be