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House of Representatives

The House was not in session today. Its next meeting will be held on Wednesday, July 29, 2020, at 9 a.m.

Senate

TUESDAY, JULY 28, 2020

The Senate met at 10 a.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, our rock of safety, hear our prayers. Help us to live that the generations to come will know of Your mighty acts.

Today, give our lawmakers the hearts to seek, find, and follow Your will. Lord, guide them in the path You have created, inspiring them with the potency of Your powerful presence. May they trust You in adversity and prosperity, knowing that they will reap a productive harvest if they persevere.

Lord, we trust You to lead us with Your loving providence.

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.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. HYDE-SMITH). Without objection, it is so ordered.

The Senator from Iowa.

WORLD TRADE ORGANIZATION

Mr. GRASSLEY. Madam President, I want to talk about the World Trade Organization. I have said what I am going to say now before. So I want to say it again: The United States must reaffirm its commitment to significant reform of the World Trade Organization. The United States must move to revitalize that organization because the World Trade Organization advances the cause of free and fair global trade, and they necessarily do it because of the modern economy we are in.

It is imperative that we continue to double down on the efforts that demonstrate the United States' leadership at Geneva, the headquarters of the World Trade Organization. That includes our efforts to reform the World Trade Organization appellate body, to work on subsidies that too many countries are using, and to continue ongoing negotiations to accomplish these goals.

The World Trade Organization can and should play an important role in the global economic recovery from our virus pandemic. I urge the administration and my colleagues here in the Senate to advocate for our interests. I urge the Trump administration to confront trade distortions, and most importantly, this administration must encourage all World Trade Organization members to unite in an effort to lift us out of the nearly unprecedented global downturn we have had in trade because of the virus pandemic.

I yield the floor.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader is recognized.

HEALS ACT

Mr. McCONNELL. Yesterday, Senate Republicans put forward the HEALS Act, our framework for another round of historic relief for American workers and families.

Our Nation stands at a challenging crossroads. We have one foot in this pandemic and one foot in the recovery. We can't go back to April, and until we have a vaccine, we can't go back to normal either. What the American people need is smart, safe, and sustainable middle ground, and they need Congress's help to construct it. That is exactly what our major proposal would do.

Everyone knows that another rescue package will need to be bipartisan to pass the Senate. So the question before the country is now really quite simple: Are we going to see the versions of House and Senate Democrats that helped us unanimously pass the CARES Act back in March, or are we, instead, going to see the same Democrats who decided to block police reform in June and lash out at Senator TIM SCOTT's proposal instead of working with him to make law? In other words, do the Speaker of the House and the Democratic leader believe that struggling Americans deserve an outcome, or do they want to stay on the sidelines and recite talking points?

Well, yesterday, even before the Democrats had seen our legislation,

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



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they began attacking it. All the tired, old partisan tropes were trotted out. Before releasing a proposal that wants to give schools even more reopening money than the House Democrats' bill and which would continue additional unemployment benefits at eight times the dollar amount Democrats established during the last crisis, we were informed here on the floor that "those Republican hard-right money people . . . don't want the Federal Government to help anybody."

This is beyond parody.

Republicans put forward a trillion-dollar proposal for kids, jobs, and healthcare, including direct cash to households, and even more cash to unemployed people. And the Democrats say it proves we don't want to help people. They say it proves we don't want to help people. These are not serious statements. It is politics as usual, with talking points that went stale 20 years ago.

But the week is young and the HEALS Act is full of provisions I would, frankly, dare my Democratic colleagues to actually say they oppose.

Republicans want to extend supplemental unemployment insurance at hundreds of dollars per week. If Democrats block legislation, it will stop all together.

Republicans want to send thousands of dollars more to American families through direct payments. If Democrats will not come to the table, they will get nothing.

Republicans want to use tax incentives to encourage the rehiring of laid-off workers and the creation of safer workplaces through things like testing, remodeling, and PPE. If Democrats block action, workers will be on their own.

Republicans want to specifically protect Medicare seniors from a spike in premiums because of COVID. If Democrats treat the HEALS Act the way they treated police reform, seniors will be on their own as well.

Republicans want to pour money into K-12 schools and give greater flexibility to childcare providers so America's kids can have a safe but more normal school year. If Democrats block action, school districts will get none of us.

Republicans want to create a second targeted round of PPE to keep small businesses above water. If Democrats will not negotiate, the "now open" signs will come down and the "going out of business" signs will replace them.

Republicans want to proactively expand our domestic manufacturing capability for masks and PPE and medical countermeasures. If Democrats refuse to negotiate, we will be just as dependent on adversaries as competitors in the next crisis.

Republicans want to protect doctors, nurses, school districts, and universities from a second epidemic of frivolous lawsuits. If Democrats don't come to the table, our Nation's reopening will be at the mercy of trial lawyers.

Republicans want to go even further to backstop hospitals and healthcare providers and fuel the sprint for vaccines. If Democrats will not let us, Americans will just have to cross our fingers and hope the medical system remains stable.

To be clear, Republicans are not proposing to "cut" any relief. Under current law, expanded UI expires and is replaced with nothing. Under current law, there are no more direct payments and no second PPP. Every single thing we put forward is a way to get more relief into people's hands.

Our Democratic colleagues want to pretend it is controversial, somehow, that taxpayers should not pay people more not to work than people who do go back to work. They want to pretend it is controversial that taxpayers should not pay people more not to work than people who do go back to work? The American people don't call it a controversy. They call it common sense. They call it basic fairness.

This is absolutely a time to be generous and provide additional Federal relief to people who have been laid off, but we should not be redistributing money away from the essential workers who have remained at their posts.

We should not be taxing somebody who has been stocking shelves for months so the government can pay their neighbor more than she makes to sit at home. That is what we are talking about—taxing essential workers to pay their neighbors a bonus to stay home.

One study by university economists just found these benefits can exceed people's previous incomes two-thirds of the time. They found a medium recipient earns 134 percent of their prior salary. That means half are making even more than that. That is just not fair. It is not compatible with a reopening economy and more than 6 in 10 Americans feel this creates a disincentive to work.

Even the Democratic House majority leader said just this morning that our perspective "has some validity to it and we have to deal with that . . . it's not \$600 or bust." That was the majority leader in the House. The Democratic majority leader in the House said: "It's not \$600 or bust." So let's get past these partisan cheap shots and have an adult conversation.

Look at it this way. Think about one street, one block in one neighborhood, anywhere in America. Think how they would benefit if this bill were signed into law. Right now, several families on that block probably have no idea whether their kids will be heading back to school in a few weeks. Our bill would provide the money and legal certainty for school districts to reopen safely.

Let's talk about the families' pocketbooks. Likely, every mailbox on that street or each checking account would get another \$1,200 per adult and \$500 per dependent. For a family of four, we are talking about \$3,400 in cash. Maybe some of these homeowners are among

the millions of Americans who have been thrown into joblessness. As we discussed, they would get hundreds of dollars more every week in added unemployment.

But because we are doing it smarter, if anyone on the street owns a coffee shop or a contracting business, they will not hear from workers that they are earning more by staying at home. Those unemployed workers will get back on the job faster when our bill supercharges incentives for rehiring and helps pay for health and safety in the workplace.

Maybe some other people on the street have held onto their jobs because of the historic Paycheck Protection Program. Their employer is considering closing down with that relief nearly exhausted. Our targeted second round of PPP could keep their paycheck coming instead of a pink slip. Maybe a retired couple lives on this block. If our proposal for Medicare Part B premiums becomes law, this couple will be protected from a spike in costs due to this pandemic, and needless to say, every single person on that street would benefit from even stronger Federal investments in the diagnostics, treatments, and vaccines that will ultimately win this healthcare battle for all of us.

So, look, it is very simple. Partisan histrionics will not get any American family any of the relief I just described. Calling names will not get school districts one dime. Washington finger-pointing will not add 1 cent to anyone's unemployment check.

The Democrats face a simple choice. They can come to the table, work with the Republicans, and engage seriously to make law for the American people or they can stay on the sidelines, point fingers, and let another rescue package go the same way as the police reform bill they killed back in June. The Republicans are ready to govern. We just need the Democrats to decide whether they are serious about actually making law.

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.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to executive session to resume consideration of the following nomination, which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of David Cleveland Joseph, of Louisiana, to be United