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Senate

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:

Eternal God, You have taken care of us in the years that have gone. We honor You for Your glory and strength. May we place our hope in You and never forget that You can also sustain us in the future.

Today, give our Senators the wisdom to trust You in the small things, realizing that faithfulness with the least prepares them for fidelity with the much. As they seek to be stewards of Your justice, mercy, and grace, use them to fulfill Your purposes. Lord, given them a love for Your wisdom and a passion to be guided by your precepts.

We pray in Your Holy 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.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. LOEFFLER). The Senator from Iowa.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

FREE TRADE AGREEMENT

Mr. GRASSLEY. Madam President, now that the United Kingdom has separated from the European Union, it is our opportunity to sit down with the United Kingdom and do some business. Therefore, I am pleased that the United States and the United Kingdom are making strides in our negotiations to complete a free trade agreement.

Our two countries, as you know, have a centuries-old relationship. That relationship will be further strengthened by a comprehensive deal that presents economic opportunities for our farmers, our manufacturers, and our service providers to the benefit of both sides of the Atlantic.

I will continue to insist that an agreement reached between our two countries will allow us to reach our full potential as trading partners, particularly when it comes to agricultural trade.

The United Kingdom has been subject to very restrictive European Union rules that have no scientific basis. We call those sanitary and phytosanitary rules.

I urge the administration to work with the United Kingdom negotiators to achieve greater marketing access for U.S. farmers. In other words, I am tired of the EU restrictions that we have had over the last couple of decades on our GMO grains.

I yield the floor.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader is recognized.

CORONAVIRUS

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, when the Senate passed the CARES Act back in March, we were trying to prepare the Nation for economic paralysis and the medical battle of the century at the very same time. Hospitals, healthcare providers, small businesses, and working families needed help fast, and the Senate stepped up in historic fashion.

For months, our legislation has helped cushion the pain of this crisis from coast to coast, but our Nation is not finished with this fight. More Americans are dying every day. Millions and millions are unemployed. And

the institutions of American life cannot stay totally shut down until our race for a vaccine hits the finish line.

Our Nation needs to smartly and safely reopen while keeping up the medical battle. We need to get kids safely back to school and adults safely back to work without losing ground in the healthcare fight.

The coronavirus does not care that we are divided. The coronavirus will not care if Washington Democrats decide it suits their partisan goals to let relief run dry. The American people are hurting, and Congress should have their backs.

On Monday, I laid down a marker to shape the bipartisan conversations that need to happen now—not a loony, ideological fantasy like the House Democrats bill from a few months ago, which would have cut taxes for rich people, raised taxes on small business, and provided no additional round for the Paycheck Protection Program. No, serious talks actually require a serious starting point.

That is why we wrote a serious bill containing largely bipartisan policies. It has another round of cash for households—more than \$3,000 for an eligible family of four, with even more support for adult dependents; another round of additional Federal unemployment benefits assistance, which would otherwise simply expire; and another targeted round of the Paycheck Protection Program to prevent even more layoffs and keep paychecks coming to American workers. It has powerful new incentives to jump-start rehiring, bring down unemployment, and create safe workplaces for workers and customers. It has more support for hospitals and health providers; more support for testing, PPE, and diagnostics; and more resources for the sprint toward a vaccine. It has historic support for schools to reopen—a higher dollar amount than House Democrats managed to propose in their bill, which costs three times as much as ours.

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



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And—uniting all three pillars of kids, jobs, and healthcare—we have legal protection for medical workers, schools, nonprofits, and businesses so that well-connected trial lawyers can't get even richer off of stopping the recovery in its tracks.

This is a more-than-fair, more-than-bipartisan framework for Democrats to engage with. The only reason I can see that Speaker PELOSI and the Democratic leader would sabotage negotiations is if, as some concluded when they killed police reform in June, they actually think bipartisan progress for the country would hurt their own political chances. That is why I said a few days ago that we would quickly learn whether the American people would be getting the responsible Democratic Party from March or the cynical, obstructionist Democratic Party from June that blocked police reform. So let's review the early going.

Almost the instant we put out this proposal—which would send thousands of dollars in cash to families and even more cash to unemployed people—the Democratic leader proclaimed that “those Republican, hard-right money people . . . don't want the Federal Government to help anybody.”

A trillion dollar proposal for kids, jobs, and healthcare just proves Republicans don't want to help anyone.

Yesterday, after meeting with the administration, the Speaker of the House said this “isn't a negotiation.”

So here we go again. It is the script from police reform all over again.

We have had weeks of talk from Democrats about the urgency of the issue, weeks of Democrats thundering that people will be hurt if we don't act. But then, when it is time to actually make a law, Democrats would rather keep political issues alive than find a bipartisan way to resolve them.

Take the issue of additional Federal unemployment insurance. For weeks now, it has been clear to a majority of Americans that we should not pay people more to stay home than we pay people who continue working.

Should we have generous unemployment insurance in this crisis? Of course. Republicans want to continue the Federal supplement at eight times the level that Democrats themselves put in place during the last recession.

But, obviously, we should not be taxing the essential workers who have kept working so the government can pay their neighbors a higher salary to stay home.

Let me say that again. We should not be taxing the essential workers who have kept working so the government can pay their neighbors a higher salary to stay home.

Until about 5 minutes ago, this was not a controversial opinion. Democrats shared it with us. The House Democrat majority leader said yesterday: “That's an argument that . . . has some validity to it. . . . It's not \$600 or bust.”

A few days earlier, our Democratic colleague Senator COONS said he

thought we would be “finding some path forward” with a different dollar figure.

The day before yesterday, our colleague Senator CARDIN said: “What is the right number? Well, we certainly understand we don't want someone to have higher benefits than what someone can make working.”

At the State level, the Democratic Governor of Connecticut agrees. This is what he said: “I think sometimes it discourages work. . . . I would put off this extra \$600 true-up they're talking about. . . . I don't think we need that.”

That is the Democratic Governor of Connecticut.

Like I said, it is not controversial. The Congressional Budget Office says that five out of six recipients of this aid—83 percent—receive more to stay home than they made on the job.

Let me say that one more time. The Congressional Budget Office says that five out of six recipients of this aid—83 percent—receive more to stay home than they made on the job. We all know that is not fair, and it is not workable in a reopening job market. We have already heard from small business owners who had trouble reopening because it would be financially irrational for their employees to come back.

This is why Republicans propose to continue providing Federal aid—continue providing hundreds of dollars per week—but do it in a more targeted way while providing even more incentives for rehiring.

But now the Speaker of the House apparently signals she rejects this bipartisan consensus and will not let a package go forward unless we continue paying people more not to work. That is apparently the Speaker's position—that she will not let a package go forward unless we continue paying people more not to work. That is what Speaker PELOSI apparently signaled yesterday: No money for schools, no money for households, no second round of the PPP, no more money for hospitals or testing, nothing at all unless we continue to pay people more not to work.

If the Democrats don't get to continue taxing essential workers to pay other people more to stay home, then nobody gets a dime.

To put it gently, that is a completely unhinged position. Sixty-two percent of Americans say that paying people extra to remain unemployed creates the wrong incentive. A Democratic Governor says he doesn't want that continuing. Her own deputy, the House Democratic majority leader, said yesterday that there should be room to negotiate.

But Speaker PELOSI is literally moving the goalposts so fast that even Democrats can't keep up, and now she apparently feels that any rescue package will have to be to the political left of her own Democratic majority leader, to the political left of the Democratic Governor of Connecticut or she will not even consider it. She will just refuse to

legislate until the election and wish the American families good luck in dealing with the pandemic.

These are not the positions of people who are putting the common good above politics. These are not the positions of people who actually want to reach an agreement to save Federal unemployment insurance from completely expiring.

The American people deserve better than this. The American people cannot afford for Democrats in Congress to have decided in June that they are finished legislating until November—not during a crisis like this. The country needs help. The country needs action. If Democratic leaders decide they will not negotiate, they will answer to the American people.

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 Derek Kan, of California, to be Deputy Director of the Office of Management and Budget.

Mr. McCONNELL. Madam President, 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 Democratic leader is recognized.

CORONAVIRUS

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, over the past 3 months, as Americans stayed home and forfeited their routines and their livelihoods to combat the spread of the virus, as essential workers risked their safety and their families' safety, as 50 million Americans filed unemployment claims, as small businesses folded, and as the disease spread rapidly through the summer, the Republican majority paused on addressing COVID-19 while it confirmed more rightwing judges. Americans pitched in and sacrificed, and many suffered greatly while the Senate Republicans kept their assembly line