

themselves to be used by child traffickers and predators, Congress passed a law to hold these and other sites responsible for enabling child sex trafficking.

As the previous chairman of the Senate Commerce Committee and current chairman of the Commerce Subcommittee on Communications, Technology, Innovation, and the Internet, I have been focusing on internet issues related to user-generated content sites for the past couple of years. I have chaired several hearings on the topic, including a hearing on terrorist content on sites like Twitter and Facebook and a hearing on the opaque algorithms that these sites use to filter the content that users see.

At the end of June, Senator SCHATZ and I introduced legislation, the Platform Accountability and Consumer Transparency Act, or the PACT Act, to address some of the issues surrounding section 230 and user-generated content sites.

Our bill would preserve the benefits of section 230, like the internet growth and widespread dissemination of free speech it has enabled, while increasing accountability and consumer transparency. One reason section 230 has become so controversial is that internet platforms have cultivated the notion that they are merely providing the technology for people to communicate and share their thoughts and ideas.

But the reality is somewhat different. The truth is that websites have a strong incentive to exercise control over the content each of us sees, because if they can present us with content that will keep us engaged, we will stay on that site longer. Today, sites like Facebook and Twitter make use of sophisticated content moderation tool, algorithms, and recommendation engines to shape the content we see on these platforms.

Moderation can certainly improve the user experience. Most of us would prefer that YouTube suggest videos that match our interest rather than something completely unrelated. The problem is that content moderation has been and largely continues to be a black box, with consumers having little or no idea how the information they see has been shaped by the sites they are visiting. The PACT Act would address this problem by increasing transparency around the content moderation process.

It would require internet platforms like Facebook and Twitter to submit quarterly reports to the Federal Trade Commission outlining the material they have removed from their sites or chosen to deemphasize—for example, posts they have chosen to mostly exclude from users' feeds.

Sites would also be required to provide an easily digestible disclosure of their content moderation practices for users and, importantly, they would be required to explain their decisions to remove material to consumers. Until relatively recently, sites like Facebook

and Twitter would remove a user's post without explanation and without an appeals process. Even as platforms start to shape up their act with regard to transparency and due process, it is still hard for users to get good information about how content is moderated.

Under the PACT Act, if a site chooses to remove your post, it has to tell you why it decided to remove your post and explain how your post violated the site's terms of use. The PACT Act would also require sites to create an appeals process, so that if Facebook removes one of your posts, it would not only have to tell you why, but it would have to tell you a way to appeal that decision. To some extent, some platforms like Facebook are already starting to do this, but by no means are they all doing so.

The PACT Act would preserve companies' 230 protections for material posted on their sites, but it would require companies to remove material that has been adjudicated as illegal by a court. Large sites like Facebook and Twitter would be required to remove illegal content within 24 hours, while smaller sites would be given additional time. Failure to remove illegal material would result in the site's losing its 230 protections for that content or activity, a provision that matches a recent recommendation made by the Department of Justice for section 230 reform.

Finally, in addition to promoting transparency and accountability, the PACT Act also contains measures to strengthen the government's ability to protect consumers. As the Department of Justice has noted in its recommendations to reform section 230, broad section 230 immunity can pose challenges for Federal agencies in civil enforcement matters.

It is questionable whether section 230 was intended to allow companies to invoke section 230 immunity against the Federal Government acting to protect American consumers in the civil enforcement context. This contributes to the creation of a different set of rules for enforcing consumer protections against online companies, compared to those in the offline world.

I am grateful to Senator SCHATZ for his work on this bill, and I am proud of what we put together. We both have done a lot of work on these issues, and this bill is a serious bipartisan solution to some of the problems that have arisen around section 230. Our hearing yesterday, which included one of the original authors of the section 230 provision, former Representative Chris Cox, confirmed that the PACT Act would go a long way toward making our user-generated internet sites more accountable to consumers.

I look forward to working with Senator SCHATZ to advance our legislation in the Senate, and I hope that we will see a vote on our bill in the near future.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Illinois.

CORONAVIRUS

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, to date, America has lost nearly 150,000 people who have died with diseases related to coronavirus. We are quickly approaching 5 million cases of infections in the United States of America.

Consider this for a moment. The United States has 5 percent of the world's population. Yet we have almost 25 percent of all the COVID infections in the world. How did we reach this point that we have such a rampant rate of infection in what is considered one of the most developed nations on Earth?

Part of the problem is the President, who peddles worthless medical advice, and part of the problem is that the Republican Senate has been unwilling to face the economic hardships which have been created by this pandemic on our economy.

It was 10½ weeks ago that the House of Representatives, under Democratic control of Speaker PELOSI, passed the Heroes Act. That was 10½ weeks ago. They knew this day was coming—when the unemployment benefits that we put in the original legislation would expire, as they will this week, and the help for those who are renting to meet their obligations would expire, as it did last week. So 10½ weeks ago, Speaker PELOSI put on the table her proposal to deal with America after these things occurred.

Today, on the floor of the Senate, Senator MCCONNELL, the Republican leader, called her efforts “a looney ideological fantasy”—“a looney ideological fantasy.” The obvious question to Senator MCCONNELL, who is the leader of the majority here in the U.S. Senate, is, Where have you been for the last 10½ weeks? Where is the Republican alternative, the Republican substitute? Why have we not seen that come forward and a real negotiation take place between the House and the Senate?

For the longest time, Senator MCCONNELL told us that he just did not feel “a sense of urgency” to take up this matter. He did not feel a sense of urgency. Well, history was made in the Senate Chamber this last Monday, because Senator MCCONNELL came to the floor and used the word “urgent.” Finally, urgency is stirring in his loins, and he announced this week a Republican alternative—but not quite. What he announced was a series of bills to be introduced by the Republican side—a series of bills. We are just days away from the situation where these issues are expiring, such as unemployment assistance, and yet, in this circumstance, we are dealing with the problem where we do not have alternatives from the Republican side. Well, we have some. One was addressed this morning, when it came to unemployment assistance.

Understand what happened last March 26 when we passed the CARES Act. This bill passed 96 to nothing in the Senate Chamber—unanimous, bipartisan. But when we sat down to establish the amount of money to be

given to unemployed workers in America, we ran into a problem—one we didn't anticipate. The Secretary of Labor in the Trump administration, Secretary Scalia, came to us and sat down at the table and said: You have a lot of interesting formulas when it comes to unemployment compensation, but just remember the reality. The reality is that 50 different States have 50 different computer systems, some of which are very modern and up to speed and others which are ancient and not up to speed. When you start coming up with complex Federal formulas for sending money to unemployed workers in these States, you are going to run into 50 different reactions. And that is exactly what we faced.

So the alternative was simple. We either gave a flat-dollar amount in the unemployment benefit supplement or we just wondered what the States might do with any other formula. So the decision was made—with the White House, with the Republicans—for the \$600 a week Federal supplement to unemployment. There was argument on the floor that some workers may come out ahead if that happens. Well, undoubtedly that might be the case, because the Federal supplement was in addition to whatever a person qualified for in State unemployment, and each State has a different formula for State unemployment assistance, and each worker has a different work experience and salary experience. But we went forward, believing we needed to do something dramatic and significant for the economy and the first place to start was with unemployed workers. Economists will state that when you are facing a recession, when there is a lack of consumer demand, the first dollar you want to hand out as a government is to an unemployed worker. You know they are going to spend it. They have to spend it to pay the rent or the mortgage, to pay the utility bills, to put food on the table, clothes on the kids, and to pay for health insurance. So we put money into the economy, and it worked. We managed to slow the decline of the economy, even though we see more unemployment still coming around. It would have been much worse if we hadn't made this commitment and invested in unemployment benefits.

So now, with the expiration of this Federal unemployment benefit program on July 31, just a few days away, the question is, What will we replace it with?

Democrats proposed in the Heroes Act in the House that we extend the current program to the end of this year. That is certainly a direct way to deal with this and one that would provide continuing assistance to these families.

The Republicans have come up with a much different approach. What they suggested is that we take the \$600-a-week Federal supplement and reduce it to \$200 a week, and then by October 1, we require the States to implement a

program that would give the unemployed workers 70 percent of their last wage. They obviously ignored what Secretary Scalia told us just a few months ago, and that is that the States would run into a terrible challenge trying to meet this new Republican standard of 70 percent of your last paycheck. We were told we couldn't do that back in March.

Has the landscape changed so much when it comes to State computer systems? I doubt it. I doubt it very much. In Illinois we have a good system, but it has been dramatically overwhelmed by the Federal supplemental payment and the new pandemic unemployment insurance and other provisions that we passed in Washington. So to think that we could move to a new formula in Illinois while meeting our current obligations is very difficult in our State, which is more modern than some.

Having said that, though, Republicans have argued that if by October 1 you can't provide 70 percent by formula to the unemployed workers, I suppose they will go back to the \$200 a week.

So what is behind this? What is at the heart of this? Well, there are several things that I think need to be noted on the floor. Here is the assumption. Listen to this. You have heard it over and over, and we heard it again this morning—the assumption that has been made by the Republicans in their approach to unemployment insurance.

They assume that if people are receiving \$600 a week in a Federal supplement to unemployment, that they are going to refuse to go back to work, even when offered a job. They are making more money to stay home than they did on the job; at least, that is what has been repeated over and over again.

This morning, I would like to put in the RECORD an article from the Yale News. This Yale study, which was just released this week, says: The Yale study finds expanded jobless benefits did not reduce employment. This is exactly the opposite of what we have heard over and over again from the Republican side.

This report from Yale economists said as follows:

[It found] that workers receiving larger increases in unemployment benefits experienced very similar gains in employment by early May relative to workers with less-generous benefit increases. People with more generously expanded benefits also resumed working at a similar or slightly quicker rate than others did, according to the report.

The data do not show a relationship between benefit generosity and employment paths after the CARES Act, which could be due to the collapse of labor demand during the COVID-19 crisis.

Put in simple terms, there aren't that many jobs out there looking for workers, and as it turns out, some unemployed workers have gone back to work, even though they might make slightly less than they did under unemployment. Why? The reason is obvious. Unemployment is a temporary benefit. Unemployment may not be as good and

generous as what a person has in the workplace when you count the benefits that come with some jobs. Ultimately, many workers who are unemployed today want to get back to work.

We should not assume, as some politicians do, that if a person is unemployed, they must be lazy. With 30 million unemployed Americans, that is hardly the case, and certainly when it comes to whether or not people have the incentive to go back to work, I believe most Americans do want to work. The notion that we have to change the whole system for fear that some might not is definitely unfair.

Let me just say this, as we move forward with this. I see a colleague on the floor seeking recognition in a few minutes. As we move forward with this attempt to deal with the economy, we have to face the reality, and the reality is, as made clear by the Chairman of the Federal Reserve, that if we take our foot off the accelerator right now, we are going to plunge it over the cliff in a deeper economic mess than we are in today.

They are trying, by every means in monetary policy and the interest rates, to enliven this economy and create an environment where it may reopen soon. I hope that happens. But if we take the Republican approach, a little bit of this and a little bit of that, it is not going to work. We are going to find ourselves with a recession that is even worse.

And for those deficit hawks, how badly do you think our deficit will look if we face an even deeper recession? It is going to get worse and dramatically so. Shouldn't our first obligation be to the workers across America who have lost their jobs so they can keep their families together? This notion of cutting the Federal benefit from \$600 a week to \$200 a week, I can guarantee you, will mean much more traffic and activity at the food pantries around America as these unemployed families try to keep things together.

Then there is a proposal from the Republican side for a three-martini lunch Federal tax break. A three-martini lunch—is that the way out of our economic morass? And at the same time they are encouraging the three-martini lunch Federal tax break, they will not give any additional assistance to those who are receiving SNAP benefits—those low-income Americans who are needing some help just to feed their families. It seems that things are upside down.

The last point I will make is this. Senator MCCONNELL has said repeatedly for months: Nothing is going to happen in the Senate—nothing—to help anybody in America, unless he gets his wish to give immunity to American corporations from coronavirus lawsuits.

Finally, we get to see his proposal. It was released this week. I want to tell you, it is the most dramatic tort reform proposal I have seen since I have served in the U.S. Senate. It basically takes away the rights of workers, as

well as those who are customers of businesses, from recovering under a coronavirus lawsuit. It lowers the standard of care that is required of businesses to a level which basically will not protect Americans who face this pandemic across the country. At the same time, it is providing assistance and relief, it is, unfortunately, creating an environment where some businesses—some, unfortunately—will not be as careful as they should be in the way they conduct their businesses with customers and their employees. We know that we face a challenge here with this pandemic, but giving this kind of corporate break when it comes to immunity and liability only will make things more dangerous for customers and employees across the United States of America.

Let me say a word about what has been said on the floor over and over again by Senator CORNYN and Senator MCCONNELL—the so-called tsunami of lawsuits, the epidemic of frivolous lawsuits, the trial lawyers on parade to the courthouse because of this pandemic. Well, we have checked every lawsuit filed in the United States this year that mentions the word “coronavirus” or “COVID-19.” Do you know how many COVID medical malpractice cases have been filed so far this calendar year with this so-called tsunami of lawsuits? Six. Six. And how many consumer personal injury cases have been filed this year mentioning “COVID-19” or “coronavirus,” this epidemic, this flood of lawsuits? There are 15 across the entire United States of America. It is an imaginary problem that they are creating at this point. We can deal with it, and 28 States have already by changing their State laws, but giving immunity to corporations from coronavirus lawsuits will not make us safer, will not make the workplace safer for workers, or the business safer for customers.

If we are going to restore consumer confidence, everybody has to pull together. We ought to have standards established by the CDC based on public health and not politics. And businesses—conscientious businesses, I am sure, will follow those standards because they do care. Currently, we don't have these standards, and this effort will make it even less likely that we will.

Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Yale News article dated July 27, 2020 be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

[From the YaleNews, July 27, 2020]
YALE STUDY FINDS EXPANDED JOBLESS
BENEFITS DID NOT REDUCE EMPLOYMENT
(By Mike Cummings)

A new report by Yale economists finds no evidence that the enhanced jobless benefits Congress authorized in March in response to the COVID-19 pandemic reduced employment.

The report (PDF) ([https://tobin.yale.edu/sites/default/files/files/C-19%](https://tobin.yale.edu/sites/default/files/files/C-19%20Articles/) 20Articles/

CARES-UI identification vF(1).pdf) addresses concerns that the more generous unemployment benefits, which provide \$600 per week above state unemployment insurance payments, would disincentivize work.

The researchers assessed this claim using weekly data from Homebase (<https://joinhomebase.com/>), a company that provides scheduling and timesheet software to small businesses throughout the United States. The findings suggest that, in the aggregate, the expanded benefits neither encouraged layoffs during the pandemic's onset nor deterred people from returning to work once businesses began reopening.

The enhanced unemployment benefits were initiated under the CARES Act, a \$2.2 trillion economic stimulus package enacted on March 27 that attempted to ease the pandemic's severe economic consequences. The expanded benefits, which are set to expire July 31, provide a \$600 weekly payment in addition to any state unemployment insurance. The supplemental payment was designed to cover 100% of the average U.S. wage when combined with existing unemployment benefits. The generosity of an individual's unemployment benefits depends on several factors, including their earnings history and their state's schedule of benefits.

The report found that workers receiving larger increases in unemployment benefits experienced very similar gains in employment by early May relative to workers with less-generous benefit increases. People with more generously expanded benefits also resumed working at a similar or slightly quicker rate than others did, according to the report.

“The data do not show a relationship between benefit generosity and employment paths after the CARES Act, which could be due to the collapse of labor demand during the COVID-19 crisis,” said Joseph Altonji (<https://economics.yale.edu/people/faculty/joseph-altonji>), the Thomas DeWitt Cuyler Professor of Economics in the Faculty of Arts and Sciences, and a co-author of the report.

Critics argued that the expanded benefits, which exceeded many people's normal weekly wages, would incentivize businesses to lay off workers to cut costs and disincentivize recipients from returning to work. If the enhanced benefits had these effects, the researchers said, the data should show a significant drop in employment in the week after the CARES Act took effect; it should also show subsequent decreases in relative employment as workers with more generous unemployment benefits put off returning to work. The data did not yield results that support these predictions.

The researchers found no evidence that recipients of more generous benefits were less likely to return to work. They also found that workers who received larger increases in their unemployment benefits relative to their wages did not experience greater declines in employment after the CARES Act was enacted.

The Homebase data primarily covers small businesses that require time clocks for day-to-day operations. The majority are restaurants, bars, or retail operations. The workers represented in the dataset are hourly employees who earn relatively low wages. While the data does not represent the entire U.S. labor market, it captures a segment of it that has been disproportionately affected by the pandemic, the researchers noted.

The analysis controlled for the severity of the COVID-19 pandemic and for the various restrictions that states imposed on businesses during the public health crisis. The researchers tested their results against employment outcomes in the federal government's Current Population Survey, a more

representative sample of the labor market than the Homebase data, and obtained similar findings. But they stress that their results pertain to the current pandemic period of slack labor demand and do not speak directly to the effects of unemployment benefits on employment during normal times.

The report's other authors are Zara Contractor, Lucas Finamor, and Dana Scott (primary author), Ph.D. candidates in the Department of Economics; Ryan Haygood, a rising senior in Yale College and research assistant at the Tobin Center; Ilse Lindenlaub, assistant professor of economics; Costas Meghir (<https://economics.yale.edu/people/faculty/costas-meghir>), the Douglas A. Warner III Professor of Economics; Cormac O'Dea (<https://economics.yale.edu/people/faculty/cormac-odea>), assistant professor of economics; Liana Wang '20 B.A., an undergraduate research assistant; and Ebonya Washington (<https://economics.yale.edu/people/faculty/ebonyawashington>), the Samuel C. Park Jr. Professor of Economics.

The analysis, supported by Yale's Tobin Center for Economic Policy, comes as Congress debates whether to extend the expanded unemployment benefits. The full report is available on the Tobin Center's website ([https://tobin.yale.edu/sites/default/files/files/C-19%20Articles/CARES-UI identification—vF\(1\).pdf](https://tobin.yale.edu/sites/default/files/files/C-19%20Articles/CARES-UI%20identification-vF(1).pdf)).

Mr. DURBIN. I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SASSE). The Senator from Pennsylvania.

Mr. CASEY. Mr. President, I rise this morning to cover a couple of topics. One is on some comments on the legislation that I hope we are going to complete to provide relief to the Nation with regard to both the public health crisis and the jobs crisis, and then I will have two other sets of remarks in different parts of the RECORD, but let me start with what we are facing right now.

We know that it has been 4 months since the CARES Act, way back at the end of March, and we all expected, I think at that time, that that piece of legislation and the legislation prior thereto and subsequently would have an impact on Americans, we hoped, in a positive way. I think there is some evidence to indicate that the CARES Act had a positive impact. Obviously, it was not perfect legislation, but I don't think any of us thought that was the end of the road.

And then we saw, just 10 weeks ago, the Heroes Act pass the House of Representatives. So you have the CARES Act enacted into law and operative—and thank goodness for that—as well as several other pieces of legislation. But the Heroes Act only passed by the House and no action by the Senate in those intervening 10 weeks.

If you were on the majority side of the aisle, the Republican side, as Leader MCCONNELL has outlined, and you wanted to delay—wait to see the full impact of the CARES Act—there is an argument that some would make in that direction. I don't agree with it. But what I don't understand is why, even if you believe that you should wait, why would you not be preparing for the worst? Why would you not be preparing for the kind of outbreaks we have seen across the country when the

virus moved away from the Northeast, generally, to the South and Southwest, and then to the West even more so? Why would you not prepare at least an outline of legislation? Why would you not begin negotiations many, many weeks ago, as opposed to waiting until the last minute not just to respond to the overall problem—the worst public health challenge in a century—but also, in a particular way, why would you wait, as the majority did, until the very last minute on the issue of unemployment insurance when we know benefits are running out in a matter of hours, really, not even a few days now? So if that is your perspective that we should have waited, why wouldn't you prepare for the worst so that when the worst was hitting, or something comparable to that, you would have legislation ready to go?

The majority chose to delay, and I think, in a real sense, seemed to adopt the President's kind of virus denial that if you just don't talk about it or if you try to change the subject or, in the case of the majority, if you don't legislate about it or prepare—just prepare to legislate about it, it will somehow recede into the background, and we don't have to worry about it. Well, that delay and that denial has proved to be, I think, misguided, and I think that is being charitable.

So we are faced with a number of challenges at the same time as we face a public health and jobs crisis. I will start with nursing homes and long-term care and the very related issue of home- and community-based services.

We know that in long-term care settings, most of those settings being nursing homes, the Nation has endured more than 59,000 deaths. That number may have hit 60,000, but we know that it is more than 59,000 deaths. So more than 40 percent of all the deaths in the United States of America, which is now about to reach 151,000, I think, from what we saw this morning—more than 40 percent of those are in long-term care settings and most of them in nursing homes. This isn't theoretical to people out there. This isn't theoretical to families across my home State of Pennsylvania or a lot of other States where, in many States, 60 percent or more of all the deaths were in long-term care settings. The deaths are, of course, residents of those nursing homes, in addition to workers.

So when you combine resident deaths and worker deaths, you get more than 59,000. We have to ask ourselves as Americans: Is that just going to be acceptable? Are we going to stand here 3 months from now or 4 months or 6 months from now and say: Wow, it is really tragic, all these deaths, and another 59,000 people died in long-term care settings, mostly nursing homes? Is that the America we want? Is that the America we are going to settle for?

And, oh, I know, I can hear the argument: Oh, you know, it is a terrible virus. It is. It is a virus that hits the very old in disproportionately higher

numbers, and if you happen to be an older citizen and you have all kinds of chronic conditions or other health issues that might compromise your immune system or otherwise, you are especially susceptible.

So some would argue: Well, this is just going to happen. But we know exactly how to get the numbers down—the case numbers down and the death numbers. Is it perfect? No. Can we get the 59,000 to zero? Of course not. No one would argue that. But the idea that the United States of America, in addition to not responding effectively to the onset of the virus itself—I am just talking about a subset or a part of the tragedy, and that is the tragedy in our nursing homes, both for residents and their families and for workers and their families.

We know exactly what works, and I have a bill that would substantially reduce the deaths and the cases. What is it? Well, first of all, it is important to know the number—3768. That is the bill. I hope that my bill will be included wholly, or in substantial fashion, in the next bill. S. 3768, what does it do? It allocates \$20 billion.

Now, we have heard numbers that this next piece of legislation might hit \$1 trillion or more, and I think that is likely. We should ask ourselves: Can't we set aside \$20 billion of that, a fraction of that trillion dollar-plus or more bill that we will pass, we hope? Can't we set aside a fraction of that for older citizens and their families and the workers who take care of them? These are Americans who fought our wars. They worked in our factories. They built the strongest middle class the world has ever seen over the course of the last 75 or so years. These are people who were inventors and innovators. These are people who made America what it is today. They are our fathers and our mothers, our grandmothers and grandfathers. They gave us life and love. The least we could do is make an American effort to get the death numbers down and the case numbers down. Anyone who says we can't do that is defeatist and I think invoking an anti-American spirit. We know how to do this.

What will the \$20 billion go for? It is simple but could be profound in its impact.

No. 1, we know that one practice in a nursing home that reduces the number of cases of people contracting the virus and the death number is cohorting. What does that mean? Separating—separating those with the virus in the nursing home from those who don't have it. Nursing homes that did that were successful in getting their numbers down. They did it early, way back in early March—maybe even earlier in some cases—and it worked. It has been implemented in a number of States. But that has a cost to it. You might have to build out, and you might have to retrofit.

You also need extra dollars for personal protective equipment. There

should be no question that in the United States of America, every nursing home has every piece of personal protective equipment it needs. PPE is lifesaving—lifesaving for the resident to be guarded from contracting the virus and essential for the workers as well.

What else do we need the money for? If you have a problem in a nursing home with an outbreak, we ought to be able to surge expertise from other settings. That nursing home might need more doctors in that crisis or that outbreak. It might need more nurses or certified nurses assistants or other personnel. We should have the dollars at the State level to serve those professions. We also need more money for testing in nursing homes—vitally important.

I think families across the country expect us to directly address this. Unfortunately, the Republican bill proposed the other day does not do that, does not invest, as my bill would.

Here is a headline from just this week, July 24, in the New York Times. I will not read the story, but the headline is "FEMA Sends Faulty Protective Gear to Nursing Homes Battling Virus"—faulty protective gear. We are months into this, and we have FEMA sending faulty protective gear. Here are the first lines of the story:

Expired surgical masks. Isolation gowns that resemble oversize trash bags. Extra-small gloves that are all but useless for the typical health worker's hands.

It goes on and on. I don't have time to read it all today. But that article and so many other documented reports indicate that these facilities don't have the protective gear they need.

The second issue is unemployment insurance. We are told that the majority, in their proposal, wants to cut the \$600 per week down to \$200. Do the math—cutting it by \$400 a week. This is at a time when we are told that since February, the United States has lost 15 million jobs. My recollection is that in the great recession of around a decade ago—between the fall of 2008 and sometime in the spring of 2009, roughly—about half a million jobs were lost. We have already lost, basically, double that—15 million jobs. We were told: Oh, don't worry. April is going to be a bad month, and May and June are going to be a lot better. That unemployment rate is just going to roll down from there.

I was hoping that would be the case, but in Pennsylvania, in April, 1 million were unemployed. What was May? Fortunately, it went down—849,000. I expected June in our State to be a lot lower than 849,000. Maybe it would go down by 100,000 or 150,000; I hoped even more. But, unfortunately, it went from 849,000 to about 821,000—821,000 people out of work in Pennsylvania in the month of June.

We still have a jobs crisis that will endure for a good while yet and, therefore, an unemployment crisis. The worst time to cut those benefits, those extra benefits, would be right now.

I know we have heard the argument that if you continue this, you are creating a disincentive to work. That is what we are told. According to the Washington Center for Equitable Growth, in a report this month—just a couple of days ago—they found: “Lack of opportunities to work, not a disincentive to work, are keeping unemployment elevated.” That is what they found. They documented more than that statement would entail, but that is what they found in their research. They also found 23 percent fewer job openings in July of 2020 versus July of 2019. So there were fewer job openings.

The Bureau of Labor Statistics in the Department of Labor said that there are almost four unemployed in the United States for every job opening.

The third issue, State and local funding: The Republican proposal has nothing to help States and local governments. We know that State and local governments have to balance their budgets, so extra dollars can come only from one source—the Federal Government. State and local governments have had to spend more to protect their citizens with the onset of the virus, the COVID-19 disease, and the impact of the virus and the pandemic blew a hole in their budgets.

So what is going to happen? A State, whether it is a red State or blue State or whatever the political conditions—they are all the same when it comes to revenue loss. Here is what is going to happen, as sure as night follows day: They are going to have to cut education. So I would say to school districts: Get ready for cuts because if your State cannot balance its budget, there are going to be education cuts.

There will be cuts to healthcare, probably Medicaid in most instances, and there will be other cuts. Public transit—we were on a call last night with transit advocates from around Pennsylvania, and our side is asking for more help for transit. But you can go down a long list, whether it is education or healthcare or even public safety itself at the local level.

So we should do a lot more. We should be replicating or at least approximating what the House did when they allocated \$875 billion for State and local governments combined.

How about the Supplement Nutrition and Assistance Program? The majority has refused over and over again—categorically refused—to increase SNAP by the percentage that our side has argued for. I know it is a little easy in Washington to talk about hunger and food insecurity as some kind of distant issue because those of us who serve in this Chamber are not food insecure. We don't have to suffer the pain of hunger that many families are suffering. Many suffered food insecurity long before the pandemic, but many others—even middle-class families or people trying to get to the middle class—are suffering from food insecurity because of the virus and the economic downturn. Families, we know, are literally choos-

ing between the food they need for their families or paying the mortgage, choosing between the food they need—groceries—versus paying for their kids' medications.

The last issue in this part of my remarks is on Medicaid. We know that the Senate did the right thing in the Families First legislation way back in early March when it increased the matching dollars for Medicaid by 6.2 percent. Those matching dollars are vital for States to be able to pay for Medicaid and to be able to balance their budgets. The House bill, the Heroes Act, passed 10 weeks ago, I believe, set forth another increase of a higher amount—14 percent—for those matching dollars. I think that makes a lot of sense, especially when people are losing their jobs every day.

We just read a story in the New York Times last week, I think it was. More than 5 million people in the country have lost their health insurance because they lost their jobs or for other reasons. So a lot of those folks who are out of luck when it comes to healthcare itself are turning to Medicaid. We should increase the matching rate to 14 percent.

The Republican proposal has no additional dollars for Medicaid. I guess we should not be surprised because the White House budget proposals in the last several years—and I think supported in large measure by the Republican majority here in the Senate—have not only not wanted to increase dollars for Medicaid, but, in fact, the White House has proposed cuts of several hundred billion dollars to Medicaid over a 10-year timeframe several years in a row. Republicans in the Senate have said very little, if anything, against those kinds of proposals.

Let me just move to a separate set of remarks.

REMEMBERING JOHN LEWIS

Mr. President, I have some remarks about U.S. Representative John Lewis, whose casket just left in a hearse from the grounds of the Capitol this morning. It was moving to see the number of people who would stand in line for a long period of time in 97- or 99-degree heat to pass by his casket.

There is so much we could say about John Lewis. It is difficult to summarize or encapsulate or not repeat ourselves, but I think in so many ways John Lewis was courage personified. Very, very few Americans—other than those who served in combat itself or in other instances—could say that they have put themselves on the line as he did with his courage in the face of hatred and in the face of brutal beatings and otherwise.

John Lewis helped the United States in its ongoing work to form a more perfect union. There is so much more we could say about that. He was beaten on multiple occasions for standing up for civil rights and, of course, the right to vote itself. He did all of this—all of this—by practicing nonviolence. I don't know how he did that. I really don't. I

would like to be able to think that I could do that in the face of beatings, but I don't think I could. I really doubt that I could and that most people could. But he practiced nonviolence and thereby had a huge impact on the American people and American law.

He served 33 years here in the U.S. House of Representatives. He also served on the Atlanta City Council. When President Obama was bestowing the Medal of Freedom on John Lewis, he said that John Lewis was “the conscience of the U.S. Congress.” It was so well said.

I think, at a time like this, we are summoned by his enduring example. We are summoned by his heroic example to pass the voting rights bill, H.R. 4, which has been basically sitting here since December, when the House passed it. That is the best way to demonstrate our gratitude for John Lewis's contributions.

The fight against injustice must continue. We can't just say what a great man he was or what a great leader he was; we have to continue to be inspired by and act against injustice whether it is in housing or food insecurity or education or employment or healthcare or otherwise.

Martin Luther King said one time, “Until justice rolls down like waters and righteousness like a mighty stream.” John Lewis's life was in furtherance of that goal—to bring about a world where justice rolls down like waters and righteousness like a mighty stream.

I think John Lewis was a patriot in the broadest sense of the word. We know from the song “America the Beautiful,” that wonderful line, “O beautiful for patriot dream that sees beyond the years,” that the dream of a patriot, when they are fighting on a battlefield, is not just about the fight they are in; the dream of a patriot, of course, is about what happens after, that their sacrifice brings about a better world, a more secure country in the context of a war or a battle.

John Lewis also had the dream of a patriot, the dream of a better life for Americans, the dream of equal protection under the law, the dream of voting rights being protected. In the largest sense of the word, John Lewis was a patriot.

I am almost done. I know I might be overtime, and I know we have a colleague waiting. I will be brief. I apologize for going a little long.

We know that there has been a lot of debate about what happened when we had reports in the New York Times and other reports, in June, about the U.S. intelligence community learning that Russian intelligence had offered payments as high as \$100,000, transferred through a middleman, to kill U.S. servicemembers in Afghanistan.

I know that we don't have time to get into all the details of that today, but we know that the President has, I think, on the record, not said anything about this until maybe yesterday in an