

6800, the Heroes Act; that the bill be considered read a third time and passed, and the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Senator from Wisconsin.

Mr. JOHNSON. Madam President, reserving the right to object, I would like to first respond to the Senator from Oregon about the economic news: yes, on an annualized rate from the downturn in the second quarter, 9.5 percent. But again, I pointed out, respectfully, that economists are predicting a shrinkage of GDP 4.6 and 8 percent because we are in recovery.

The employment has dropped by 10.5 percent. We have already passed \$2.9 trillion. We haven't spent \$1.2 trillion of that at least. So we haven't spent \$1.2 trillion. Yet our Democratic colleagues want to pass a bill that costs \$3 trillion.

We are already \$26.5 trillion in debt by the end of this fiscal year. That would be approaching \$28 trillion. They want to pass a bill by unanimous consent for \$3 trillion when we haven't spent \$1.2 trillion of the \$2.9 trillion we have already passed. That massive amount would represent 27.5 percent of our economy, when economists are saying it will shrink by probably no more than 7 percent or 8 percent.

We don't need to authorize more money. What we need to do is help the American people who are unemployed. I know the minority leader called that stingy. The offer we are making—the \$200 flat payment—does not provide an incentive to stay unemployed. It replaces more than 100 percent of people's wages for 20 percent of the people currently unemployed—a 100-percent wage replacement for 20 percent. That is according to a study by the University of Chicago.

For the other 80 percent, it replaces up to 100 percent. What is stingy about that? Why do our Democratic colleagues want to propose continuing the \$600 per-week plus-up that is preventing people—incentivizing people not to reengage in the economy so that our economy can recover. It makes no sense.

Again, I will point out that the two-thirds option is the exact same amount that the House passed—the Democratic-controlled House passed in phase 2 of the COVID-19 relief packages for paid sick and family leave. So, again, we tried to tailor this to protect those American workers. We tried to tailor this based on what Democrats themselves have proposed and passed. Yet they would rather play politics. They would rather be cynical and object to my unanimous consent request because time is running out—I acknowledge that.

So we are responding, but as in so many other debates—whether it is gun control or immigration—it is their way or the highway. They simply will not

take yes for an answer. It is very unfortunate they are taking this position that they want to indebted our children for another \$3 trillion, and they will not say yes to a very reasonable proposal structured on things they proposed and passed in the past.

Madam President, It is very unfortunate, but I have to object to \$3 trillion of additional debt on our children.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The assistant Democratic leader.

Mr. CORNYN. Madam President—

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The assistant Democratic leader has been recognized.

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, I believe there are pending requests by several Members, and I don't want to try to preempt it.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Would the Senator yield the floor?

Mr. DURBIN. I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—S. 4019

Mr. CORNYN. Madam President, I thank the assistant Democratic leader.

We come back to the floor today, the Senator from Minnesota and I, to reoffer a unanimous consent request that Senator MARKEY, the Senator from Massachusetts, and I offered previously.

After the death of George Floyd and, unfortunately, similar incidents, it has become increasingly obvious that our country is in need of reconciliation—racial reconciliation and personal reconciliation.

One of the things we could do to honor the memory of George Floyd and to attempt to take one small step toward that reconciliation is to make Juneteenth a Federal holiday. We previously had offered this unanimous consent request, and my friend from Wisconsin has his reasons for objecting, but one of the major newspapers in my State said to me: Try again. So I am coming here to the floor to reoffer.

Juneteenth has been a holiday in Texas for 40 years because of the distinct Texas connection. Just to remind my colleagues, Juneteenth was the day when the Union Army Major General Gordon Ganger showed up in Galveston and told people who had previously been slaves that they were no longer slaves 2½ years after the Emancipation Proclamation.

I believe, in all sincerity, we need to remember our history because, you know what, we learn from our mistakes, and if we don't remember our history, we will not learn from our mistakes, and we will commit those mistakes over and over and over again.

The tragic and brutal killing of George Floyd earlier this year has shown a light on the injustices that still exist in our society. Now, for somebody who looks like me, my experiences have been much different from those of our friend TIM SCOTT, the Senator from South Carolina, or the experiences of a pastor whom I encountered

in Houston the other day at a roundtable that Sylvester Turner, the mayor of Houston, convened so that they could share with me their experiences.

This pastor, who was head of the local NAACP chapter, told me: I honor the police. I respect the police. I support the police. But my son, he is afraid of the police.

So, we clearly have a long way to go in treating all people the same, regardless of the color of their skin. And when the perception among some in the minority community is that they are being treated differently, that is a problem that we should all try to address together.

So one way we could attempt to make this small step toward that reconciliation and continue to remind ourselves on an annual basis of how far we have come but how far we still have to go would be to take up this bill, pass it, and get it to the President's desk without further delay.

At this point, before I ask for unanimous consent, I would yield to the Senator from Minnesota.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Minnesota.

Ms. SMITH. Madam President, I thank my colleague from Texas. I appreciate his leadership on this.

Juneteenth is among the oldest celebrations of emancipation and is certainly worthy of a Federal holiday. I want to read an op-ed from the Washington Post, written by the musician Usher, which I think eloquently sums up why it is not only important to honor this day as a Federal holiday, but it is also important to recognize it as a part of American history.

I ask unanimous consent to introduce the Washington Post op-ed in full into the RECORD.

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

[June 18, 2020]

USHER: WHY IT'S SO IMPORTANT THAT
JUNETEENTH BECOME A NATIONAL HOLIDAY
(By Usher Raymond IV)

Usher Raymond IV is a musician, actor and entrepreneur.

At the 2015 Essence Music Festival in New Orleans, I wore a T-shirt that caught a lot of people's attention. The design was simple. The words "July Fourth" were crossed out and under them, one word was written: "Juneteenth." I wore the shirt because, for many years, I celebrated the Fourth of July without a true understanding that the date of independence for our people, black people, is actually June 19, 1865: the day that the news of the Emancipation Proclamation finally reached some of the last people in America still held in bondage.

I have no issue with celebrating America's independence on July 4. For me, wearing the shirt was an opportunity to inform others who may not necessarily know the history of black people in America, and who are not aware that Juneteenth is our authentic day of self-determination. It is ours to honor the legacy of our ancestors, ours to celebrate and ours to remember where we once were as a people. And it should be a national holiday, observed by all Americans.

Growing up in Chattanooga, Tenn., I was taught in school one version of U.S. history

that frequently excluded the history of my family and my community. The black history I learned came from the "Eyes On the Prize" documentary that aired during Black History Month. That was where I learned about Emmett Till, Rosa Parks and the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. When I moved to Atlanta at age 13, I went deeper and discovered more about the movement, the horrors of slavery and the resilience of our people. I came to understand Juneteenth's history a decade ago during a period of reflection and in pursuit of any ancestral history that would tell me who I am.

The liberation Juneteenth commemorates is cause for celebration, but it also reminds us how equality can be delayed. On June 19, 1865, on the shores of Galveston, Tex., Union Gen. Gordon Granger arrived by boat to announce to enslaved African Americans that the Civil War had ended and they were now free. While President Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation was issued two and a half years prior, and the Civil War had ended in April of that year, it wasn't until June 19, 1865, that almost all of our ancestors were free. We should honor their lives and celebrate that day of freedom forever.

I cherish the words of Nina Simone. I respect the legacy of Harry Belafonte and the unapologetic blackness of James Brown. I admire the entrepreneurship of Madam C.J. Walker. I have learned from my elders. Their wisdom has taught me to use my voice to support my people, so many of whom are hurting right now. Making sure that our history is told is critical to supporting and sustaining our growth as a people. The least we deserve is to have this essential moment included in the broader American story.

I am humbled by the platform that has been given to me because of my musical talents, but I know I must do more with it. As an artist, it is my duty to reflect the trying times in which we live. My heart is shattered by the ongoing injustices in this country, incited by its long history of racism that has led to deadly outcomes for too many of our people. This country must change.

And it must change quickly.

Recognizing Juneteenth as a national holiday would be a small gesture compared with the greater social needs of black people in America. But it can remind us of our journey toward freedom, and the work America still has to do.

We could observe it, as many black Americans already do, by celebrating both our first step toward freedom as black people in America and also the many contributions to this land: the construction of Black Wall Street; the invention of jazz, rock n' roll, hip-hop and R&B; and all the entrepreneurship and business brilliance, extraordinary cuisine, sports excellence, political power and global cultural influence black Americans have given the world.

And rather than observing Juneteenth as we do other holidays, by taking it off, we can make it a day when black culture, black entrepreneurship and black business get our support. A national Juneteenth observance can affirm that Black Lives Matter!

What changes do you hope will come out of protests and debates about police and race? Write to us.

I proudly join the incredible people and organizations who have been working on this for years, among them the inspiring Opal Lee, a 93-year-old from Fort Worth, Tex., who has campaigned for the recognition of Juneteenth at the state and local level. There has never been a more urgent time than now to get this done. On Thursday, Sens. Tina Smith (D-Minn.), Edward J. Markey (D-Mass.), Sen. Kamala D. Harris (D-Calif.) and Cory Booker (D-N.J.) announced that they are introducing legislation to

make Juneteenth a federal holiday. Congress must pass this bill immediately.

As we celebrate today, let's stay open to possibility. Let's support black-owned businesses today and every day. Let's uplift our resilient history. Let's honor our people. Happy Juneteenth, America.

Ms. SMITH. Usher wrote:

The liberation Juneteenth commemorates is cause for celebration, but it also reminds us of how equality can be delayed. On June 19, 1865, on the shores of Galveston, Tex., Union Gen. Gordon Granger arrived by boat to announce to enslaved African Americans that the Civil War had ended and they were now free. While President Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation was issued two and a half years prior, and the Civil War had ended in April of that year, it wasn't until June 19, 1865, that almost all of our ancestors were free. We should honor their lives and celebrate that day of freedom forever.

Usher continues:

Recognizing Juneteenth as a national holiday would be a small gesture compared to the greater social needs of black people in America. But it can remind us of our journey toward freedom, and the work America still has to do.

We could observe it, as many black Americans already do, by celebrating both our first step toward freedom as black people in America and also the many contributions to this land.

So thank you to my colleague from Texas. I am glad to stand with him in making Juneteenth a Federal holiday.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. YOUNG). The Senator from Texas.

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, as in legislative session, I ask unanimous consent that the Judiciary Committee be discharged from further consideration and the Senate now proceed to S. 4019; further, that the bill be considered read a third time and passed; and that the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Senator from Wisconsin.

Mr. JOHNSON. Mr. President, reserving the right to object, let me first state and make perfectly clear that I think the emancipation of slaves is a day worth celebrating. I have no argument whatsoever with the fact that we should probably celebrate it better than we have in the past. But there are other ways of celebrating it—a resolution in the Senate creating a national day of celebration without declaring it a national holiday.

The effect of declaring it a national holiday is primarily one thing: It gives Federal workers a paid day off. Now, Federal workers are compensated quite well, and I want to quickly go through this again, as we did last week. I have some charts up here.

If you take a look at just their wage, Federal workers, on average, make about a little over \$94,000 per year. In the private sector, the average wage is \$63,000, which is 67 percent of what Federal workers make. If you also include benefits—total compensation—Federal workers make, on average, about \$135,000, almost \$136,000 per year. In the private sector, it is about \$75,000, which

is 55 percent of what Federal workers make.

So if you strip out only the benefits, which is what we are talking about with holiday pay and paid family leave and other things, Federal workers, on average, get compensated about \$41,000 annually, versus the private sector's \$12,000, which is only 29 percent of what Federal workers make.

What we are talking about is a paid day off. Now, take a look at what Federal workers get in terms of the number of days off with pay. It is quite generous, particularly after last year's National Defense Authorization Act, in which we added paid parental leave.

I have two charts here. Here is one: If a Federal worker gets paid parental leave—and I realize that only happens a few times during somebody's lifetime—but Federal workers get 10 paid holidays. That is probably the max anybody gets in the private sector. In terms of paid leave, minimum, they get 13 days off; maximum, they get 26; and by the way, 26 is more than 5 weeks off with pay—basically paid vacation. They get 4 weeks after only 3 years. That is virtually unheard of in the private sector—very generous paid vacation in the Federal workforce. Then, with paid parental leave, they get 60 days off maximum.

So, a Federal worker taking advantage of paid parental leave will get 96 to 109 days off or, put a different way, for every 1.4 days a Federal worker works, they get a day off.

Now, let's strip out paid parental leave. Let's look at people who aren't having a child or adopting a child—again, same basic numbers: 10 paid holidays, 13 to 26 paid leave days, 13 sick days, for a total of anywhere from 36 to 49 days of leave that is paid. For a more senior worker, for every 4.3 days they work, they get a day off, which is basically a 4-day workweek. By the way, if they don't take the paid leave days, they can carry them over.

So, again, the private sector benefits aren't even close to this generous. I am not objecting to celebrating Juneteenth. What I am objecting to is the rest of America paying for another paid day off for Federal workers. By the way, it costs about \$600 million per year. The CBO score is over 10 years; that is \$6 billion. The sponsors of this bill want to just go ahead and incur that additional cost on the American economy and American taxpayers without a vote. They can't do it just by unanimous consent, which is really what I am objecting to in this process here.

So, again, I have a different proposal. We could either declare it a national day of celebration. That would be fine. Or we can go ahead and declare it and make it a national holiday, but if we are going to do that, let's just take one of their paid days away. They come out whole.

Last week, I was accused of taking something away from Federal workers. Not really—I am still leaving them

with the same 36 to 49 or 96 to 109 days off. I am just saying that it strikes me as kind of strange that the only way we can properly celebrate Juneteenth is by giving Federal workers a paid day off, paid by every other American taxpayer, to the tune of \$600 million a year.

So, again, what I would recommend is that modification: Declare Juneteenth a national paid holiday but remove one of their paid sick leaves. So I ask the Senator to modify his request to include my amendment at the desk; that the amendment be considered and agreed to; that the bill, as amended, be considered and read a third time and passed; and that the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Does the Senator so modify his proposal?

The Senator from Minnesota.

Ms. SMITH. Mr. President, reserving the right to object, it is notable to me that we are gathered here today, while in Atlanta we are celebrating the life of JOHN LEWIS. In this moment, I think it is worth remembering that when Congress was debating whether to make a Federal holiday honoring Martin Luther King, Jr.—Dr. King, in the 1980s—people made this same kind of argument about its potential cost. Ronald Reagan made this argument. But President Reagan came around, and he signed into law this bill, and now that holiday is celebrated nationwide as a day of reflection and rededication to progress toward racial justice. Just as the civil rights movement is honored as an important milestone in the history of this country, so should be emancipation.

Just as the argument that it is too expensive to give Federal employees a day off was wrong regarding Martin Luther King Day, it is wrong for Juneteenth. And just as Ronald Reagan got on the right side of history, I think that we will get on the right side of history, and we will finally have a full holiday to commemorate Juneteenth, not as a holiday with an asterisk, not as a half holiday, but as a full holiday; therefore, I object to this modification.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

Is there objection to the original request?

The Senator from Wisconsin.

Mr. JOHNSON. I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Illinois.

HEALS ACT

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, if you want to know what is wrong with Washington, take a snapshot of this day. Take a snapshot of where we stand at this moment.

In the midst of the worst health crisis in American history in 100 years and in the midst of the worst economic setback in 75 years, we have reached the point in the U.S. Senate where we are going to adjourn until next week,

leaving in doubt whether 30 million unemployed Americans will continue to receive support from the Federal Government. How have we reached this point?

Well, in anticipation of this moment, 10 weeks ago, the House of Representatives passed a rescue package that not only addressed unemployment benefits but a score of other major concerns we have at this moment in our history and at this moment in our economy—10 weeks ago.

Since then, the burden has been on the Republican leader in the U.S. Senate, Senator MCCONNELL, of Kentucky, to pick up the challenge and to produce his own approach, whatever it may be, representing his caucus—the Republican caucus—on what to do with the economy and what to do with the pandemic. We stand today, preparing to leave for 3 or 4 days, with nothing—nothing.

The situation is so bad that an individual Republican Senator decided to come to the floor and see if he could fix it. I disagree with his approach completely, but I respect the fact that he is as frustrated as we all are waiting on Senator MCCONNELL to come forward.

Here is the reality of what we face and the reality that Senator MCCONNELL should face. Any solution coming out of the Senate needs to be bipartisan. Democrats and Republicans need to agree, and we did on March 26. The vote was 96 to nothing for the CARES Act—96 to nothing. I went home to Illinois and people would come up to me and say: I can't believe you did that. I didn't think you agreed on anything in Washington, but you all agreed on one thing, the most significant economic rescue package in the history of the United States.

Well, we were challenged to do it again, and we have failed miserably in the Senate. Under the current leadership with a Republican majority, they cannot produce a bill to bring to conference or at least to a conference table between the House and the Senate.

I would like to address directly some of the arguments being made. Here is one that you have heard over and over. I think it is an urban legend, and I want to say a word about it. Here is how it goes: \$600 a week? At \$600 a week, at that level, individuals will not even take a job. They will sit home on the couch and watch another round of Netflix, bingeing, and they will not even want to go back to work. How many times have you heard that \$600 is just too much money? I can tell you that \$600 is the equivalent of \$15 an hour, which many of us believe is at least a minimum living wage. It is certainly not a luxury salary for anyone. If you have lost your job, that \$600 Federal check, together with whatever the State sends your way, has to pay for a lot of things: rent, mortgage, car payments, utilities—did I mention health insurance?—food, clothing for the kids, the debts you have already incurred

leading into this, and your credit cards. All of a sudden, \$600 a week tends to evaporate.

What if you had health insurance where you worked, and they laid you off or fired you and said it was over, that they are closing down? If you tried to pick up the employer's share of your health insurance, the average cost is \$1,700 a month. So \$600 a week, \$2,400 a month, and \$1,700 of it is just going to keep the health insurance you had on the job?

Then there is this abiding notion that people who are unemployed just aren't trying hard enough to get a job. They say: You know, the jobs are out there, and these folks are just saying: I would rather not.

Let's take a look at the facts, and here are the facts. For every job that is available in America today, there are four unemployed people. So it isn't as if it is the other way around, one job for every four unemployed people. It is four unemployed people for each job that is available.

And to the argument by some employers that, well, I just can't get them to come back to work, it turns out that employers are filling jobs faster now than at any time. There are people prepared to go back to work. I happen to believe that many of these people see returning to work as the right thing to do for them economically. Unemployment cannot last forever; they know that. Secondly, it may not be meeting their needs, as their family requires of them. Third, the job itself may be something they had invested part of their life into and want to continue. Fourth, there may be benefits in that workplace that aren't available, even through the unemployment system available today. So I reject the notion—this urban legend—that \$600 a week is so much that people are turning down the opportunity to go back to work. It is not an urban legend; it is an urban lie.

Yale University just came out with a report from their economics department this week. I put it into the RECORD yesterday. You can find it, if you wish. It proves the point I just made. They looked at the statistics. This is just not a viable complaint against the unemployment system.

What Senator MCCONNELL has led us to is this moment, where, when we return next week, there will be no Federal unemployment benefit—none. It will have expired. What do we say to these millions of family members who are struggling at this moment? Try harder. Go take anything. That is what the future is for you.

I don't believe that. I think we are a better nation than that.

Facing the worst public health crisis that we have seen in a century, realizing what it has done to each and every one of our lives and families, understanding how devastating it must be to lose a job in the midst of this, that sometimes people for the first time aren't working, realizing how desperate