

Chicago Public Schools have done an incredible job providing 18 million meals since March. We need to ensure the U.S. Department of Agriculture provides the range of alternative options needed to make sure that no kid in America goes hungry.

Schools in Chicago and around our State don't need any more tweets or self-congratulatory briefings, Mr. President. They need Federal resources and guidance based on the best science our government has to offer. That is why I am fighting for this relief package to be at a level to meet the challenge we face across America.

#### CORONAVIRUS

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, let me close by saying this. The majority leader comes to the floor regularly and talks about special interests. Perhaps he can explain to us why the Republican proposal for relief for the COVID-19 virus includes a \$2 billion allocation for a new FBI building across the street from the Trump hotel. Perhaps he can explain the \$30 billion wish list from the Department of Defense, trying to make up for cuts that were made when the President raided their accounts to build his almighty wall in the southern border. Perhaps the majority leader can explain to us the liability immunity which is being proposed by the Republican side as a "redline, take it or leave it, we will walk away if you don't like it" approach.

It would be one thing if the Republican leader were in the room, actually negotiating, but he just makes a redline and walks away. That redline is a subsidy to the largest corporations in America, giving them liability immunity when it comes to possible court suits.

Wouldn't we want a standard to make sure that all businesses and every individual or group or business is doing its best to keep America safe? When we say, don't worry about any liability in court if you ignore the public health reality, that is no guarantee that it is going to be a safe environment for America when we reopen this economy.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from South Dakota.

#### CORONAVIRUS

Mr. THUNE. Madam President, last week Senate Republicans did introduce a new coronavirus relief bill called the Health, Economic Assistance, Liability Protection, and Schools Act. This bill is a \$1 trillion piece of legislation focused on getting Americans back to work, getting kids and college students back to school, and providing healthcare resources to help defeat the virus. As the title says—the Health, Economic Assistance, Liability Protection, and Schools Act—it does have liability protections in there.

I just listened to the Senator from Illinois attack the idea of including

those types of protections in the legislation, but I think it is really important to point out that those type of protections are critical if we are going to get the economy reopened again.

Businesses that are doing all the right things—following the CDC guidelines, adhering to all the laws, all the guidelines and restrictions that are out there—shouldn't have to worry about lawyering up and spending thousands and, in some cases, millions of dollars to try and defend themselves against frivolous lawsuits, which are being filed as we speak by the thousands.

The implication given by the Senator from Illinois that somehow this is all about big corporations or big businesses is just not consistent with the facts on the ground. In fact, I had a conversation 2 days ago with the school administrators in my State of South Dakota, all of whom are very interested in getting their schools opened up and getting kids back in school, which, again, is one of the priorities of our legislation and should be, I think, one of the priorities of the country as we head into the fall.

One of their big issues was ensuring that they had protections against liability—a liability shield, if you will, not against gross negligence, not against intentional misconduct—those types of things would not be covered—but protections if, in fact, they are doing all the right things, consistent with the guidelines, following the rules that have been put in place, that they should have at least some protections.

That is going to be true not just of schools and small businesses, but it is also going to be true of healthcare providers. We have people on the frontlines who are sacrificing every day to try and get people better, to heal those who have contracted the virus, and also protect those who are on the frontlines from getting it. They, too, are going to need those very types of protections that are called for in our legislation.

So this is not something that was put in there on a whim just because we knew that the Democrats wouldn't like it. It was put in there because of feedback we received from States, local governments, school districts, healthcare providers, hospitals, nursing homes, and, yes, some small businesses, all of whom are going to be essential if we are going to get the economy up and going again and get people back to work, kids back to school, and Americans back on their feet.

So it is an essential part of the legislation, one which, so far, the Democrats have demonstrated no interest in including and, frankly, no interest in even having a conversation about, which is unfortunate because it is a critical element, feature, of any bill that we should be working on right now to provide coronavirus relief.

When we introduced this bill, we knew this version wouldn't be the final draft. I think everybody conceded that. We knew we would need to negotiate

with our Democratic colleagues just like we did with the CARES Act, which was our largest coronavirus relief bill, back in March.

Back in March, the model that was used was having committee chairmen and ranking members get together in compromise and work out differences and end up with a strong, bipartisan bill. Was it a perfect bill? Well, no, of course not. No bill is. Did everyone get everything that he or she wanted? No, but it was a strong, bipartisan bill that was praised by Democrats and Republicans alike—in fact, reflected by the unanimous vote.

I would like to say that we are engaging in those same types of negotiations right now, but unfortunately I can't say that. I can't say, in fact, what is happening right now is even negotiations. Negotiations involve both sides being willing to give something up to compromise and to try and move toward a solution. While Republicans are willing to make compromises to ensure that we can deliver another coronavirus relief bill to the American people, Democrats apparently aren't willing to make any.

Back in May, House Democrats proposed and passed a massive \$3.4 trillion piece of legislation that they called a coronavirus relief bill. Subsequently, it has been endorsed by Senate Democrats who have gone so far as to offer up unanimous consent requests here on the Senate floor to adopt the House-passed bill. In reality, that House-passed bill, \$3.4 trillion bill, was a lengthy liberal wish list which even Members of the Democrats' own party dismissed as dead on arrival. In fact, Democrats had some work to do to persuade Members of their own caucus in the House to vote for the bill.

As POLITICO put it at the time: "As of late Thursday evening, the House Democratic leadership was engaged in what a few senior aides and lawmakers described as the most difficult arm-twisting of the entire Congress: convincing their rank and file to vote for a \$3 trillion stimulus bill that will never become law."

That is from POLITICO. The House bill includes various "coronavirus priorities" like funding for diversity and inclusion studies in the marijuana industry, tax cuts for blue-State millionaires, federalizing elections. Those are just a few of the items that were included in the House-passed bill that it is very hard to argue have anything to do with defeating the coronavirus. In fact, the House bill mentions the word "cannabis" more often than it mentions the word "job," which tells you all you need to know about the seriousness of that proposal.

Despite all that, Democratic leaders have taken the House bill as their starting and, yes, their ending point for negotiations. They are insisting that Republicans sign off on pretty much everything in their bill, from the tax cuts for wealthy Americans to major changes in election law. And

they are not budging on the pricetag either.

As I said, Republicans have proposed a \$1 trillion piece of legislation, and I can tell you—from being a Member of the Republican conference and the discussions that we have—what a stretch it is for a lot of Republicans, who already have voted for multiple coronavirus relief bills to the pricetag of about \$3 trillion so far, to do another trillion dollars, knowing that every one of those dollars is a borrowed dollar, every one of those dollars is going on a Federal debt which is already upward of \$25 billion and will ultimately have to be paid back by our children and grandchildren.

Well, that said, the trillion-dollar legislation that was put forward by Republicans is nowhere close to the pricetag for the Democrats' bill, which is \$3.4 trillion, as I said. Now, I think even an elementary school student would realize that compromise lies somewhere between those two numbers, more than, perhaps, the Republicans' bill and less than the Democrats' bill, but apparently that is not something Democrats are willing to entertain.

A senior correspondent for CNN talked to Speaker PELOSI yesterday, who claimed she wanted to reach agreement on a bill this week. The correspondent asked the Speaker what pricetag she was willing to agree to. Her answer: \$3.4 trillion. In other words, after more than a week of negotiations, the Speaker of the House hasn't budged from her original position. She hasn't budged, nor have the Senate Democrats, who every time something has come up on our side to try and address this crisis have answered with: Well, let's just pass the Heroes Act of the House, the \$3.4 trillion boondoggle.

Well, that is not a compromise. That is not a negotiation. And if we emerge from this process without a coronavirus relief bill, the responsibility rests squarely on the shoulders of the Democratic leadership.

Let's suppose, for a moment, that Republican negotiators agreed to every single thing that Democrats are insisting on: tax cuts for millionaires, diversity studies for the marijuana industry, a trillion-dollar pot of money for States, which, I might add, haven't even come close to spending the coronavirus money the government has already given them. Let's suppose Republican negotiators agreed to everything. What would happen then?

Well, the bill would never pass the Senate. In the Senate, you need 60 votes to pass a bill, and there simply aren't 60 votes in the Senate for the Democrats' liberal fantasies. In fact, it would be lovely if, as Democrats seem to think, the government drew its funding from a magical pot of gold that never runs out, but it doesn't. Every dollar of the coronavirus relief that we already provided has been borrowed money, which continues to drive up our

national debt. Now, arguably, it was money that needed to be borrowed, but there has to be a limit.

The higher we drive our national debt, the greater the danger to the health of our economy. Democrats may be fine with jeopardizing our economic health to pay for diversity studies in the marijuana industry, but I can tell you the Republicans are not. Republicans know we are going to have to borrow some additional money to meet the demands of the coronavirus crisis—and we have offered legislation to do just that—but we are not going to further endanger our already battered economy by signing off on every unnecessary spending item on the Democrats' liberal fantasy list.

Now, are Republicans going to have to agree to some of the things that we are not crazy about? Of course we are. But Democrats are going to have to accept that they can't dictate every word of the bill.

The bill which passed the House, I might add, was 1,800 pages long. The bill that we have proposed in the Senate is 165 pages. The ball is in the Democrats' court. Republicans want to pass a coronavirus relief bill, and we are ready to negotiate. The Democrats are going to have to decide they want to come to the table.

"Our way or the highway" is not a negotiating position, and if Democrats continue to insist on getting everything that they want, they are going to be responsible for Congress's failure to deliver additional relief. I hope—I really hope the Democratic leadership will remember what it means to negotiate and that it will work with Republicans to arrive at a compromise bill that can make it through both Houses of Congress and actually become law.

I yield the floor.

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

#### FREE SPEECH

Mr. YOUNG. Mr. President, "Freedom is the freedom to say that two plus two makes four. If that is granted, all else follows"—so wrote novelist George Orwell.

In the late 1980s, I traveled to the former Soviet Union as part of a youth soccer program. Now, decades have passed since that trip, of course, but the memories to me are still vivid. The shelves were barren. Citizens drank from communal water fountains. The items most in demand and hardest to find were American items: blue jeans—Levi Strauss—and bubble gum.

Of course, those weren't the only things common in Indiana that were contraband behind the Iron Curtain. For decades, news, literature, art, or entertainment that was not broadcast or approved by the state was scarce and available only by bootleg.

The monuments towering over Russia were built to honor those who controlled it, the same men who regularly erased parts of Russia's history to suit

their own political purposes, not to serve others.

This was a society where ideas and dialogue existed only underground, where watching American movies was a jailable offense, where free thinkers weren't found in newspapers or airwaves but locked away in labor camps, where information protected the State instead of empowering the individuals, where history was constantly purged and revised.

By the time I visited, though, Soviet leadership, in self-preservation mode, had gradually allowed citizens access to information and media as new technologies emerged. It was only a ray of sunlight through a very small crack, but through it, people all across the former Soviet Union and the Eastern Bloc could finally see and hear what had long been hidden from them: jazz, rock 'n' roll, Star Wars, Chuck Norris, Dr. Zhivago, and Robinson Crusoe. History once erased was restored. The truth of Stalin's murders was revealed.

Inevitably, the fatal conceit of a centrally planned Communist economy was exposed, and large numbers of Russians realized just how poorly their quality of life compared to the free, Western alternative. They were even permitted rights to express dissatisfaction with their circumstances.

A totalitarian regime's greatest ally is darkness and silence. Keeping a people in the dark is the surest way to guarantee they never demand their God-given rights. But just a trickle of information, just a hint of truth, a small offering of differing perspectives, and a touch of freedom of expression helped lead to the Soviet Union's demise—"the freedom to say that two plus two make four."

Free people become and stay free through open dialogue because of the free exchange of information and ideas—even ones we disagree with; because of patience with perspectives that are not our own; because we study our history, celebrate its highs, and learn from its lows.

That is why—that is why—it was painful to read recently that over 60 percent of Americans are now scared to admit their beliefs or air their opinions for fear of offending others and the consequences that will come with it. It is painful to learn but easy to understand.

This is the logical reaction when Americans are regularly canceled, as we say today, for things said or written decades ago, with no chance of grace or allowance for growth. It is not just people who are being canceled. It is words. It is music. Classrooms and libraries are banning "Huckleberry Finn" and "To Kill A Mockingbird" rather than encouraging students to examine or understand their authors' words and messages. "Hamilton" is falling from grace now for the "sin" of acknowledging America was created in 1776. Whole parts of our American story are being wiped away.

Communities have a right to lawfully determine who and what adorns their