

and the help of the government to extend this extra \$600 a week benefit for a little while longer. Not to sound ungrateful, but an extra \$100 or \$200 per week is just not enough to help pay rent and other bills. Cutting this benefit abruptly will cause such economic hardship and devastation to so many Americans.

This is a single mother, with a 15-year-old son, who is pleading with the U.S. Senate to do its job. And what does the majority leader say to Senators? Take tomorrow off. Take Saturday off. Take Sunday off. Take Monday off.

I want to read another letter I received on this subject. Here is what my constituent wrote:

I am emailing in hopes of asking for your support to extend the \$600 Federal assistance in addition to unemployment. While I realize that the country has to spend more and more during this pandemic, many of us are learning our temporary layoffs are now permanent (I received the call yesterday) and our industries are still completely shut down. I have always worked in the hotel industry and have no further education or experience than that. The hospitality industry is the hardest hit during this pandemic. While I search multiple times a day for jobs, they simply are not open because the industry has not yet recovered. In fact, our industry is downsizing immensely.

I am a single mother to one 5-year-old boy who will start kindergarten in the fall. We do not receive any financial assistance through the State, such as housing assistance or child support. Maryland unemployment of \$430 per week will not even cover the rent costs, and we will quickly be evicted with no options for housing.

I am not looking to make more money than I was at my job. That is not possible. I grossed \$75,000 in 2019, but I am looking to be able to pay my rent and bills and part-time childcare because it is in the best interest of my son to have social interaction and education during the pandemic even if I am not working. Please—I beg you—please support the extension of the \$600 per week benefit.

Now, I have heard a lot of Senators on this floor over weeks and months talk about how we just cannot extend \$600 a week. Yet we hear from these moms and parents who are pleading for that help so that they can simply pay their bills and get by. Even with that, they are not able to pay all of their bills.

The Republican leader says to the U.S. Senate: Take a day off. Take 2 days off. Next week, I will be in, says the majority leader, but I don't need for the Senate to be in, doing its work.

What are we all here for? We should be here 24/7, working around the clock together to resolve these issues.

We have a lot of multi, multi, multi-millionaires in this U.S. Senate, and it is really rich for all of us to be telling families out there that the extra \$600 per week is too much. That is just too much.

These are individuals who want to go back to work. I just read to you a letter from someone who works in the hospitality industry. That is her experience. That is what she knows.

I don't know if our Republican colleagues have checked recently, but the unemployment rate is around 15 per-

cent. There are a lot of people out there who are looking for work who can't find it. They can't find it because we are in the middle of a pandemic, and that has caused a lot of small businesses and others to shut down in order to make sure that we stop the spread of the virus.

These are people who want to get back to work. They want nothing better than that. They want their children back in school. All of us do. Yet we have a failed, botched Federal response, starting with the White House—starting with the President, who has made this a political issue when it has to be a health issue. It has made the problem a lot worse, and we all know it. We all know that this pandemic is lasting longer in the United States and has killed more people in the United States because of a totally failed response right from the top, and we should not be complicit in that. We should do our job.

We have the majority leader, the Republican leader. What is he saying? He is not even part of the negotiations, right? He says: You know, I am in my Republican caucus lunches, and, reportedly, only half of the Republican Senators want to do anything.

I don't know if that is true or not, but that is what Republican Senators are saying on national television. That is what we are hearing from the Republican caucus. So, if that is not true, it would be great to hear all of the Republican Senators come down to the floor and talk about what they are willing to do, not what they are not willing to do. Because there are not the votes there, the majority leader has contracted out his negotiation authority to the White House, and he has told the Senate to go home.

Let's just start doing our job here in the U.S. Senate. Nobody should be contracting out his job and his vote and his negotiating authority to the White House. This is the U.S. Senate. I don't know what people ran for if they just want to say: Oh, I can't deal with this because my caucus doesn't support any response. Go talk to the White House.

In the meantime in the Senate, take Friday off. Take Saturday off. Take Sunday off. Maybe take Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday off, too.

That is a hell of a message to send to the American people in the middle of a pandemic during which so many people are hurting.

I will end with this. Instead of the majority leader's coming down to the floor today and telling everybody to go away, we should stay here. We should stay here, and we should do our job. Doing our job means coming together with the next round of emergency legislation to slow down and then stop the spread of the virus and help the millions of Americans who are in tremendous economic pain right now. This is not business as usual. The Senate needs to do its job. Let's stay here and get it done.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Delaware.

CORONAVIRUS

Mr. COONS. Mr. President, I rise to join my colleagues this afternoon in asking: Is this just another Thursday—is this just another afternoon in a week, in an average year, or in an average August—when it is fine for all of us to simply head to our other commitments and concerns?

Sometimes here in Washington it is awfully easy to feel and be disconnected—disconnected from the daily concerns and grinding anxiety of the pressing issues that make the lives of the folks we represent so different.

I want to start by reminding us of something a Senator—a Senator from Minnesota—once said in the 1970s. It was Hubert Humphrey who said: The moral character of a society can best be gauged by how they treat those at the dawn of life, its children; those in the shadows of life, the disabled, the disadvantaged; and those in the twilight of life, senior citizens.

Well, if that were the measure of this place in this day and this time, then we are failing.

I think every person here, every person listening or watching knows that we are in the midst of three crises at the same time: a global pandemic, the COVID-19 pandemic, in which a highly transmissible disease has spread rapidly across the world. Many other nations have gotten ahead of it, have managed it, have stabilized it, but here in the United States, we have failed to get our arms around it, to stop it, and to deliver the coordinated resources and supplies needed to give some confidence, some positive direction in our public health infrastructure; in our schools, in our senior skilled nursing centers; in our communities. It has gotten away from us.

More than 150,000 Americans have died so far, and States that thought they had it well under control are seeing it reemerge, and States that early on saw no impact are seeing record deaths and infections.

And coming right on the heels of it, a recession—a recession deep and sharp. In the last quarter, a nearly 40-percent drop in our GDP; the sharpest since we began recording that.

And then third, a renewed focus on inequality in our country. We have seen, because of this pandemic and recession and because of the brutal killing of George Floyd, a reminder of the ways in which we are unequal in our access to healthcare, our access to opportunity, our access to housing.

So that is the environment we are in.

Several months ago, we all came to this floor and unanimously voted—unanimously, in this bitter and divided partisan time, we unanimously voted to deliver \$2.3 trillion in assistance and support that sent checks to individual Americans and families, that sent checks to those who were newly unemployed, that sent support for small

businesses at risk of going under, that sent support to State and local governments, that sent support to hospitals. It was the single largest spending bill since the Second World War—some reminder of just the seriousness, the gravity, and the scale of this challenge.

And 2 months later, the House of Representatives took up and passed the Heroes Act—another \$3 trillion to provide support across many of those same areas.

And for weeks, this body, the majority, failed to act, to propose an alternative, to take it up and examine it, to send something back, to put something on the table. It was just this Monday, the 27th of July, that we got to see the answer, and that answer fails to meet this moment.

I am from a small State, the State of Delaware—a State below a million people. Our Department of Labor, since March, has received over 130,000 claims for unemployment in a State of less than 1 million. More than 1 in 10 Delawareans have filed for unemployment assistance.

We have had huge challenges delivering all over our country the assistance we voted on months ago. Out of that 130,000, 27,000 of them are still waiting to get their unemployment checks.

My office and other offices in our delegation are helping hundreds of individuals and families who have called, who have emailed, who have texted, and who have reached out for help. And yet, this body, through inaction, allowed the additional \$600 a week in unemployment insurance that has sustained so many families to expire because we can't work out a simple agreement on how severe this moment is, on how deep the need is, and on what the right path forward is.

When I talk to my Governor, my mayor, my county executive in my home State, in my city, my county, one of their biggest needs is for additional support for State and local governments.

There is robust support in the Heroes Act sent over by the House—\$875 billion. That is a lot of money. There is nothing in the HEALS Act presented this Monday. And why? So far, 1.5 million public employees, public servants—State, county, local employees—have been laid off. And some folks I hear on television talking about this speak as if they are faceless bureaucrats in gray buildings.

But they are teachers; they are paramedics; they are nurses in county hospitals; they are the folks who administer these unemployment claims. They are the folks who help support small businesses. They are the folks who help make sure our water is drinkable, that our parks are mowed, that our libraries are functional, and that our schools can open safely.

This moment is the tale of two worlds—a world in the House of Representatives that says we are in a crisis and an emergency, and when the Amer-

ican people see a challenge this big, this deep, they often look to our Federal Government for the resources that will make it possible for their States and their counties and their communities, for their hospital, for their school to get through.

And here there has been a resounding silence for weeks.

I hear week in and week out from parents, from teachers, from paraprofessionals, anxious: How are our schools going to reopen? What is the plan? Where are the resources? What are the details? How do we get testing? How do we get personal equipment—personal protective equipment?

Even now there are conversations urgently going on in my home State about how and when and where we will be able to reopen.

When it comes to childcare, millions of Americans are unable to return to work because there isn't support for childcare.

And when it comes to small businesses, thousands have closed their doors; thousands more are at risk.

We will not get through this unless we can pull together and deliver a sustained and meaningful response.

So to my colleagues and friends, I don't know where the rest of our colleagues are. I don't know what they are hearing, but I know what I am hearing from my constituents in Delaware.

The way they make sure that we don't get disconnected from our home when we are here in Washington, boy, they text; they email; they call; they post on social media. Some even still write good old-fashioned letters.

And the thousands of letters and emails and comments that I got in the first few weeks of this pandemic and recession motivated me—motivated this entire body—to vote unanimously on the CARES Act, one of the biggest moments of Federal assistance in our Nation's history.

So what is going on now? Why the lack of focus? Why the sense this is just another Thursday afternoon?

Well, let me read to you for a few minutes from a few of the folks who have reached out to me from my home State.

Christine in Wilmington lost her job, now, months ago. She is a single mother. She is raising a 12-year-old son. She got just one unemployment insurance check. She has been barely hanging on, and ultimately had to sell her car to buy groceries. She sent me a message, painful in its focus on the urgency of there being an additional \$600 in Federal aid.

She has no job prospects in sight. The \$1,200 stimulus check that came from the CARES Act months ago and that one unemployment insurance check so far has been critical to keeping food on the table and the lights on and a roof over their head for her son.

She is just one of millions of Americans right now—right now, wondering what it is going to take to get this body to put down the tools of partisanship and work together.

Some folks say: Well, why don't you just go back to work? There is a study out from the Department of Labor that says for every four unemployed Americans there is only one job that is even posted.

And there are others who cannot work because of their family circumstances. A husband and wife from Millsboro who are senior citizens reached out to me. The wife wants to go back to work. She has an opportunity to go back to work, but her husband has a serious, chronic condition, a lung disease, and she is terrified of going back to work, catching COVID, and infecting her husband in a way that would lead to his death.

They have also relied on this additional unemployment, the \$600 a week, which, if it runs out, they will have to make very hard choices. She wants to work, but she wants to protect her husband.

A friend of mine, Jeff, runs a small candy store on Rehoboth Beach. This time of year it would normally be just humming with clients and customers, folks stopping in for Snyder's Candy, a great small business. Business is down 50 percent.

He applied for and he got one of those PPP loans in the CARES Act, but he received just \$9,000—far too little to keep everyone on his payroll, to stay fully open, and he is waiting, waiting to see if we will work together to come up with a compromise, with a next step, with a next round of loans.

Another person, a woman Shari, who runs a daycare in Wilmington, small daycare in her own home. She had six families whose children she cared for. Even if she is able to reopen fully and safely, she has heard from those six families. Only two of them are coming back. So she is going to have to close her business, which means she loses her wages, and the families lose childcare.

She has seen firsthand that parents can't go back to work if they don't have childcare. There is funding for childcare in the House bill—so far none in the Senate bill.

And Robert, a man from Newark, DE, works in the entertainment industry. One of the areas hardest hit is the small stages, the entertainment venues that are so important to the vibrancy of our communities and our culture.

He has been relying on unemployment to pay his bills—that extra \$600 a week. Robert's message to me:

When the stimulus runs out, where do I turn? Do I have my vehicle repossessed? Do I not pay my mortgage or buy food? I have worked my entire life and I am ready to get back to it as soon as there is clear direction for society to follow. Unemployment is not a choice—it is an unfortunate byproduct of not taking this virus seriously enough in the beginning.

The publisher of a storied local newspaper in Sussex County shared with me a story that once their PPP funds were exhausted, they had to lay off 20 percent of their full-time staff, half of their contract employees, and he said:

The uncertainty in regard to the economic condition over the next few months certainly

weighs heavy on the Cape Gazette and our industry as a whole. The loss of local news would be devastating to communities, big and small, across the country.

I can see that I have colleagues eager to join me in these remarks on the floor, so let me bring this to a close.

One of the moments this became most real for me was when the Delaware Food Bank partnered with the Delaware National Guard to provide supplemental food for Delawareans.

I was out at the Christiana Mall, just off I-95—huge parking lot. The mall, of course, closed. This was early on in the pandemic.

We thought we would see dozens, maybe 100 households lined up in their cars to get some extra food, much of it from Federal sources.

The line went all the way around the mall. Hundreds and hundreds of Delawareans—people who later commented either on radio or letters to the editor that they never thought they would be in a food line.

Not since the Great Depression have the food banks of this Nation seen lines as long and made up of as diverse a background and groups asking for, eager for, willing to accept, hoping for support for them and their families.

This year alone, 50,000 Delawareans have turned to our food banks so that they can put food on the table for their families.

I don't know what my colleagues are reading, what emails they are getting, what calls they are answering, what texts or posts on social media are moving them, but I know that the Delawareans that have reached out to me have shared with me the pain of 150,000 Americans who died, have shared with me the anxiety and concern about how schools and businesses will reopen, and have asked: When will we do our job? Work across the aisle, find responsible compromise, and support our Nation in this moment of crisis.

With that, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Hampshire.

CORONAVIRUS

Ms. HASSAN. Mr. President, since the early days of the COVID-19 pandemic, it has been clear that we would need a sustained response to mitigate the damaging health and economic impact facing the American people.

When Republicans and Democrats came together to pass the CARES Act in March, I, along with my Democratic colleagues, made clear that we would need to stand ready to provide additional, robust support as the situation demanded.

This afternoon we have been hearing from our colleagues. I thank Senator STABENOW for gathering us here. I thank Senator COONS for the way he just illustrated in such personal, direct terms the way this pandemic and all of its ripple effects are impacting his constituents, as they are impacting my constituents and constituents of every single Member of the U.S. Senate.

Unfortunately, the Trump administration and Washington Republicans have not met the challenges facing the American people today with any sense of urgency, and the cost of that inaction has been seen all across the country. But, today, Senate majority Leader MCCONNELL decided to act as if this were just any other Thursday—just any other Thursday for the Republicans in the Senate.

Well, it is not just any other Thursday for our constituents. Back in May, House Democrats passed a substantial relief bill called the Heroes Act, but for months, Republicans refused to even acknowledge the necessity of providing more relief. In the 3 months since the House acted, the pain that our citizens are experiencing has only grown. Cases have skyrocketed. The United States of America is approaching 160,000 Americans killed by this virus. Small businesses have shuttered, and millions of people have lost their jobs.

Meanwhile, President Trump continues to downplay the significant toll that this virus has taken. Earlier this week he said this of the COVID-19 death toll: "It is what it is."

Just yesterday, he again claimed that the virus would simply go away. Not recognizing the gravity of this threat has significantly harmed Americans and America. While Congress can't undo the damage that has been done, I am urging my colleagues to come together on a response that will lead us forward. Throughout this week, I have joined with my colleagues to come to the floor and to lay out some of the priorities that we are focused on and to share what we are hearing from people all across our States.

The cost of inaction grows every single day. Millions of Americans lost enhanced unemployment benefits and with it the ability to feed their families and pay their rent. People will lose their homes now to evictions. By the way, their landlords will feel the ripple effect when they can't pay their rent. Their grocers will feel the ripple effect when they can't buy groceries. The economic pain will spread and spread and spread.

Lack of supplies and testing capacity—a national disgrace months into this pandemic—is hindering the ability to slow the spread of the virus and, of course, hindering the ability of people to get back to work and school safely.

Schools are struggling to open without the adequate guidance that the Federal Government could provide and without resources that they need to keep teachers, staff, students, and families safe.

States and local communities are accelerating cuts and, with it, adding to job losses and lost economic activity.

Americans are hurting. They are hurting in red States, and they are hurting in blue States. They are crying out for help.

One of the great privileges of this job is that people come forward with their ideas, with their hopes, with their

fears. They share incredibly personal details about the challenges that they face and then are also so willing to share with us their successes too. We get to witness our constituents and work with them in difficult times and in good times, and they are willing to share that with us. They demonstrate to us day in and day out what it means to be a member of a community, what it means to come together and solve a problem. They do it in their businesses. They do it on school boards. They do it without regard to political party or walk of life.

The least we could do in the U.S. Senate on this Thursday, over this weekend, over the next week, is follow their example, represent them at their best, display that American ingenuity, innovation, pragmatism, compromise, can-do spirit. In the process we could save lives; we could begin to rebuild our economy; and we could demonstrate to the rest of the world that we know how to come together and work for what is best for all of us.

We must help our constituents. We must act. Our country cannot wait any longer.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oregon.

CORONAVIRUS

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, Senator STABENOW said some time ago that this is not just another Thursday. She and my eloquent colleagues, Senator COONS and Senator HASSAN, who has just left the floor, have shown how painfully true Senator STABENOW's statement is about letting this not be just another Thursday here in the Senate.

With Republican colleagues headed home for the weekend, perhaps for weeks, I want to take stock for a moment of all of the very crises the country faces while American families and communities don't have the luxury of a weekend. There is the COVID crisis, which Senator STABENOW and Senator COONS just talked about, with more than 50,000 newly confirmed cases and 1,000 or more deaths a day with a total of 4½ million cases in our country to date.

There is the joblessness crisis. Enhanced unemployment benefits have expired. Tens of millions of Americans are out of work, with millions walking on economic tightropes.

My colleagues are reading the letters. This is not based on some kinds of media reports. They are reading directly from what their constituents are saying, and I want to make sure everybody knows this, having listened now for days to our colleagues saying that the big problem is that somehow the American worker doesn't actually want to work. Senator STABENOW and I have heard that repeatedly in the Finance Committee room. I think it is insulting to the American worker.