

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.

We had a nationwide townhall sponsored by the Town Hall Project on unemployment issues recently, and people would say things such as this: If I heard about a job on Monday night, I would be there at the crack of dawn on Tuesday morning to get that position.

So, as we take stock of these crises, the COVID crisis, the joblessness crisis, I think what we ought to do is add the crisis of legislative malpractice that we are seeing with this Senate Republican walkout today, heading home instead of working, as Senator COONS has said, in a bipartisan way to get the coronavirus rescue bill.

I have not seen anything like this in my time in public service: The biggest public health disaster in over a century, the worst level of unemployment since the Depression, an economy that barely holds on, and tomorrow's jobs report will almost certainly show that any hope for a V-shaped recovery that Donald Trump talked about is long gone.

Republicans delayed and sat on their hands for months. I think the Presiding Officer heard me walk everybody through the calendar, how weeks passed, months passed. We made offer after offer for negotiation. Senator SCHUMER and I developed a proposal that to a great extent was based on some of the thinking of Senator THUNE.

I always think of my friend from Delaware, who is the champion of bipartisanship. That proposal was based on Senator COON's—excuse me, Senator THUNE's thought that, you know, if unemployment is high, people need a benefit so they can make the rent and pay for groceries. Then Senator THUNE said: But, you know, when unemployment goes down, the benefits should reflect that as well. He said that.

So Senator SCHUMER and I wrote the unemployment insurance bill to reflect that. The unemployment benefits would be tied to economic conditions on the ground.

Yet what we have seen is that somehow Senate Republicans can now leave in good conscience for the weekend, possibly the August recess, when the Senate hasn't passed a bill to help all of those Americans who are sick and jobless.

Our job is to legislate on the big issues, not to run home and campaign. Our job is to sit down, negotiate, and find solutions. MITCH MCCONNELL, on the basis of this morning's newspaper, doesn't seem to even show up at the negotiating table.

Now, as I mentioned, we have been warning for days and weeks and months that enhanced unemployment benefits were going to expire at the end of July. Republicans sat on their hands.

Earlier, we heard Senate Republicans talk about how they had a 1-week proposal which, of course, wouldn't—based on the unemployment experts—get any real help to people who need that money for rent and groceries anytime soon. The Senate Republicans said:

You know, workers are going over the cliff.

Well, the fact that Republicans have sat this debate out is what pushed those workers over the cliff—pushed them over the cliff—as we warned week after week after week that the economy was cratering and permanent layoffs are increasing.

Senator MERKLEY has joined us. We hear all the time at home and in the Pacific Northwest about people who got laid off once, things seemed to be getting better, they got brought back, and they were laid off again. So it seems—when Senator STABENOW points out that this is not just another Thursday in the Senate—that the economy is headed in the wrong direction.

I am just going to spend a couple of minutes, as we talk about this issue of how things are definitely not right here on this Thursday in the Senate, on the question of what would it take for Senate Republicans to get serious about working with us on a coronavirus bill now? How bad would it have to get? One-quarter of a million Americans' lives lost? Half a million? How many jobless? 40 million? 50 million? Does the economy need to contract even more than it did in the second quarter before Senate Republicans say they are going to work with Democrats to help the economy and help the Congress?

Back in March, there was a basic deal between the American people and the government to try to make sure that there was an effort to try to provide help for people as the pandemic took hold in this country. Senator STABENOW and I were sort of the point people as it related to the big issues in the Finance Committee. Senator STABENOW, doing her usually terrific job on the big health issues, and I spent days and days hearing essentially from the Labor Secretary, Secretary Scalia, about how he really wasn't going to push hard for much of anything except business as usual. But after that difficult period that went on for days and days in the Finance Committee, we actually got the \$600 extra per week, each week, and modernized the unemployment program. As Senator STABENOW knows, back when the program began in the 1930s, nobody knew about a gig worker or the self-employed, or the independent contractor, or freelancers, and the like. There was a sense that we would be working on unemployment for a long time, particularly the way it was administered, because the States have these kinds of bronze-age technologies. One of the frustrating parts of this period is that even though millions and millions of Americans have gotten those extra benefits, that is really cold comfort to the many people who haven't been able to get through the system and who haven't been able, call after call after call, to get their claim resolved. Yet there was the beginning, based on that vote, of a strategy to help people get through the economic hardship.

Right now, the Trump administration and Republicans in the Congress are breaking that deal. The virus is out of control, spiking in so many States. The key economic lifeline for jobless Americans is getting yanked away. It is just unconscionable.

And, now, just in the last few hours, there is talk that Donald Trump is looking at possibly tomorrow, Senator STABENOW, tearing up the Constitution and ordering a cut in the Social Security and Medicare tax on his own. This will not give a dime to the millions of families who have lost jobs during the pandemic but will put thousands of dollars in the pockets of every lawyer and wheeler-dealer who can pay themselves a salary while sitting at home.

What really concerns us—and I have been involved in these issues since my Gray Panthers days—is one thing that Donald Trump is talking about, Senator STABENOW, and that is draining the Social Security trust fund and bringing closer the day when Social Security benefits will be cut. So for all of those people who are, say, in their late fifties, and they have worked so hard and done difficult labor year after year after year just hoping—hoping—to be able to get Social Security, now Donald Trump is talking about draining the Social Security trust fund, cutting the Social Security and Medicare tax on his own. It sure seems like he has a monopoly on bad ideas.

He is also talking about some kind of Executive order on enhanced unemployment benefits, which he actually doesn't have the authority to issue—one more Donald Trump “con” oil, an additional bit of snake oil.

With respect to the unemployment issue and his idea of an Executive order, what he would do there is throw State workforce agencies into chaos. As we talked about, so many States have faced real challenges in getting benefits out to all the deserving Americans.

We have been trying, on the Finance Committee. Senator STABENOW has been a big champion of improving technology. We got \$1 billion for the State agencies. We are trying to get more. Donald Trump's proposal would just end up hurting the jobless Americans counting on benefits even more. If Donald Trump were serious about extending enhanced unemployment coverage, he would be working with Democrats on extending the benefits instead of fighting them.

I am going to close with this, and it is a response to something I have heard from many of my Republican colleagues who seem to have recovered their sense of fiscal conservatism that disappeared when Donald Trump was inaugurated. I heard some of them say that passing another COVID bill would amount to sacrificing our children's futures.

Here is what is worse for American children: growing up at a time when their parents can't find good-paying jobs because of double-digit unemployment, getting evicted from their homes

in the middle of a pandemic and becoming homeless, having to skip meals because their family can't afford enough food each month, going to school in a district that laid off teachers and staff due to the coronavirus recession, which means packing too many kids into classrooms, which can be dangerous.

Let's forget about all of that same old Republican deficit talk. It is the same old routine from a decade ago and a decade before that and a decade before that. The Republican deficit talk was nowhere to be found when they passed—over the opposition of Democrats on the Finance Committee—a \$2 trillion tax handout overwhelmingly benefiting multinational corporations and the wealthy.

Americans struggle with the pandemic and the joblessness crisis right now. The Senate needs to deal with it right now.

As Senator STABENOW said—she eloquently launched this important discussion, and I know my friend from Oregon is here to be part of it—it is certainly not another Thursday in the Senate, not another garden-variety, end of the week when you have enhanced unemployment benefits expiring, and 160,000 Americans dying. It is unthinkable—unthinkable—that anybody could be going home when there are so many challenges right in front of us.

I hope the majority leader, Senator MCCONNELL, and my Republican colleagues understand the power of what Senator STABENOW has basically outlined, because there are times on a Thursday afternoon in the Senate where I think you could say you wouldn't have the kinds of challenges we are talking about. This is not one of them. This is one where, on issue after issue, there are crises: the COVID crisis, the joblessness crisis, and now we have a legislative malpractice crisis by Senator MCCONNELL leading his Senators.

I urge him to come back, work with us, bring about the negotiations we need, as I said again and again, on unemployment.

I am not going anywhere—not anywhere. This is one of the most important causes I have ever had the opportunity to be a part of. Even with all of the challenges with unemployment, I can only imagine, Senator STABENOW, how much more hurt there would be in America without those millions of people getting the money for groceries and rent and paying medical bills and car insurance and keeping the lights on.

We need the majority leader and Republican colleagues in the U.S. Senate to work with us. There is no time to waste. They ought to be recognizing the power of what Senators have said here today. That negotiating needs to take place now rather than having yet another break for Senators to pursue other kinds of matters.

I thank my colleagues.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oregon.

CORONAVIRUS

Mr. MERKLEY. Mr. President, is this just another Thursday? Are things going along well in America, with nothing to worry about, nothing to keep us up at night, nothing to keep mothers and fathers up worried about the health of their children? Is this just another Thursday with America doing well, or are we here in the midst of the worst pandemic in a century since the Spanish flu? You wouldn't know it from this Chamber. You wouldn't know it from the majority leader's shutting this place down.

Is it possible that we are in the worst economic implosion since the Great Depression? Is this just another Thursday?

You wouldn't know that we are in a terrible economic collapse based on the fact that the majority leader is treating this period of time like just another Thursday, when everything is fine and everything is good in America.

It is almost 3 months ago that the House passed a robust bill to address the pandemic and to address the economic implosion—3 months ago. Why didn't the Senate say immediately, we will act, as well, because we are having big issues in America? They didn't act after the first week after the House acted. They just treated it like another week, no concerns. They didn't act in the second week. We are now 11 weeks since the House acted and still the majority leader says: Don't worry, be happy. It is just another Thursday. All is good in America—no concerns, no anxiety, no worry. Just be happy.

I can tell you what I am hearing from Oregonians. They are saying it is not just another Thursday. They are saying our State government is estimated to lose \$10 billion in revenue over the next two bienniums—a little less than \$3 billion this biennium, a little more than \$4 billion in the next biennium, and about \$3 billion after that. That is \$10 billion of lost revenue for core programs, like healthcare, housing, education, and transportation. That is a pretty big deal in terms of the foundations for the programs Oregonians count on.

I am hearing from a whole lot of parents—moms and dads—and they are saying: This is not just another Thursday. We are worried about our children's education.

I recognize there are a lot of rich people in America paying for tutors for their children, maybe two tutors for a child—maybe a math tutor and a reading tutor, maybe a special education tutor, who knows—because they are rich.

You know what, most of America are ordinary Americans who count on the quality of our public schools. I can tell you, a lot of parents are worried about how are they going to be able to have an education for their children given

the challenge in the school if the school can't afford to convert the way it operates, either in the school, in a very altered manner, or providing workstations and computers and broadband so every child has the ability to work online.

Now, we know that even that is going to be far insufficient because so many children are in households where there isn't going to be the type of full-on, all-day assistance to help them utilize that online access. We know that. Shouldn't we be providing the resources to minimize the gap between the best-off and ordinary families? Shouldn't we be trying to do everything for our children?

My dad was a mechanic. A mechanic who works in the sawmill is called a millwright. He said it is the best job in the world. If he could keep the machinery humming, it meant that every worker had a job to come to, and it meant the company made money. Everybody was happy if he could keep the machinery running, and he did. He did a marvelous job.

He was pretty disappointed when the company was bought by an investor and the mill was shut down overnight and the timber that the company had was sold to another company, a bigger company. But, in that context of a father with a powerful ability to keep machinery humming that would benefit so many other people, he loved the fact that we had good public schools.

He told me: Son, because we live in America and have these public schools, if you go through the door of that schoolhouse and you study hard, you can do almost anything in our country.

What a glorious vision for an ordinary, working American to say to their child: Because we live in America, you can do almost anything, in our country. The horizons are boundless because we have good public schools.

But it is 11 weeks since the House acted. Have we acted to provide good public schools? All of our teachers and our administrators and our parents and our school boards are saying we are just around the corner from the ordinary start of school. It is either just before or just after Labor Day.

Where is the U.S. Senate? MITCH MCCONNELL sent us home. He shut this place down while our children's education, preparation for a very unusual and difficult year, goes untended because there aren't the resources.

I can tell you, I am hearing a lot from the medical community. My wife, Mary, is a nurse. She is a home hospice nurse, so she goes and coaches families as their loved one goes through the final chapter of their life here on our planet. A lot of these folks that she visits, because they are in hospice, it, by definition, means they are quite ill. Often, the families around them are elderly, and they are very concerned about any presence of COVID, coronavirus. What she hears is that we need to tackle this pandemic.