

the Democratic leader would stop blocking this bipartisan bill that Senator BLUMENTHAL and I have introduced and that passed unanimously out of the Judiciary Committee.

TRIBUTE TO MARTHA MCSALLY

Mr. President, on one final matter, every other December we have the difficult task of saying farewell to some of our colleagues. Today, I want to say a few words about our friend from Arizona, Senator MCSALLY, whose successor, I believe, will be sworn into office tomorrow.

Before she was Senator MCSALLY or Congresswoman MCSALLY, she was known as Colonel MCSALLY—a dedicated, courageous, and extremely talented Air Force pilot.

During her 26-year career in the Air Force, she made a habit out of breaking barriers and became the first woman in U.S. history to fly a fighter jet in combat.

But those of us who know Senator MCSALLY can say—and certainly her incredible staff can attest to this—that she is not one to rest on her laurels. She was always pushing herself and those around her to aim higher, to do better, to work harder. So it is no surprise she became the first woman ever to command a fighter squadron in the Air Force.

Her arrival in the Senate brought with it a wealth of knowledge and experience on many issues that are important to our work here, particularly those surrounding the military and veterans, and Senator MCSALLY has been a fierce and unyielding advocate for all of our servicemembers and veterans and their families.

As a member of the Armed Services Committee, she has played a critical role in developing major legislation to support them, such as the National Defense Authorization Act, which I mentioned earlier.

But she has also been a champion to our servicemembers through lesser known but still very important legislation. Last month, President Trump signed a bill she introduced to improve mental health delivery for veterans and to help those who are suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder to receive the treatment they need.

Over the last 2 years, I have enjoyed working with Senator MCSALLY on a number of shared priorities. Both of our home States were devastated by mass shootings, and we introduced legislation to reduce that sort of horrific violence and to prevent more communities from experiencing these tragedies. Of course, we are both Senators from border States, so you can imagine that we have worked together to improve border security along our southern border and ensure that trade and the good parts of having a common border with our southern neighbor remain effective and efficient. Once COVID-19 hit, we teamed up on legislation to protect the healthcare workers who lost their jobs during the pandemic.

Senator MCSALLY has continuously fought for change, both big and small, to improve the lives of her constituents in Arizona and to strengthen our national security. We will miss this dedicated friend and colleague, but I know her work is far from finished. I have no doubt that Senator MCSALLY will remain a strong voice for Arizonans and an unshakable advocate for our servicemembers and veterans. We are grateful for her lifelong service to our country, and I am eager to see the ways that Senator MCSALLY will continue to make her home State proud and make the American people's lives just a little bit better each day.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. PORTMAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

ORDER OF PROCEDURE

Mr. PORTMAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that notwithstanding the provisions of rule XXII, the postcloture time on the Hauptman nomination expire at 11:45 a.m. tomorrow and the Senate vote on confirmation of the nomination; further, that if cloture is invoked on the Davis nomination, the Senate then vote on the motion to invoke cloture on the Waller nomination. I further ask that the postcloture time with respect to the Davis nomination expire at 2:05 p.m. tomorrow and the Senate vote on confirmation of the nomination and that the confirmation vote with respect to the Waller nomination occur at a time to be determined by the majority leader in consultation with the Democratic leader on Thursday, December 3; finally, that if any of the nominations are confirmed, the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table and the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

CORONAVIRUS

Mr. PORTMAN. Mr. President, I am here on the floor today to, once again, talk about the need for this Senate and this Congress to pass legislation to deal with the COVID-19 crisis. I think we have to do this now before the end of the year—certainly, before we leave the Congress to go back home for the holiday recess.

We just got back from a weeklong recess for Thanksgiving, and all the Members of this body—all of them—had to have seen what I saw, which is an up-close look at the crisis that is upon us.

In Ohio, our daily new cases are four times what they were just 1 month ago—four times. I see the numbers every single day, and they are discouraging.

And it is not just new cases. It is more people hospitalized. It is more

people in the ICU units. It is more people, tragically, who are counted among the fatalities.

This morning, I tried to call a friend of mine who is in the hospital in Columbus, OH. He is there because of COVID. And I am just thinking probably of the people watching tonight, most either have had COVID themselves or have a friend or a family member who have had COVID.

This friend was unable to talk to me because he had taken a turn for the worse. His organs were starting to malfunction. He had slipped into unconsciousness. I was able to speak to his wife. I told her, of course, that he is in our prayers. But I also told her that he is in my thoughts as we look at whether we should do something more here at the Federal level to help with the coronavirus pandemic.

Of course, we should. It has been a long time since we took action. You really have to go back several months. The last big package was passed in March, about 9 months ago. It is time for us to act again.

And there is some good news out there. With all of the negative news about the cases and hospitalizations, ICUs, and, tragically, the fatalities increasing, the good news is that there is hope on the horizon, and that is the vaccines.

I have been a big supporter of providing the Federal funding for the vaccines. And I applaud the administration for the work they have done on this Operation Warp Speed because I believe that while masks are critical—and I wear mine, and I hope you are wearing yours—the social distancing is very helpful; the work that people are doing on the therapies is really important; and we need more testing, and that is good to know where we stand, but nothing can take the place of these vaccines.

Think about the other diseases we have tackled with vaccines—measles and small pox and polio. My dad had polio as a kid. It was fairly common. Today, we don't even think about it.

These vaccinations, if they work well, can be amazing. And guess what we learned over the past several weeks. We learned that the early results from some of these vaccines, including the early data we have from the Moderna and the Pfizer candidates are incredibly effective. We are talking over 90 percent efficacy or effectiveness.

I am participating in one of the trials. It is the Janssen-Johnson & Johnson trial. That vaccine shows promise also. I joined the trial, by the way, for a few reasons: One, because I really want to understand better how this system is working, and I had received a briefing from a company that manages trials around the world, and they indicated to me that they were having trouble getting people to sign up. So another reason I entered was because I asked them: If I sign up, will that help? They said: If you are willing to go public, yes. So I did, and I am.

But I also joined the trial because I am concerned about the numbers I see about people's concerns about the safety and effectiveness of these vaccines—because, I know, through Operation Warp Speed, that the science is calling the shots; that these scientists, the best in the world here in America, are working around the clock to get these vaccines out as quickly as possible, and we have to be sure people actually use them, that people are willing to get vaccinated.

When I joined the trial only a few weeks ago—several weeks ago, maybe 4 or 5 weeks ago. This is before the election—Gallup had recently come out with a survey which said that only 50 percent of Americans were willing to be vaccinated. That is not good.

Again, this is a vaccine that is very effective. The flu vaccine is probably about 30 percent effective, and I have friends who say: I am not going to take the flu vaccine. I took one last year, and I got the flu anyway. Well, that is because it is about 30 percent effective, on average.

That is not true with these vaccines. From the early indications, again, 90, 95 percent, 94 percent effectiveness or efficacy.

So I urge people to do their own research, to look at what the scientists are saying, look at what Dr. Fauci is saying, look at what those who are the professionals are saying. They are saying that corners are not being cut here. In fact, it is going quickly, but they are being more careful than ever to get this emergency use authorization, which is what the Pfizer and the Moderna vaccine candidates are trying to get right now. They actually have to go through more hoops than normal. So my hope is that this willingness to be vaccinated changes.

By the way, there was another Gallup poll 2 weeks ago, and it didn't show 50 percent, it showed 58 percent are willing to be vaccinated. That is good. That is progress. I think that is because we are beyond the election, and the irresponsible people who were saying publicly: Gosh. I don't know if I trust this because it was during the Trump administration, if they were Democrats, perhaps, have stopped saying it. I hope they have because this is not something that is political. We should never politicize this. This is about saving lives. It is about getting our economy back on track. It is about dealing with a virus that has caused so much devastation and dislocation in our families, in our communities, in our businesses.

So my hope is that everyone will be encouraged to, again, look at it yourself, do your own research but get yourself and your families vaccinated because it is going to help you protect you and also protect the community. It is the only way we are going to get to the kind of community immunity rather than community spread that all of us hope for.

Leader McCONNELL spoke on the floor here yesterday, the Republican leader,

the majority leader. He said that we need a new COVID-19 bill to continue investing in the distribution system for these vaccines so we can get them in circulation as soon as possible.

I couldn't agree with him more. That is part of why we need another COVID-19 bill. We actually need more money for ensuring that we are going to have these vaccines broadly available with a distribution system that makes sense, that is fair but also gets this out as quickly as possible.

You know, this Operation Warp Speed did something extraordinary. It is a public-private partnership. I think it is very innovative. They said: The government is going to subsidize your production of these vaccines, and while you are going through the approval process, which takes several months, you can go ahead and start producing what you think is the right vaccine that you are testing, and then, if you get the approval—boom—the vaccine is ready to go; as compared to getting the approval and then waiting several more months for the vaccine to be produced.

That means we are going to probably end up discarding some vaccines that don't work, that don't get the approval. That is OK because the benefit is that much sooner we are going to have a vaccine out there now in record time. Unprecedented. This has never happened in the history of the world that one has been created so quickly and will be distributed so quickly.

I expect we are going to have vaccines circulating in our communities within a few weeks, and I suspect that they will go first to, as the CDC will determine—and they are meeting next week to talk about this, as I understand it—but it will probably go first to our healthcare providers, to the healthcare workers who are on the frontlines. It will probably go first to people who work in nursing homes because so much of that problem in our long-term care facilities comes from people going in and out of the facility. Those people should be vaccinated, the residents of those long-term care facilities. And I believe our first responders need help as quickly as possible because we are putting them in impossible situations. And then the most vulnerable among us—those who are immunocompromised or have other healthcare problems that are pre-existing, those who are older and out in concentric circles from that to the point that, by March and April, we would hope that everybody would have the opportunity to step up and become vaccinated.

That is something all of us want to see—Republicans and Democrats alike. A COVID-19 bill passed now will help make that happen. It will also help us to get over the valley. The valley, to me, is between now, where we have this surge in the virus that has not abated—in Ohio, I am told by the experts, including talking to our public health officials and our Governor, we do not believe that we have peaked. I don't

know about your State, but I believe the same thing is probably true.

So there is a valley here between now and the March-April timeframe. During those 4 months, we have to have a bridge, in my view. It is not forever. It is a bridge between now and March and April, when the vaccinations are broadly available, and we can have the kind of community immunity we talked about earlier.

That bridge is going to be extremely important to the people I represent and the people whom every Member on this floor represents.

We had some earlier successes coming together to pass legislation around here. When the coronavirus first hit, we were all together. In fact, the CARES Act that passed in March, 9 months ago, passed unanimously—not a single negative vote. We got together, actually, for four or five different bills that were bipartisan, and we were all together. Then something happened. We started to sort of split apart.

But when we were together, we did some great things. Was every penny spent exactly right? Probably not because it was a lot of money, but we saved so many small businesses. I know of them because they are all over Ohio, and I talk to them.

The PPP program was a great success. Again, did some get it who shouldn't have? Of course, but, overall, it was extremely successful in keeping the doors open in these small businesses that otherwise would have closed and keeping these employees working and connected to work rather than on the unemployment lines. That was very important.

CARES Act funds also were critical to those who lost their jobs through no fault of their own. You remember, we had a lot of shutdowns in the March and April timeframe. People were just out of work for the first time in their lives. I have friends who lost their jobs for the first times in their lives, and they had to go to unemployment insurance. They had never done that before, but it saved them. They could make their car payments. They could make their rent or pay their mortgage.

There were other important steps that were taken at that time to be sure that we didn't have a more devastating impact. I am proud of the way we came together, but, again, that was 8 or 9 months ago.

And I have been frustrated that that sense of urgency and that willingness to sort of set aside the partisanship or whatever our specific concerns were to come together for the good of the country seems to have dissipated. It, particularly, seemed to disappear as we got closer and closer to the election. There seemed to be more and more politics finding its way into the discussion.

Well, the election is over. Republicans here in the Senate have offered a responsible, targeted bill focused on funding our healthcare response, supporting our small businesses, making

our schools safe for students to return to class, helping those unemployed through no fault of their own. We have actually twice had a majority of this Senate, in the last month and a half, stand up and vote for such a bill—a targeted, focused bill on COVID-19 response—52 Senators.

(Thereupon, Mr. SCOTT of Florida assumed the Chair.)

Unfortunately, here in the Senate, that wasn't enough because you need 60—a supermajority—in order to pass it. So although we had 52 out of 100, we didn't get to 60. Democrats opposed it but didn't offer an alternative here in the Senate and didn't even allow us to get on the bill to debate it to come up with alternatives. Instead, they supported the House-passed bill, which is called the Heroes Act, which not only is a lot more expensive—the original version was probably \$3.5 trillion, according to the Congressional Budget Office, the most expensive legislation ever passed by any body of Congress—but also it included a number of provisions that had nothing to do with the coronavirus. That was not something that a lot of us could support. There are immigration law changes, tax breaks for wealthy individuals, and other provisions unrelated to COVID-19.

My hope is that now, the election behind us, the crisis upon us, the year-end looming, the vaccines coming online, now we can provide that bridge on a bipartisan basis. And I am not just hopeful; I am encouraged. We have made some recent progress towards what I think could be a good COVID-19 relief package.

This morning, a bipartisan framework was put forward by what is called the Problem Solvers Caucus, with four Members on the Democratic side and four Members on the Republican side. Their proposal—we have all had a chance to look at it now, during the day, and I think it is the basis for getting something done before the end of the year. I have been in discussion with those eight Members as recently as this afternoon. I have been in discussion over the past several weeks with many colleagues on both sides of the aisle about, how do you come together on this? And I think what was proposed today by this Problem Solvers Caucus is a good start. It is not exactly what I would write. I have some ideas that I think are really good that aren't in there, and there are some things in there that I wouldn't support. It probably is not what any individual Senator would write. In fact, I am confident in that. But, again, it is a good starting point.

It has about \$300 billion to help bolster the PPP program, to keep it going and to help struggling small businesses. A lot of them are on the edge right now; I can tell you that. There is \$16 billion for the vaccine distribution we talked about and also for more testing and more money for therapy. There is \$180 billion to help Americans who

have lost their jobs during this downturn in the economy, in addition to a lot of other important provisions for our schools and for our healthcare providers. It doesn't do everything Republicans want; it doesn't do everything Democrats want; but it does what the American people need.

I hope this starting point will result in our getting the same kind of broad bipartisan support that we have had for previous bills that have been offered here on the Senate floor.

Again, I would like to add some things to it that I think make a lot of sense. Specifically, there are some tax incentives to boost our economic recovery, like the healthy workplaces tax credit to help businesses reopen and stay open with the current safety and social distancing guidelines. I would like to expand and repurpose the employee retention tax credit and the work opportunity tax credit from the CARES Act into something that is more encompassing for companies that don't qualify for PPP but that are willing to retain their employees, again, keeping them connected to work, which I think is so important.

Again, we need to act soon because I am concerned about some of the new reports coming out on the economic impact this pandemic is having, especially on certain sectors of the economy and particularly on middle and lower income Americans. After the initial economic shutdown that created the record unemployment numbers we saw in the early weeks of this pandemic, unemployment claims began to fall. The Paycheck Protection Program helped small businesses stay open and keep employees on payroll, which was good. As more businesses found ways to reopen and reopen safely, hiring picked up, and as of October, national unemployment was moving in the right direction—not near where it was pre-pandemic but still in the right direction.

But then we have seen more troubling signs as the pandemic—the healthcare crisis aspect of the pandemic—has increased. One problem is that the partial economic recovery we were seeing was not evenly distributed across different sectors of our economy. That is pretty obvious to people. If you are a manufacturer in Ohio that closed your factory floor this spring, you were able to figure it out—reconfigure the workspace, perhaps, allow for social distancing—and demand started to go back up, and it looks like our manufacturers are in pretty good shape now. But if you are in the hospitality business, travel business, personal care business, you have been hit really hard. Our restaurants, bowling alleys, music venues, coach companies, and many more have had a much tougher path to reopening their doors in a safe way.

I had a very sobering call with members of the Ohio Restaurant Association last week. It is troubling to me that more than half of all Ohio res-

taurants say it is unlikely they will be in business 6 months from now in the absence of more help. So without a new PPP and other help, half of them said they are going to close their doors. I am in the restaurant business. It is a tough business. People are hanging on.

We have to do something to help the economically disadvantaged also. At the start of 2020, thanks to consecutive years of strong growth in the pre-COVID economy, under the Trump administration's Republican proposals—tax cuts, tax reform, regulatory relief, allowing our energy resources to be used in this country—things were going pretty darn well.

The national poverty rate over the last few years—before COVID started in February of this year, the national poverty rate had fallen to the lowest rate since the government started tracking this statistic 60 years ago. Let me repeat that. The poverty rate had fallen to its lowest level since it was recorded—10.5 percent.

The economy was good—not just low unemployment but also higher wages. We actually had in February the 19th straight month of wage increases of 3 percent or more. That was compounded. People were saying: My gosh, if I work hard and play by the rules, I can get ahead. Things were good particularly because that wage increase was primarily focused on lower and moderate-income Americans. But that all changed as we hit COVID.

The early economic stimulus actually helped drive that poverty rate lower than I talked about in the March-April timeframe. But since then, a lack of Federal action and this sluggish economic recovery we have seen have reversed that process, with nearly 7 million Americans falling into poverty since May. That means the poverty rate has now risen 2 percentage points to 11.4 percent. That represents 7 more million Americans who have fallen into poverty.

So people say: What has the coronavirus done to the economy? There it is. Among other things, it has driven the poverty rate back up after we had so much success. What is worse, the longer these individuals stay in poverty, the harder it will be for them to get out of poverty. That is one of my concerns—long-term unemployed, long-term problems with regard to the poverty rate.

A big part of the problem is that those who are most vulnerable to sliding into poverty—these low-income Americans we are concerned about—have been the hardest hit by the waves of layoffs that started in the spring. Nearly half of all lower income adults now report that either they or someone else in their household lost a job or took a pay cut as a result of the economic slowdown—half. In comparison, only about one-third of higher income Americans report being affected in this way. Maybe that is obvious to you, but the woman who works in the kitchen for that restaurant who lost her job,

maybe making \$15, \$16 an hour, compared to maybe somebody who works in a factory making \$25 or \$30 an hour—those restaurant workers have been more affected. That has been played out through so many different industries around the economy where lower income individuals, often who cannot work mobile—they can't virtually work, unlike someone, say, who is in the financial services industry. They have been some of the hardest hit.

Another economic slowdown caused by our failure to act here in Congress would only exacerbate those real hardships being felt by those who can least afford it. Do we have a magic wand here? No. We can't solve all the problems, but we can help.

With so many challenges to contend with, it is concerning to me that the Senate will be in session for only 11 more days before we adjourn for the holidays. We have to act, and we have a very short window to do so.

By the way, we should not leave Washington without acting. We should not leave Washington for the holidays without passing a COVID-19 response bill. If we do, we will be risking even more devastation from the virus and even more economic impacts, where millions of Americans could lose their jobs, their homes, their cars, and more.

We can help avoid this if we provide the necessary resources to continue to combat the ongoing pandemic as well as addressing a lot of the important provisions created under the CARES Act way back 9 months ago that were set to expire at the end of this year.

Of these provisions, one of the most concerning to me is the cliff that we face with regard to unemployment benefits for those who have lost their jobs due to COVID-19. Both the Pandemic Unemployment Assistance Program and the Pandemic Emergency Unemployment Compensation Program will expire at the end of this month. These are supplementary Federal programs designed to help the self-employed, gig economy workers, and those who need extra support while on unemployment during the pandemic. I know some of these people. I have talked to them. They are nervous. They are looking at this year-end and thinking: My gosh, I am on unemployment now. Even though I am self-employed and I wouldn't have been on it under the State system, now the Feds are going to pull out, and I am left with nothing.

Even with the economic rebound we have had since the spring, we are still down 10 million jobs in this country since February. Think about it. Again, the economy was going great, the policies we put in place were working, and we are still down 10 million jobs. A further slowdown of the economy is going to be tough for those long-term unemployed, and my concern is that some of them may never reenter the workforce. So we need to act and act quickly to get them back in the mix.

With the latest round of stricter social distancing measures and closures

in some States in order to counter the coronavirus, more jobs will vanish. We are seeing that already. Look at the States that are doing shutdowns—higher unemployment, more people without a job. Losing that unemployment insurance lifeline will be devastating for lots of those Americans. Let's not let that happen.

The end of 2020 also means the end of other important COVID-19 response programs. Many individuals who had their incomes affected by this pandemic are also renters. The current national moratorium on evictions has allowed these individuals to keep a roof over their head while they look for work and try to hold their lives together, but this moratorium expires at the end of the year. So you will see a lot more people losing their apartment, losing their home, and ending up without anyplace to go. We need to act here in Congress to make sure that doesn't happen.

Same goes for the millions of individuals who are currently relying on student loan deferrals to free up money to cover expenses during the pandemic. Come the start of next year, these student loan payments will be due if we don't act. A lot of people relied on this. It is not that they won't have to pay, but it has been deferred. That ends at year-end.

My hope is that laying out everything we stand to lose in just a few weeks at year-end will encourage Congress to act on targeted coronavirus legislation to serve as that bridge—just as a temporary bridge between now and when we have widespread vaccine availability next spring. Failure to act could mean further economic suffering that puts millions more Americans in a tough spot.

In the face of a virus that seems to be getting more and more out of hand every day, it just seems like common sense to me that we should act. We should come together to expand and extend these important programs.

Again, I agree with Leader MCCONNELL, who spoke on the floor yesterday, talking about the importance of providing support for, as an example, our hardest hit small businesses by having a second round of Paycheck Protection Program targeted at those companies that are actually losing money, year-to-year showing this month as compared to a year ago or this quarter as compared to a year ago that they are seeing a significant drop in the revenue. These are the ones that need the help the most.

In addition, we should consider other important provisions, again, to provide funding to keep our kids safe in school—we want them in school; it is a good thing for them, but we have to be sure they can be safe—facilitate vaccine distribution, support our healthcare providers, and funding and flexibility for State and local governments that truly need it. They have to show the need.

American lives are at stake, and we are in danger of losing whatever

ground we gained on the coronavirus as this third wave threatens my home State of Ohio and the States of so many of my colleagues in this Chamber.

Let's not wait any longer. Let's come together and get something done that is good for the American people before the end of the year. And let's stay here. I am committed to staying here. Let's stay here until we do that.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to legislative session for a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

ARMS SALES NOTIFICATION

Mr. RISCH. Mr. President, section 36(b) of the Arms Export Control Act requires that Congress receive prior notification of certain proposed arms sales as defined by that statute. Upon such notification, the Congress has 30 calendar days during which the sale may be reviewed. The provision stipulates that, in the Senate, the notification of proposed sales shall be sent to the chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

In keeping with the committee's intention to see that relevant information is available to the full Senate, I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD the notifications which have been received. If the cover letter references a classified annex, then such annex is available to all Senators in the office of the Foreign Relations Committee, room SD-423.

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

DEFENSE SECURITY
COOPERATION AGENCY,
Arlington, VA.

Hon. JAMES E. RISCH,
Chairman, Committee on Foreign Relations,
U.S. Senate, Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: Pursuant to the reporting requirements of Section 36(b)(1) of the Arms Export Control Act, as amended, we are forwarding herewith Transmittal No. 20-52 concerning the Navy's proposed Letter(s) of Offer and Acceptance to the Government of Brazil for defense articles and services estimated to cost \$70 million. After this letter is delivered to your office, we plan to issue a news release to notify the public of this proposed sale.

Sincerely,

HEIDI H. GRANT,
Director.

Enclosures.