

pandemic, and by any measure, the program has been an incredible success.

But not all small businesses have been eligible for the Paycheck Protection Program, and some of the most heavily impacted are our small, independent venues. These businesses were the first to close when COVID-19 hit, and they are likely to be the last to open when it is behind us.

Live, cultural, musical, theatrical events are not only critical cultural institutions, but they are huge drivers of local economies.

A single event can provide paychecks not only to the artists and performers but to lighting and sound technicians, bartenders, ticket takers, concessions, and merchandise salesmen, as well as security guards, cleaning staff, and the list goes on and on.

Unlike restaurants, which have been able to offer at least carryout or outdoor dining, or retailers, which switched to curbside pickup, there is no virtual substitution for these live events.

That is why, working with the Senator from Minnesota, Senator KLOBUCHAR, I introduced the Save Our Stages Act so that these venues can be kept afloat so that when we are able to put the virus behind us, our favorite, small, independent venues will be able to open their doors once again.

This is a stressful and scary moment for the Texans who work at and frequent our favorite venues, and the Save Our Stages Act can provide some hope for these cultural institutions.

I am proud to say that 58 of our colleagues have cosponsored Save Our Stages, making it one of the most widely supported bipartisan proposals before the Senate.

These final hours of negotiations are not the time to try to change the basic contours of that proposal to benefit well-endowed institutions or institutions that don't, frankly, need the money, while these other venues are dying unless they get the money.

Save Our Stages will benefit beloved, small, independent music venues and other theaters and the like across the country and ensure those marquee will shine bright once again.

So as we all know, time is running out. The Congress needs to take action and take action soon.

We cannot add the stress of another government shutdown to a raging pandemic. It is time for us to come together and get this done for the American people.

I yield the floor.

(Mr. HOEVEN assumed the chair.)

(Mr. DAINES assumed the chair.)

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. BARASSO). The Senator from Missouri.

CORONAVIRUS

Mr. HAWLEY. Mr. President, I rise today to discuss the COVID relief bill that I understand is soon to be brought before the House and then to this floor.

I understand that we have finally, at long last, a deal that hopefully will re-

sult in real relief for the American people. And there is a piece of good news that I want to be sure to note, and that is that this COVID relief package will contain direct assistance to working people. For every working family in this country that needs it, they will be, under this deal, getting a direct check just like they did in March.

Now, that is a victory. There are no two ways about it, and we should celebrate that victory not on our own behalf but for the many people in this Nation who desperately need it and who, until just a few days ago, could expect nothing at all in the way of direct assistance from this body.

I want to thank those who worked so hard to make sure that this relief was available and is going to the working people of this country—not least the President of the United States, who has been very clear, over and over again, that he wants to see direct relief to working families, that it should be the cornerstone of the bill. Of course, I thank Senator SANDERS for his strong stand on this issue, and it has been a privilege to work with him on it.

So this is good news—good news for working families, good news for working people just before Christmas, when they need the help the most.

But I have to say that the levels of support that I understand will be offered to working people are hardly adequate, and we should not pretend otherwise: \$600 per person, \$600 per child. This is a fraction of what was offered to working people in the CARES legislation just a few months ago—legislation, I might add, that every Member of this body voted for—every Member voted for. Now they will be getting only a portion of that. It all adds up to about \$100 billion. And we are told that there just wasn't enough left over, that there just wasn't any more available for working people.

Yet I notice that in the spending bill that we are also going to vote on as part of this package, a bill that costs over \$1 trillion, we managed to have found \$65 million for salmon recovery in the Pacific, \$643 million to carry out international communication activities in the Middle East, \$116 million for the Export-Import Bank, and \$118 million for that sterling example of international leadership, the World Health Organization, which has done more to undermine world health in the last year than I think any international organization in the history of the world.

Then there is the so-called bipartisan proposal, which is the basis for the present deal—the bipartisan proposal which included, I might point out, not a cent—not a cent—in direct relief for working people—almost \$1 trillion in costs, not one penny in direct relief for working people, until it was added recently. That proposal included \$20 billion for higher education—\$20 billion. This is going to many universities that have massive endowments worth billions and billions of dollars, most of that built on the backs of taxpayers, I

might add. Yet we cannot find any further funds to help working people in this country.

I cannot help but note that working people were the last consideration in the draconian shutdowns earlier this year that sent so many of them home, that cost them their jobs, that cost them their wages, that cost them their healthcare on the job, and they have consistently been the last consideration in COVID relief in this body ever since. Frankly, it is disgraceful and, frankly, it is unacceptable.

So the work that we are going to do today—and I hope to see a vote on this floor yet today on this relief—is a step—a step—in the right direction, but it is only a step. And I hope that it will be the beginning of a better approach, the beginning of actually putting working Americans first, putting their needs, putting their independence, putting their strength, their families, their communities first.

That ought to be the economic policy of this Nation. That ought to be the economic policy of this body. And I can assure you, that is the foundation on which economic recovery will be built because it is the working people of this Nation who power the American economy.

Don't believe anything else. We hear a lot about global capital. We hear about the need to secure the financial markets—oh, and, by the way, the Federal Reserve. We are taking back \$430 billion from the Federal Reserve in this piece of legislation—\$430 billion from the Federal Reserve—funded to the max. Wall Street—funded to the max.

But I say again: Wall Street, capital, the financial markets—they are not the foundation of this economy. The working people of this Nation, the working people of Missouri, the working people of our other States—they are the foundation of this economy, and it is time that they were put first—first for COVID relief, first in our economic policy, first in all that we do.

So I hope that this effort to get them direct assistance will be the beginning of a larger effort to orient our economic policy and the policy of this Nation around the strength and the independence and the needs of our great working Americans.

I want to end by saying thank you to them, thank you to the working people of Missouri who have endured through this crisis day in and day out, who have gone to work as essential workers, who have taken care of children at home, who have missed shifts at work in order to care for loved ones, who have contributed food to others in need even when they didn't have enough food for themselves, who have gone without in order to see that their children could eat.

The people of this country, the working people who have sacrificed again and again and again and have borne the brunt of this pandemic and have continued to show up for their families, for

their communities, and for this country—thank you. Thank you for making this country work. Thank you for building this country as we know it.

Help is on the way. Help is on the way in this bill, which I hope will become law tonight. But there is much more to do, and I, for one, stand ready to work to do it.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Ohio.

U.S. AFRICAN-AMERICAN BURIAL GROUNDS NETWORK ACT

Mr. BROWN. Mr. President, I rise today to discuss S. 2827, the African-American Burial Grounds Network Act, introduced by Senator ALEXANDER from Tennessee and me.

We know that for too long and in too many parts of our country, Black families were blocked from burying their loved ones in White cemeteries. These men and women were freed slaves, civil rights champions, veterans, mothers, fathers, and active workers in communities.

Our bill is simple. It directs the National Park Service to conduct a study on ways to identify and preserve and record unmarked, abandoned, or other historic African-American burial grounds.

We need to act now before these sites are lost to the ravages of time or development.

In an op-ed published in the *Memphis Commercial Appeal*, Senator ALEXANDER summed up the need for bills like ours: “Our children need to learn more history in order to grow up knowing what it means to be an American, including our struggle with race.”

For more than two centuries, these cemeteries have been looked after by churches, community groups, and private citizens. I learned about these efforts and the struggle to preserve these sacred places when I visited Union Baptist Church in Cincinnati, where parishioners have worked to preserve their hallowed space from vandals and the inexorable passage of time.

The cemetery I visited in Cincinnati was founded in 1864. It is a final resting place for freed slaves, for Black Union soldiers, and for civil rights activists.

I was there last November on a very cold morning, I remember, with Ms. Angelita Jones, chair of the trustee board for Union Baptist Church, and other elected officials in the city and members of the church, to announce funding to help restore the cemetery. But there is more to do at this cemetery and so many more like it across the country.

Our bill will help us better understand the scope and the scale of the issue and develop the tools needed to help churches, historic organizations, and communities to protect these sacred burial grounds.

I would like to take a minute, as we move this legislation forward—and I appreciate the cooperation of the peo-

ple on all sides—to thank Senator ALEXANDER for his help with this bill. In fact, almost 3 years ago to the day—it was almost exactly this day; I believe it was December 21, 2017—our bill to create an African American Civil Rights Network passed this Chamber. His interest in and awareness of protecting and preserving our history and the contributions to it by all Americans are so important.

He has been a champion for so many issues that I have had the pleasure to work with him on over the years, from protecting the Smokey Mountains to STEM education, to helping me find funding for cleanup efforts at a former uranium enrichment plant in Southern Ohio. His willingness to work across the aisle and to work in good faith for an agreeable compromise will surely be missed. We all regret his retirement and thank him for amazing service.

Mr. President, as if in legislative session, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources be discharged from further consideration of S. 2827 and the Senate proceed to its immediate consideration.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the bill by title.

The bill clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 2827) to amend title 54, United States Code, to establish within the National Park Service the U.S. African-American Burial Grounds Network, and for other purposes.

There being no objection, the committee was discharged, and the Senate proceeded to consider the bill.

Mr. BROWN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Brown substitute amendment be agreed to and the bill, as amended, be considered read a third time.

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

The amendment (No. 2721) in the nature of a substitute was agreed to, as follows:

(Purpose: In the nature of a substitute)

Strike all after the enacting clause and insert the following:

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the “African American Burial Grounds Study Act”.

SEC. 2. DEFINITIONS.

In this Act:

(1) **BURIAL GROUND.**—The term “burial ground” means any natural or prepared physical location, whether originally below, on, or above the surface of the earth, into which human remains are deposited as a part of the death rite or ceremony of a culture.

(2) **SECRETARY.**—The term “Secretary” means the Secretary of the Interior, acting through the Director of the National Park Service.

SEC. 3. AFRICAN AMERICAN BURIAL GROUNDS STUDY.

(a) **IN GENERAL.**—The Secretary shall conduct a study of ways to identify, interpret, preserve, and record unmarked, previously abandoned, underserved, or other burial grounds relating to the historic African American experience.

(b) **REQUIREMENTS.**—In conducting the study under subsection (a), the Secretary shall consider—

(1) ways to engage with descendant, local, and other communities historically associated with identified burial grounds by geography, genealogy, or culture;

(2) appropriate processes to identify locations of unmarked and unrecorded African American burial grounds with appropriate consideration for the privacy and safety of the burial grounds;

(3) alternatives for providing in a public database, as appropriate, the locations of, and information on, recorded and unrecorded African American burial grounds;

(4) alternatives for commemorating and interpreting African American burial grounds; and

(5) best practices for preserving burial ground landscapes and caring for artifacts.

(c) **REPORT.**—Not later than 3 years after the date on which funds are first made available to carry out the study under subsection (a), the Secretary shall submit to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources of the Senate and the Committee on Natural Resources of the House of Representatives a report describing—

(1) the findings of the study; and

(2) any recommendations of the Secretary.

The bill was ordered to be engrossed for a third reading and was read the third time.

Mr. BROWN. Mr. President, I know of no further debate on the bill, as amended.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there further debate?

Hearing none, the bill having been read the third time, the question is, Shall the bill pass?

The bill (S. 2827), as amended, was passed.

Mr. BROWN. I ask unanimous consent that the title amendment be agreed to and the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

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

The title amendment (No. 2722) was agreed to, as follows:

(Purpose: To amend the title)

Amend the title so as to read: “A bill to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to conduct a study of African American burial grounds, and for other purposes.”

Mr. BROWN. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR—Continued

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. BOOZMAN). Without objection, it is so ordered.

VOTE ON NOLAND NOMINATION

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Mr. President, I yield back all time.

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

All postcloture time has expired.

The question is, Shall the Senate advise and consent to the Noland nomination?

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, I ask for the yeas and nays.