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## COVID-19 Legislative Update

*August 24, 2020*

Please see below for updates on legislation related to COVID-19. Updates are published every Monday and Thursday evening. For past updates, click [here](#). For updates before May 8, click [here](#). If you believe you have been accidentally unsubscribed, you can re-subscribe [here](#).

### **8.24.2020. COVID-19 Legislative Update**

#### **Legislation**

##### ***Supplemental IV***

Timeline: While formal negotiations remain stalled, the House convened for a rare Saturday session this weekend to consider the Delivering for America Act (H.R. 8015), a bill to provide \$25B in emergency funding to the U.S. Postal Service and to roll back recent policy changes and operating procedures. The bill passed the House by a vote of 257-150, with 26 Republicans voting in favor despite GOP leadership's efforts to whip against the legislation. Leader McConnell indicated even prior to passage of the House bill that the Senate would not take up the standalone measure.

In a sign of continued interest in exploring a path towards a deal, White House Chief of Staff Mark Meadows visited the Capitol on Saturday, reportedly to meet with members to build support for a "skinny bill". Meadows also attempted to have an impromptu meeting with Speaker Pelosi, though she was unavailable and [later reiterated to the press](#) that Democrats will be ready to talk when the White House is willing to increase its topline funding level.

Following passage of the Postal Service bill, the House adjourned and both chambers are expected to remain in recess, with the Senate conducting only pro forma sessions, until after Labor Day. Members in both bodies have been told they will be given 24-hours' notice in advance of votes if there are any changes to the schedule. **With the Republican convention taking place this week, it is unlikely that any talks between the two sides**

Process/Politics: Dynamics of the negotiations around the overall size of a potential package are largely unchanged from where the two sides left things following the last formal discussions on August 7, with Republicans seeking to keep the topline number closer to \$1T and Democrats insisting they meet in the middle at roughly \$2T (after having offered to come down from the initial \$3.4T price tag of the HEROES Act). And despite having acted on a standalone postal bill, Democrats continue to resist any suggestion of taking a piecemeal approach and are continuing to push for a comprehensive relief package.

While the release of a leaked version of an updated draft by Senate Republicans circulated last week certainly reflects Leader McConnell's desire to unify his conference around a set of policy priorities, it remains unclear how many GOP Senators would support the new "skinny bill" if put up for a vote. In a sign of continued Republican reticence, it is likely telling that McConnell hasn't yet formally unveiled the updated legislation.

With the expiration of the expanded unemployment insurance provision continuing to cause economic pain for constituents, rents being due at the end of the month, and the continued turmoil and delays at USPS, the pressure for both sides to work towards a deal is unlikely to subside and therefore the expectation remains that talks will resume at some point early in September.

As the end of the fiscal year looms, it seems that leaders will need to either 1) come to an agreement in early September on the next COVID-19 bill and then later in the month pass a continuing resolution (CR) before fiscal year 2020 funding runs out on September 30, or 2) combine the CR and COVID-19 bill into one large package and pass it later in September. **If they do not pass a CR by September 30, the government will shut down.**

Policy: On Saturday, the House passed the Delivering for America Act (H.R. 8015) by a vote of 257-150. Text [here](#). Highlights include:

- Prohibition of any changes to policies and operating procedures – revert to the policies that existed on January 1, 2020.
- Prohibition of the closing of Post Offices, other facilities, and "Blue Boxes".
- Disallow the prohibition of overtime.
- Mandate that all elections mail is treated as First Class.
- \$25 billion for emergency funding to ensure the above provisions are executed.

As previously mentioned, a sizable group of moderate and vulnerable House Democrats expressed a desire to vote on additional relief measures while the House was back in session on Saturday, though leadership ultimately decided to stay the course in pursuit of a comprehensive package. The text of Rep. Beyer's bill tying unemployment insurance to economic indicators, the Worker Relief and Security Act, is [here](#). Summary [here](#). Press Release [here](#).

include funding for unemployment insurance through the end of the year, funding for the Paycheck Protection Program, liability protections, and health and education funding. It does not include individual stimulus payments, the non-Labor HHS appropriations included in HEALS, and tax incentives. Notably, **there is no inclusion of Democratic priorities like funding for state/local/tribal governments and childcare** (among other things). Text of the Delivering Immediate Relief to America's Families, Schools and Small Businesses Act [here](#). Highlights include:

- Provides **liability protections** to businesses and healthcare providers;
- Provides \$300 per week in enhanced **unemployment insurance** through the end of the year;
- Allows small businesses to take out a **second Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) loan** if they have revenue loss of 35 percent or more (HEALS set the threshold at 50 percent or more);
- Provides \$257.7 billion for PPP, which includes \$100 billion in unused funds;
- \$105 billion for **Education Stabilization Fund** (66 percent for K-12 and 29 percent for higher education and 5 percent to governors to use for either higher education or K-12);
- \$29 billion for **vaccine and treatment** development and distribution;
- \$16 billion for **testing/contact tracing**; and,
- \$10 billion for the **U.S. Postal Service** – the bill would convert a \$10 billion loan to the USPS into a grant if the USPS falls below \$8 billion in cash on hand.

On Saturday, the House will be voting on the Delivering for America Act (H.R. 8015) and some additional policies to the bill. Text [here](#). Highlights include:

- Prohibition of any changes to policies and operating procedures – revert to the policies that existed on January 1, 2020.
- Prohibition of the closing of Post Offices, other facilities, and “Blue Boxes”.
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The House passed the Democrats' opening bid for the next bill, the Heroes Act, on May 15. While it's been over two months since House passage of the bill and the contours of the debate and which issues are most pressing have shifted slightly, it can still serve as a marker of what Senate Republicans will be responding to in their bill. Heroes Act text (as of 5/12/2020) [here](#). Section by section [here](#). One pager [here](#). State and Local one pager [here](#). NCAI's summary on tribal provisions [here](#). Manager's amendment [here](#). House Rules Committee report [here](#).

### **Passed Legislation**

Moving forward, this section will only include new information and guidance. For past information and guidance and passed legislation, please refer to the [archives](#). For a summary of all supplementals, please see [here](#).

- There has been no new information and guidance since the previous update.

**Members of Congress in Quarantine or Treatment** (new additions in bold)

Tested Positive (1): Sen. Bill Cassidy (R-LA)

Currently Self-Quarantined (1):

Recovered (12): Sen. Rand Paul (R-KY), Rep. Joe Cunningham (D-SC), Rep. Ben McAdams (D-UT), Rep. Mario Diaz-Balart (R-FL), Rep. Mike Kelly (R-PA), Rep. Nydia Velazquez (D-NY), Rep. Neal Dunn (R-FL), Rep. Tom Rice (R-SC), Rep. Morgan Griffith (R-VA), Rep. Louie Gohmert (R-TX), Rep. Raúl Grijalva (D-AZ), Rep. Rodney Davis (R-IL)

Completed Quarantine (45): Sen. Ted Cruz (R-TX), Rep. Mark Meadows (R-NC)\*, Sen. Lindsay Graham (R-SC), Rep. Don Beyer (D-VA), Rep. Sharice Davids (D-KS), Rep. Doug Collins (R-GA), Rep. Paul Gosar (R-AZ), Sen. Cory Gardner (R-CO), Sen. Rick Scott (R-FL), Rep. Matt Gaetz (R-FL), Rep. Jason Crow (D-CO), Rep. Julia Brownley (D-CA), Rep. Ben Ray Lujan (D-NM), Rep. Gwen Moore (D-WI), Rep. Stephanie Murphy (D-FL), Rep. John Yarmuth (D-KY), Rep. Adam Schiff (D-CA), Rep. Vincente Gonzalez (D-TX), Rep. Drew Ferguson (R-GA), Rep. David Schweikert (R-AZ), Rep. Anthony Brindisi (D-NY), Rep. David Price (D-NC), Rep. Ann Wagner (R-MO), Rep. Kathleen Rice (D-NY), Rep. Matt Cartwright (D-PA), Rep. Tom Cole (R-OK), Rep. Steve Scalise (R-LA), Rep. Frederica Wilson (D-FL), Rep. Andy Kim (D-NJ), Rep. Kendra Horn (D-OK), Sen. Mike Lee (R-UT), Sen. Mitt Romney (R-UT), Rep. Katie Porter (D-CA), Rep. Seth Moulton (D-MA), Rep. Lizzie Fletcher (D-TX), Rep. Josh Gottheimer (D-NJ), Rep. Ayanna Pressley (D-MA), Rep. Mikie Sherrill (D-NJ), Sen. Lamar Alexander (R-TN), Rep. Randy Weber (R-TX), Rep. Kay Granger (R-TX), Rep. Mike Johnson (R-LA), Rep. Jody Hice (R-GA), Rep. Guy Reschenthaler (R-PA)

\*Mark Meadows quarantined March 9 – 12 after coming in contact with a CPAC attendee who tested positive. On March 20, he resigned from his position in the House to become the White House Chief of Staff.



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