

United States Senate
WASHINGTON, DC 20510-3203

September 3, 2020

Dear Colleague:

Under President Trump's failed leadership, America today has the worst record battling the COVID-19 pandemic in the entire world. Our fatality rate continues to exceed 1,000 deaths per day and we have surpassed an astonishing 6 million positive cases; millions more are likely undetected. The pandemic continues to spiral out of control in America with no end in sight. President Trump has given up on developing a plan to solve the public health crisis. He callously remarked that the thousands of Americans who are dying each week simply "is what it is," as if the American government has no ability to combat this terrible disease while other nations have brought it under control.

Throughout this crisis, Democrats have been unified and unrelenting in our fight against the virus and on behalf of American workers and families. When the Democratic-led House passed the Heroes Act, they knew how high the stakes were and rose to meet the occasion. From robust funding for testing, health care, and those most vulnerable to coronavirus to enhanced unemployment insurance, paid sick leave, housing assistance and consumer protections, Democratic proposals—and the laws we have passed so far—have helped workers and families survive the COVID-19 pandemic. One of our policies included in the CARES Act, enhanced unemployment benefits, has kept nearly 12 million Americans from poverty.

For more than four months, however, Senate Republicans have been "on pause" in the battle against the COVID-19 pandemic. And now, as we return to session in the Senate, Leader McConnell is planning another round of partisan games. Speaker Pelosi and I have been attempting to negotiate with the White House on the next round of legislation to properly respond to the unprecedented health and economic crises caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. It has been arduous. Democrats have negotiated in good faith and we have offered to meet our Republican counterparts in the middle, but the White House has refused to make any significant compromise.

According to reports, the Republicans are now moving even further in the wrong direction. In the upcoming session, Leader McConnell and the White House may cut their original, inadequate, \$1 trillion "skinny" bill in half.

Republicans may call their proposal "skinny," but it would be more appropriate to call it "emaciated." Their proposal appears to be completely inadequate and, by every measure, fails to meet the needs of the American people. With no money for rental assistance, no money for nutrition assistance, and no money for state and local services, the census, or safe elections,

Leader McConnell and Senate Republicans would be making another unacceptable and ineffective attempt at providing relief.

I was hopeful that with the highest unemployment since the Great Depression and the worst public health crisis since 1918, we could make progress in our negotiations with the White House during the month of August. But President Trump, led by Chief of Staff Mark Meadows, has embraced a hardline view that the federal government should be doing less, not more, during this time of national crisis. Based on their self-described lack of urgency, the continued division of their caucus, and this most recent inadequate proposal, it is clear Republicans are trying to “check the box” and give the appearance of action rather than actually meet the truly profound needs of the American people.

As the pandemic continues to spread and our economy continues to falter, the American people need our help and deserve a bipartisan and bicameral bill that meets the needs of the nation.

During the debate over the CARES Act, it was our unity against a partisan, Republican first draft that allowed for significant improvements to be made; improvements that have benefited millions upon millions of Americans and helped our economy. We should strive for, and hope we can achieve, another comprehensive, bipartisan bill that meets the moment facing our nation.

Thank you for your continued leadership and I look forward to working with you all in the coming weeks.

Sincerely,



Charles E. Schumer
United States Senator