infectious disease. While the infectious disease experts should be queried, so, too, should economists. We should seek counsel about balancing the harm to health caused by disease with the harm to health caused by enforcing dysfunction on the economy—not easy decisions.

Most importantly, leaders in each State must weigh in on the problem. New York City's opening date will be different from Fargo, ND. We need to get past a one-size-fits-all approach to infectious disease.

Realize that most of this money that is being loaned to small business is not a loan. Most of this money will not be repaid. It will ultimately be considered grants that will be added to our national debt.

Let's be honest about this. Applications for the program opened to overwhelming initial demand. The current data indicates that the money is gone, so now, here we are again, with leadership from both parties saying, Let's do another $300 billion, what is another couple hundred billion dollars? But realize the money desired is not money we have saved for a rainy day. This money doesn't exist anywhere. It will be created or borrowed. Even more alarming than the money is the idea that one Senator can stand on the floor and pass legislation spending a half-trillion dollars and have no recorded vote and no debate.

Look, I understand the hardships of Senators returning from around the country, so I have not invoked the Senate rules to demand a recorded vote. I did return today, though, so that history will record that not everyone gave in to the massive debt Congress is creating. My hope is that, across the country, there will remain a vibrant voice for limited government for our constitutional Republic. I don't want to see this massive accumulation of debt destroy this great country. My advice to the Senate and to the American people is let's be aware of what we are doing by creating all this new debt, and let's think before we jump to a terrible, terrible conclusion.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alaska.

CORONAVIRUS

Mr. SULLIVAN. Mr. President, we are going to vote here in a minute on the next package that is going to try to help our Nation address these unprecedented challenges. I want to thank the majority leader, the White House, and the Democrats who have come forward to do this.

It is very important that we are doing this. In my view, as the leader said, we should have done this 12 days ago. We are facing unprecedented challenges. When we passed the CARES Act 4 weeks ago—and I think Leader MCCONNELL did an incredible job bringing the U.S. Senate together on a vote of 96–0, as Minority Leader SCHUMER mentioned with regard to this legislation that our Nation needed so desperately and that we are trying to provide more resources because the resources needed had already been spent.

After that vote, I came to the floor, and I made a statement that, although I was proud to have voted for that and proud to have been a part of the negotiations for that because our Nation was going to need it—did need it, desperately—that we knew there would be mistakes. We knew there would be areas that weren't covered that should have been. We knew elements of that bill would run out of money, as they have.

I made a plea that we should be here working on behalf of the people we represent. Our Governors are back home working hard, doing a good job; but as I mentioned, the evening that we passed the CARES Act, from the perspective of Congress—House and Senate—this should be our duty station as we address these unprecedented challenges, and I still believe that. We have heard about the difficulties that could come with voting and having Members of Congress catch COVID–19, but we can do this safely. We can vote safely.

As Senator LEE mentioned earlier, Americans all over the country are on the frontlines—truck drivers, healthcare workers, grocery store attendants—helping their fellow Americans. If they can be doing that, I think we should be here working on behalf of them.

There is so much more to do. We need to be nimble. Let me give you an example. The energy sector right now—hugely important to my State—is being decimated because of what is happening globally with regard to energy prices. Great workers are being laid off. Small businesses in many sectors in Alaska like tourism are at a huge risk. Had we been here—you know, there is a lot of talk right now about the delay—the minority leader, Speaker PELOSI, wouldn't have had an excuse to delay the funding for the PPP for 12 days. How many small businesses and jobs were lost because of that delay? We will never know, but I am sure it was in the thousands.

I am reading a book right now, ''1776,'' by David McCullough. It is about the incredible challenges that our Nation went through at the birth of our Nation. It is mostly about George Washington and the tough battles he led and fought. He lost a lot of them in New York.

One remarkable thing about that book is, for almost the entire year in 1776, the Continental Congress was actually in session directing General Washington. They were in Philadelphia at enormous risk as the British were closing in on them. But as the war was raging for most of that year—that remarkable year of 1776—they were working.

We have so much more work to do for our Nation in these unprecedented times, whether it is confirming judges or phase four of an infrastructure package that we should be working on or even confirming key members of the executive branch. I am hopeful that, just in a couple of minutes, we are going to be able to move forward with Rear Admiral Michael Weahkee's nomination to be the Director of Indian Health Service at the Department of Health and Human Services. As our Native communities are being threatened by COVID–19, having this admiral, who has got broad support throughout our Tribal governments, including in Alaska, be able to be confirmed right now is just one example of the work that I am hopeful we can be doing.

So this should be our duty station, working around the clock for people we represent, getting through these unprecedented times, being able to address challenges as they arise—and they are arising every hour, every minute.

I want to end on a positive note—speaking of duty station—a good news story that involves the people of interior Alaska and our wonderful U.S. military. Right now, literally as we speak, there are two F–35s that have left Texas—brand new—coming to Eielson Air Force Base in Alaska. Fifteen years ago, Eielson Air Force Base was on the verge of being shut down. The interior Alaska communities of Fairbanks, North Pole, and so many leaders fought that. They said, No, this is a strategic location for our military, we shouldn't shut this down.

Now, these communities today will be receiving the first of 54 F–35s, two squadrons. I want to commend, not just my fellow Alaskans for their grit and determination to make this day happen—a huge day in my State—but the U.S. military. The U.S. military, a year and a half ago, said the F–35s will start coming to Alaska in April 2020. Despite this pandemic, that is what is happening today—remarkable grit and determination of my fellow Alaskans but also remarkable service to our Nation by the U.S. Air Force delivering these F–35s on time. That will make my State have over 100 fifth generation fighters protecting our country. So this is an inspiring story, as we are hearing all kinds of inspiring stories throughout our Nation, throughout these challenging times.

But in my view, we should be ready to help these great people that we lead and that we serve to get them through these unprecedented times.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader.

MAKING APPROPRIATIONS FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR, ENVIRONMENT, AND RELATED AGENCIES FOR THE FISCAL YEAR ENDING SEPTEMBER 30, 2019

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to immediate consideration of Calendar No. 12, H.R. 266.