CORONAVIRUS

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, faced with the greatest economic challenge in 75 years and the greatest public health threat in a century, we Senate Democrats have been waiting for months for our Republican colleagues in the Senate to get serious about another round of emergency relief for the American people.

Now that Senate Republicans have finally woken up to the calamity in our country, they have given up wishing it would go away, following the President's wishing everything would go away, to the detriment of this country. Our Republican colleagues have been so divided, so disorganized, and so unprepared that they have to struggle to draft even a partisan proposal within their own conference. This is before they talk to a single Democrat. This is before they even consider what the House has done.

It does seem that sometime soon, Republicans may finally unveil a legislative proposal, but because they are so disorganized and divided, they can't agree on a series of smaller bills that don't even amount to one coherent proposal. Even after all this time, it appears the Republican legislative response to COVID is ununified, unserious, unsatisfactory. Let me repeat that. Despite hitting the ''pause'' button on the Senate for 3 months, despite waiting more than 60 days after the House Democrats passed their plan to start work on their own, the Senate Republican response to COVID is ununified, unsatisfactory, and, fundamentally, unserious.

From what we know, their proposal or series of proposals will not include food assistance for hungry kids. Families where the parent has lost a job through no fault of her or his own can't feed their kids in this proposal, as we hear about it.

From what we know, it will not include rental assistance or extend the moratorium on evictions that is keeping tens of millions of Americans with a roof over their heads. Millions of Americans have lost their jobs through no fault of their own. They can't pay the rent or the mortgage, and our Republican friends say: Evict them.

It will not provide hazard pay to our essential workers, who have been risking their lives and their families' lives ever since this crisis began. It will not make the necessary investments in communities of color that have been ravaged by this virus disproportionately so. It will not provide the new funding that State and local governments need to keep the busdrivers and sanitation workers, teachers, and so many others on the job. From what we know, it will not even include funding to ensure that our elections are safe this fall during this COVID crisis.

Remarkably, the likely centerpiece of the Republican legislative response to COVID is not an aid package for the 20 to 30 million unemployed Americans or a massive influx of resources to test and trace and finally stop the spread of this evil disease. The centerpiece of the Republican proposal is a liability shield to protect big corporations from lawsuits if they put their workers at risk—seriously. As COVID continues to surge throughout our country and unemployment numbers rose again for the first time in weeks, Leader MCCONNELL has made corporate immunity the centerpiece of this Republican response. Once again, the Republican Senate is far more comfortable providing relief to big corporations than relief to American workers and American families.

How about instead of shielding corporations from liability, we shield renters from eviction? How about instead of shielding corporations from liability, we shield the unemployed from poverty?

Even in those areas where the Senate Republicans seem to be moving a bit in our direction, it looks like they are coming up way short. Republicans aren't talking about providing enough resources for our schools to reopen safely. According to reports, the White House and Senate Republicans want to extend the enhanced unemployment benefits the Democrats secured in the CARES Act but only provide a percentage of a worker's former wage.

That is right, America. If you have lost your job through no fault of your own and can't go back to work because this administration has mismanaged the crisis, Republicans want you to take a 30-percent pay cut in the middle of this crisis.

Worse still, because Republicans dithered and delayed for so long, there will be an interruption in unemployment benefits. Eviction protections will expire no matter what we do because they waited until the last minute and, even at this last minute, can't seem to get their act together.

Leader MCCONNELL and Senate Republicans dismissed the House-passed Heroes Act because it included a few items that Republicans didn't think were absolutely necessary.

Senate Republicans can't even get their act together to provide the basics—food for kids, keeping Americans in their homes, preventing the unemployed from going into poverty, and giving the economy the needed help so we can overcome this recession.

You can't say you support essential workers and then refuse to give them hazard pay. You can't say you want to fix racial issues and then throw millions of Americans of color out of housing and off unemployment benefits during a pandemic. You can't say you want to honor John Lewis and then refuse to provide funding for safe elections.

Congress needs to act quickly, but the developing Republican proposals are not going to get the job done. We need to immediately enter bipartisan, bicameral negotiations to develop a proposal that actually meets the moment and matches the scale of the crisis.

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. MCCONNELL. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. HYDE-SMITH). Without objection, it is so ordered.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is closed.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2021—Resumed

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of S. 4049, which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 4049) to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2021 for military activities of the Department of Defense, for military construction, and for defense activities of the Department of Energy, to prescribe military personnel strengths for such fiscal year, and for other purposes.

Pending:

Inhofe amendment No. 2301, in the nature of a substitute.

McConnell (for Portman) amendment No. 2080 (to amendment No. 2301), to require an element in annual reports on cyber science and technology activities on work with academic consortia on high priority cybersecurity research activities in Department of Defense capabilities.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader is recognized.

VOTE ON AMENDMENT NO. 2080

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, I know of no further debate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. If there is no further debate, the question is on agreeing to amendment No. 2080.

The amendment (No. 2080) was agreed to.

VOTE ON AMENDMENT NO. 2301, AS AMENDED

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to amendment No. 2301, as amended.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk called the roll.