and the American people stand with them in their journey.

HEALS ACT

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, on an entirely different matter, stop me if the story I am about to tell sounds familiar.

The Speaker of the House and the Democratic leader summon President Trump's representatives to the Capitol. They meet for a long while. The Democrats emerge, saying they have permitted a few millimeters of progress, but a deal is still far off, leaving millions of Americans in the lurch. Then they continue to push their $3 trillion wish list that even their own Democratic colleagues brush off as absurd. We have had variations on this theme daily for more than a week now.

Yesterday, the Speaker of the House called their far-left proposal a ''well-developed strategic plan,'' but even Members of her own caucus know that is not true.

Back when the Speaker's wish list was rammed through the House, one Democratic Member came right out and said that the so-called Heroes Act ''isn't a plan. It's a wish list.''

Another said that Members of her caucus had taken the bill as ''an opportunity to make political statements . . . that goes far beyond pandemic relief and has no chance at becoming law.''

Others said it was ''not focused'' and ''partisan gamesmanship.''

These are Democrats I am quoting.

Even the Speaker's own rank and file know it is comical to say your ''strategic plan'' for COVID–19 involves sending taxpayer checks to people who are here illegally, paying people more not to work than essential workers earn by working, soil health programs—so-called ''environmental justice'' grants—and a massive tax cut aimed directly at wealthy people in New York and California.

That last point needs special attention.

Now, in ordinary negotiations, Members of Congress like to bring things home for their core supporters, but it is a little too on the nose for the Speaker from San Francisco and the Democratic leader from New York City to be holding up $1 trillion in emergency aid for the entire country unless they get big tax breaks for millionaires in their hometowns.

Economists across the political spectrum say this demand of theirs is a bad idea because 94 percent of the benefit would flow to people who make north of $200,000.

In the words of one progressive economist, who ought to be on their side:

> This is not a good idea. . . . It would not help the economy heal and would not benefit the people who need help.

Yet my friends in the Democratic leadership are not deterred. More than a week into these talks, they are still threatening to block any and all relief for struggling people unless big city penthouses get these tax cuts. The Democratic leader said just yesterday that he is still holding out for this.

Now, this isn't the only bad policy they are hung up on. The Speaker and the Democratic leader continue to insist that Federal unemployment assistance should pay people more not to work than the essential workers who have kept working. Let me say that again. The Democratic position has been that these millions of laid-off people should get nothing unless they get a higher salary than the people who are still working. This isn't just bad economics if you are trying to reopen a country; it is also just simply unfair in the simplest terms.

The Republicans want to keep providing some supplemental Federal unemployment. We just don't think it is remotely fair for the Federal Government to tax essential workers who have kept working every day so Uncle Sam can pay their neighbors a higher salary to stay home. Let me say that again. We just don't think it is remotely fair for the Federal Government to tax essential workers who have kept working every day so Uncle Sam can pay their neighbors a higher salary to stay home.

Outside of the Democratic leader and the Speaker of the House, even Democrats concede it is a bit upside down to pay people more not to work.

Last week, the House Democratic majority leader said: ''It's not $600 or bust.''

Our colleague, the senior Senator from Maryland, has said: ''We certainly understand we don't want to have higher benefits than what someone can make working.''

Just yesterday, the senior Senator from West Virginia stated plainly that Speaker PELOSI's position was untenable. ''I don't think we're going to stay at the $600.''

Let's bear in mind, even $200 would be eight times what the Democrats put in place with unified control of the government during the last crisis in 2009. It is unthinkable they will hold every bit of relief hostage unless we land back at $600 and pay workers a bonus if they do not help to reopen our country. Maybe the Speaker and the Democratic leader will get the memo from their colleagues sometime soon.

Then there is the Democrats' demand for $1 trillion more to hand out to State and local governments even though they have only spent a fourth of the money we sent them back in March.

Yesterday, I received an urgent letter from the city of Malibu, CA—and I promise I am not making this up—asking Congress for hundreds of billions of dollars for State and local governments because it has had to delay its ''conversion to an all-electric city fleet.''

I guess that is an emergency in Malibu when they can't keep buying brandnew electric cars as quickly as they would like. Well, this emergency is hitting most of America very differently.

My constituents in Kentucky have bigger problems. They need actual relief to go straight to struggling families, and, frankly, they needed it yesterday, not a $1 trillion slush fund for bureaucrats who haven't spent what we sent them back in March.

Those are just some of the fantasy items that are in the Democrats' demands. I haven't even gotten to all of the important things they left out. Their bill costs three times as much as the Senate Republicans' HEALS Act, but they skip over major, serious things that we took care of.

The Democrats proposed fewer resources than the Republicans for the fund to help schools reopen safely. The Democrats completely shortchanged the successful Collins-Rubio Paycheck Protection Program, wherein our bill would fund a whole second round. The Democrats have no real equivalent to our proposals to strengthen domestic supply chains for PPE and critical resources, and they propose no legal protections at all for the doctors and nurses who have fought this unknown enemy or for the schools, universities, churches, and businesses that are trying to reopen. Apparently, those soil health experiments and diversity initiatives didn't leave enough room for the critical policies that would actually help the country.

But, remember, our Democratic colleagues told us from the beginning their goal was never a targeted plan for COVID–19.

In March, one of the Speaker's top lieutenants said the Democrats should view this deadly disease and mass unemployment as a ''tremendous opportunity to restructure things to fit our vision.'' Speaker PELOSI herself called this crisis a ''wonderful opportunity.'' It is clear they view it that way because, while Americans are struggling, the Democratic leaders have moved about 1 inch in 8 days.

For the sake of the millions and millions who need more help, let's hope they decide to get serious soon.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

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

MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will be in a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

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