

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader is recognized.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the cloture motion with respect to the motion to proceed to H.R. 748 be withdrawn.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.
The cloture motion was withdrawn.

MIDDLE CLASS HEALTH BENEFITS TAX REPEAL ACT OF 2019

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of H.R. 748; further, that the only amendments in order be amendments to be offered by Senator MCCONNELL, No. 1578, and Senator SASSE, No. 1577, or their designees; further, that the Senate vote on the Sasse amendment with a 60-affirmative-vote threshold for adoption; further, that following disposition of the Sasse amendment, the McConnell amendment, as amended, if amended, be agreed to, the bill, as amended, be read a third time, and the Senate vote on passage of the bill, as amended, with a 60-affirmative-vote threshold for passage; finally, if passed, that the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table and that all rollcall votes in this series be 30 minutes in length.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the bill.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 748) to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to repeal the excise tax on high cost employer-sponsored health coverage.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the bill.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that I proceed under my leader time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, so here we are, colleagues. For the information of all of our Senators, we will first vote on the adoption of the Sasse amendment at a 60-vote threshold, and then our second and final vote will be on passage of the CARES Act, also at a 60-vote threshold. We are going to pass this bipartisan relief package and send it over to the House so they can put it on the President's desk.

When the Senate adjourns this evening, our next scheduled vote will be the afternoon of Monday, April 20. Of course, during this unprecedented time for our country, the Senate is going to stay nimble. As always, we will convene regular pro forma sessions, and if circumstances require the Senate to return for a vote sooner than April 20, we will provide at least 24 hours' notice.

Our Nation obviously is going through a kind of crisis that is totally

unprecedented in living memory. Let's stay connected and continue to collaborate on the best ways to keep helping our States and our country through this pandemic. Let's continue to pray for one another, for all of our families, and for our country.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The minority leader is recognized.

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, I will speak for a little bit, briefly.

The legislation now before us is historic because it is meant to match a historic crisis. Our healthcare system is not prepared to care for the sick. Our workers are without work. Our businesses cannot do business. Our factories lie idle. The gears of the American economy have ground to a halt. Our country has faced immense challenges before but rarely so many at the same time.

Over the past few days, the Senate has stepped into the breach. We packed weeks or perhaps months of legislative process into 5 days. Representatives from both sides of the aisle and both ends of Pennsylvania Avenue have forged the bipartisan agreement in highly partisan times with very little time to spare. It has been a long, hard road with a remarkable number of twists and turns, but for the sake of millions of Americans, it will be worth it.

It will be worth it to save millions of small businesses and tens of millions of jobs.

It will be worth it to see that Americans who have lost their jobs through no fault of their own will be able to pay their rent and mortgages and put food on the table because we passed the greatest expansion of insurance to the unemployed in decades.

It will be worth it to send gloves and masks to our nurses and to our doctors.

It will be worth it to send ventilators and beds to our hospitals and begin rebuilding the public health infrastructure in America—a Marshall Plan in this new century for our medical system.

It will be worth it to save industries from the brink of collapse in order to save the jobs of hundreds of thousands of Americans in those industries.

It will be worth it to put workers first.

It was a long, hard road. Neither side can be completely happy with the final product, but it will be worth it.

I am damn proud of the work we did over the past few days because we put in the work. Because we tested the limits of exhaustion, because we didn't immediately accept the bill drafted by only one party, the legislation before us tonight is better—better for our healthcare system and 65,000 Americans now afflicted with COVID-19, better for our workers, better for our small businesses, better for our Indian Tribes, better for our economy, and better for the American people.

So I must thank my colleagues on both sides of the aisle—especially the chairs and ranking members and their

staffs. The past few days have been filled with drama. The past few hours were no exception. I know a few of my Republican friends still harbor reservations about voting for this legislation, but when there is a crisis of this magnitude, the private sector cannot solve it. Individuals, even with bravery and valor, are not powerful enough to beat it back. Government is the only force large enough to staunch the bleeding and begin the healing.

This is a time when the American people need their government. This is what we were elected for. The oath we swear to the Constitution means we must protect the general welfare of the people. So let us marshal this government into action.

There are millions of Americans watching us right now at home on their televisions, separated from friends and family, fearful for their children and their livelihoods, unsure of when the time will come when all of our lives may return to normal. Let us tell them tonight that help is on the way; that they are not truly alone; that this country, that this Senate, that this government is here for them in a time of dire need. This is a strange and evil disease. There is much we still don't know about it, and it is keeping us apart. When we pass this bill, instead of hugging each other, we will wave from a distance.

None of us can know when this plague will pass. The only thing we know for sure is that we must summon the same spirit that saw previous generations through America's darkest hours. Fellowship, sacrifice, fortitude, resilience—that is what it means to be an American. With that spirit, this Nation faced down war and depression and fear itself. I have no doubt that once again America will ultimately prevail.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader is recognized.

AMENDMENT NO. 1578

(Purpose: Providing emergency assistance and health care response for individuals, families and businesses affected by the 2020 coronavirus pandemic.)

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, I call up the substitute amendment No. 1578 and ask that it be reported by number.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, the clerk will report the amendment by number.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Kentucky [Mr. MCCONNELL] proposes an amendment numbered 1578.

(The amendment is printed in today's RECORD under "Text of Amendments.")

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Nebraska is recognized.

AMENDMENT NO. 1577

Mr. SASSE. Madam President, I call up amendment No. 1577 and ask unanimous consent that it be reported by number.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, the amendment will be reported by number.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Nebraska [Mr. SASSE] proposes an amendment numbered 1577 to amendment No. 1578.

The amendment is as follows

(Purpose: To ensure that additional unemployment benefits do not result in an individual receiving unemployment compensation that is more than the amount of wages the individual was earning prior to becoming unemployed.)

At the end of subtitle A of title II of division A, insert the following:

SEC. 2117. UNEMPLOYMENT BENEFITS MAY NOT EXCEED THE AMOUNT OF WAGES THE INDIVIDUAL WAS EARNING PRIOR TO BECOMING UNEMPLOYED.

(a) PANDEMIC UNEMPLOYMENT ASSISTANCE.—Notwithstanding section 2101, in no case may the total amount of the weekly assistance applicable to an individual under paragraph (1) or (2) of section 2102 (including the increase under section 2104) exceed the amount of the individual's average weekly wages for an appropriate period prior to the receipt of assistance under such section, as determined by the Secretary of Labor.

(b) FEDERAL PANDEMIC UNEMPLOYMENT COMPENSATION.—Notwithstanding section 2104, in no case may the sum of the weekly amount described in subparagraphs (A) (regular compensation) and (B) (Federal pandemic unemployment compensation) of section 2104(b)(1) for an individual exceed the amount of the individual's average weekly wages for which the amount described in such subparagraph (A) is based.

(c) PANDEMIC EMERGENCY UNEMPLOYMENT COMPENSATION.—Notwithstanding section 2107, in no case may an individual's average weekly benefit amount described in 2107(b)(3) (including the increase under section 2104) exceed the amount of the average weekly wages for which the individual's average weekly benefit amount (determined without regard to such increase) is based.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the Sasse amendment.

Mr. SASSE. I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The senior assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. BARRASSO. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Utah (Mr. LEE), the Senator from Kentucky (Mr. PAUL), the Senator from Utah (Mr. ROMNEY), and the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. THUNE).

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. PERDUE). Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote or change their vote?

The result was announced—yeas 48, nays 48, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 79 Leg.]

YEAS—48

Alexander	Cotton	Hawley
Barrasso	Cramer	Hoeben
Blackburn	Crapo	Hyde-Smith
Blunt	Cruz	Inhofe
Boozman	Daines	Johnson
Braun	Enzi	Kennedy
Burr	Ernst	Lankford
Capito	Fischer	Loeffler
Cassidy	Graham	Manchin
Cornyn	Grassley	McConnell

McSally	Roberts	Shelby
Moran	Rounds	Sullivan
Murkowski	Rubio	Tillis
Perdue	Sasse	Toomey
Portman	Scott (FL)	Wicker
Risch	Scott (SC)	Young

NAYS—48

Baldwin	Gillibrand	Reed
Bennet	Harris	Rosen
Blumenthal	Hassan	Sanders
Booker	Heinrich	Schatz
Brown	Hirono	Schumer
Cantwell	Jones	Shaheen
Cardin	Kaine	Sinema
Carper	King	Smith
Casey	Klobuchar	Stabenow
Collins	Leahy	Tester
Coons	Markey	Udall
Cortez Masto	Menendez	Van Hollen
Duckworth	Merkley	Warner
Durbin	Murphy	Warren
Feinstein	Murray	Whitehouse
Gardner	Peters	Wyden

NOT VOTING—4

Lee	Romney
Paul	Thune

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the 60-vote threshold having not been achieved, the amendment is not agreed to.

The amendment (No. 1577) was rejected.

The amendment (No. 1578) was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will read the title of the bill for the third time.

The amendment was ordered to be engrossed and the bill to be read a third time.

The bill was read the third time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The bill having been read the third time, the question is, Shall the bill pass?

Mr. DAINES. Mr. 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.

Mr. BARRASSO. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Utah (Mr. LEE), the Senator from Kentucky (Mr. PAUL), the Senator from Utah (Mr. ROMNEY), and the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. THUNE).

The result was announced—yeas 96, nays 0, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 80 Leg.]

YEAS—96

Alexander	Cruz	Klobuchar
Baldwin	Daines	Lankford
Barrasso	Duckworth	Leahy
Bennet	Durbin	Loeffler
Blackburn	Enzi	Manchin
Blumenthal	Ernst	Markey
Blunt	Feinstein	McConnell
Booker	Fischer	McSally
Boozman	Gardner	Menendez
Braun	Gillibrand	Merkley
Brown	Graham	Moran
Burr	Grassley	Murkowski
Cantwell	Harris	Murphy
Capito	Hassan	Murray
Cardin	Hawley	Perdue
Carper	Heinrich	Peters
Casey	Hirono	Portman
Cassidy	Hoeben	Reed
Collins	Hyde-Smith	Risch
Cooms	Inhofe	Roberts
Cornyn	Johnson	Rosen
Cortez Masto	Jones	Rounds
Cotton	Kaine	Rubio
Cramer	Kennedy	Sanders
Crapo	King	Sasse

Schatz	Smith	Van Hollen
Schumer	Stabenow	Warner
Scott (FL)	Sullivan	Warren
Scott (SC)	Tester	Whitehouse
Shaheen	Tillis	Wicker
Shelby	Toomey	Wyden
Sinema	Udall	Young

NOT VOTING—4

Lee	Romney
Paul	Thune

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. BOOZMAN). On this vote the yeas are 96, the nays are 0. The 60 vote threshold having been achieved, the bill is passed.

The bill (H.R. 748), as amended, was passed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alaska.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. SULLIVAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate be in a period of morning business.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

CORONAVIRUS

Mr. SULLIVAN. Mr. President, we just finished here, on the Senate floor, some very, very important work for the people we represent and have the privilege to serve. It is what we are calling phase 3 of our very important response to this unprecedented pandemic that is hitting our country, the health of our country, and the economic health of our Nation.

So we acted. A number of us worked, over the past week, around the clock to put this legislation together, and I think it was a strong showing of bipartisan support.

I was on the floor a couple of days ago saying that what we needed to do were four key things: Put cash directly in the hands of hurting families in Alaska and throughout the country; deliver rapid relief to small businesses that are being crushed by this pandemic and having to lay off workers; stabilize key sectors of the economy to avoid more layoffs that are now quickly coming over the horizon and have started happening; and send a surge of new resources to medical professionals who are on the frontlines. We did that. We did that relatively quickly. It could have been faster, but those were our goals, and that is what we achieved here.

But here is a fact. This was legislation that was very important. It wasn't perfect, and there is probably a lot of mistakes here. We are going to need to correct them quickly. There are probably Americans who weren't covered in some way, shape, or form by this legislation, who need help, and we are going to need to cover them quickly. There are likely new challenges in this pandemic that seems to be changing every day—new challenges with regard to this crisis that we are going to need to address.

The final thing is, when we look at what we just did here, this was focused