

COVID-19 Update: Federal Developments – Congress

Congress	
News	Notes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No votes are expected in the House during the week of June 1. An updated 2020 House legislative calendar was released on May 29. It was announced last week that the Senate will stick with its original legislative schedule for the year, with a state work period around the July 4 holiday as well as from August 10 to September 7. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> On May 29, Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., told reporters in Fort Thomas, Ky., that the next bill will be the "fourth and final" relief package the Senate does. "We anticipate the decision being made on whether to go forward in about a month," he added. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> On May 29, a group of allied trade organizations and companies, including The Coca-Cola Company and PepsiCo, sent a letter to Speaker Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif., House Minority Leader Kevin McCarthy, R-Calif., Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., and Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y. The group is calling on Congress for an additional aid package as efforts to pass another coronavirus relief bill drag on. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> On May 28, the House Education and Labor Committee Subcommittee on Workforce Protections held their rescheduled hearing, "Examining the Federal Government's Actions to Protect Workers from COVID-19." Witnesses included Loren Sweatt, Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Occupational Safety and Health Administration, and Dr. John Howard, Director for National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH). Topics covered during the hearing included: universal workplace standards and guidelines; workforce and industry protections and guidelines; providing protections for workers; and interagency re-opening guidance. When Members asked about guidance that both NIOSH and OSHA have issued on reopening workplaces, and specific guidance for different industries, both Sweatt and Howard responded that their agencies are continually updating the guidance available on their websites. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> On May 28, the House overwhelmingly passed H.R. 7010, bipartisan legislation championed by Reps. Dean Phillips, D-Minn., and Chip Roy, R-Texas, which would give Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) borrowers more leeway in how they can use the funds and still have the loans forgiven in exchange for maintaining their payrolls. Specifically, businesses seeking full loan forgiveness would be given more time to spend the money — 24 weeks instead of 8 — and lower the minimum amount that must be spent on payroll from 75% to 60%. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> On May 27, both Dr. Anthony Fauci and Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., urged Americans to wear masks. "There's no stigma attached to wearing a mask. There's no stigma attached to staying six feet apart," McConnell said at an event back in his home state. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> On May 27, Sen. Debbie Stabenow, D-Mich., ranking member of the Senate Agriculture Committee, introduced the Food Supply Protection Act. The legislation would provide \$5.5 billion in grants, loans and loan guarantees to help small- and medium-sized companies shift their operations to respond to COVID-19, including procuring more personal protective equipment (PPE) and testing. More details here. 	

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> On May 27, a group of Republican Senators sent a letter to President Trump asking the administration not to restrict temporary work-based visas amid the coronavirus pandemic. Sens. Lindsey Graham, R-S.C., John Cornyn, R-Texas, Mike Crapo, R-Idaho, Jim Risch, R-Idaho, Mike Rounds, R-S.D., Todd Young, R-Ind., Lisa Murkowski, R-Alaska, Dan Sullivan, R-Alaska, and James Lankford, R-Okla., note that issuing H-2B and H-2A visas, which are used for seasonal workers, will help economic recovery. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> On May 26, Minority Leader Kevin McCarthy, R-Calif., along with 20 other GOP lawmakers, sued Speaker Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif., over the new proxy voting system. House GOP is challenging the voting method, calling it unconstitutional. Four constituents also signed on to the lawsuit, claiming their representation in Congress is at risk of being diluted. It's unlikely that federal courts will settle the matter, as they are notoriously reluctant to wade into internal House machinations. The House sets its own rules and procedures, and judges routinely sidestep questions about them by deferring to the internal prerogatives of the House, often citing the Constitution's language that "[e]ach House may determine the rules of its proceedings." 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A group of moderate Senate Democrats, including Sens. Chris Coons, D-Del., Doug Jones, D-Ala., Tom Carper, D-Del., and Joe Manchin, D-W.Va., say they are open to considering liability protection for businesses in the next round of coronavirus relief legislation. This continues to be an important marker for Republicans. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., said on May 26 that there would "likely" be a fifth coronavirus relief bill "in the next month or so." 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The House returns for votes on Wednesday, May 27 and Thursday, May 28. The Senate will reconvene on June 1. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A vote is expected on a measure introduced by Representatives Dean Phillips, D-Minn., and Chip Roy, R-Texas, to ease restrictions on how businesses use Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) loan proceeds. Early indications are that the Senate is supportive of the Phillips-Roy bill and that senators would move to pass it when they reconvene on June 1. An effort by Senators Marco Rubio, R-Fla.; Susan Collins, R-Maine; Ben Cardin, D-Md.; and Jeanne Shaheen, D-N.H., to pass during the week of May 18 their PPPP Extension Act by unanimous consent met with opposition and was unsuccessful. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> On May 28 at 10:15am, the House Education and Labor Subcommittee on Workforce Protections will hold its rescheduled hearing: Examining the Federal Government's Actions to Protect Workers. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> On May 21, Energy and Commerce Chairman Frank Pallone, D-N.J., Ranking Member Greg Walden, R-Ore., Oversight and Investigations Subcommittee Chair Diana DeGette, D-Co., and Oversight and Investigations Subcommittee Ranking Member Brett Guthrie, R-Ky., sent a letter to White House Coronavirus Task Force Coordinator Dr. Deborah Birx urging the Trump Administration to develop a national COVID-19 vaccine plan. In the committee's view, a comprehensive plan should outline plans for development, manufacturing, distribution, provider training, public education and broad access to the vaccine. 	

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The House Clerk is keeping track of proxy letters submitted by Members of Congress. See the list here. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The House Select Committee on the Coronavirus Crisis held on May 21 a hearing on “Heroes of the Coronavirus Crisis: Protecting Frontline and Essential Workers During the Pandemic.” The hearing detailed the continued need for more personal protective equipment (PPE), testing and resources for frontline workers as well as the risks associated with reopening economies too quickly. Republicans focused on investigating the origins of the virus, the alleged negligence on the part of the Chinese government and payroll tax cuts. Democrats focused on their recently passed HEROES Act and providing bonus pay to frontline workers. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The House Small Business Committee held on May 21 a virtual forum to discuss business interruption insurance. Republicans favored a public-private model for pandemic-related business insurance coverage while some Democrats argued the COVID-19 pandemic is not specifically excluded from many current policies. Both sides opposed retroactive business insurance payouts, citing unconstitutionality and unaffordability. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Senators Marco Rubio, R-Fla.; Susan Collins, R-Maine; Ben Cardin, D-Md.; and Jeanne Shaheen, D-N.H., introduced on May 22 the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) Extension Act (summary). The bill would: extend the deadline to apply from June 30 to December 31; allow borrowers 16 weeks to use funds instead of eight (borrowers would not lose forgiveness eligibility if they maintain payroll for the original eight weeks); allow funds to be used for the purchase of PPE and adaptive investments to reopen safely; and clarify the hold harmless provisions for lenders. While Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., is attempting to pass the bill through the Senate by unanimous consent, there are likely to be objections from individual senators that will need to be addressed before the bill can pass. The House will vote during the week of May 25 on a measure introduced by Representatives Dean Phillips, D-Minn., and Chip Roy, R-Texas, to ease restrictions on how businesses use PPP loan proceeds. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Senate has finished its business and will reconvene on June 1. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Following on the remarks made by Sen. Cory Gardner’s, R-Colo., to derail the Senate from recess, Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., announced that the chamber will take action on Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) loans when they return. Additionally, Sen. McConnell announced that senators will vote on Gardner’s Great American Outdoors Act when they return in June. Sen. Gardner relented following these announcements. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As for a Phase Four relief bill, there are a few signs that Congress will pass another recovery package at some point this summer. Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin said at a virtual event hosted by The Hill that there’s a “strong likelihood” they will need another relief bill. Sen. McConnell told President Trump during a private meeting during the week of May 18 that the next piece of legislation has to be under \$1 trillion, according to Axios’ Jonathan Swan. And during an interview with Fox News’s Martha McCallum, McConnell said there is a high likelihood another rescue package would be forthcoming, but it could be awhile before we see progress. On May 21, Sen. Chuck Grassley, R-Iowa, told The 	

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<p>Washington Post’s Paul Kane and CNN’s Lauren Fox that negotiations wouldn’t even begin until the third or fourth week of June.</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Senators Roy Blunt, R-Mo., Lindsey Graham, R-S.C., and Roger Wicker, R-Miss., have all voiced support for moving on an infrastructure package to fund much-needed road, bridge and transportation projects. This is part of the ongoing discussion in the Senate regarding the need and timing for Phase Four legislation. However, Sen. Cory Gardner, R-Co., has threatened to block the Senate from going into recess for Memorial Day if action is not taken on an additional aid package. Sen. Susan Collins, R-Maine, expressed similar sentiments. Senate GOP leadership is working to reach an agreement with Sens. Gardner and Collins. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> House leaders have agreed to hold a vote on bipartisan legislation to ease restrictions on how businesses use Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) loans, which can be forgiven if employers agree to maintain their payroll and avert layoffs during the coronavirus pandemic. Reps. Dean Phillips, D-Minn., and Chip Roy, R-Texas, are working together to draft the bill. The bipartisan legislation that the House is planning to take up during the week of May 25 would give businesses more flexibility in how they use their PPP loans and still have them forgiven. The request has become an urgent demand from restaurants and other industries as shutdown orders nationwide have persisted longer than lawmakers first expected when they created the program in March. Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., has not announced specific action on standalone PPP legislation. There also is clear bipartisan support in the Senate. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif., sent on May 20 a “Dear Colleague,” which will begin a 45-day “covered period” allowing remote voting by proxy as well as remote committee proceedings. Per the resolution the House passed on May 15, the covered period terminates after 45 days (but could be renewed). 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The House Select Subcommittee on the Coronavirus Crisis will hold a briefing for Members on May 21 at noon on the impact of the coronavirus crisis on medical staff, first responders, grocery store workers, drivers, custodians and other frontline workers. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Congressional Oversight Commission – comprised of Reps. French Hill, R-Ark., and Donna Shalala, D-Fla.; Sen. Pat Toomey, R-Pa.; and Bharat Ramamurti – released on May 18 its first report to review the use of \$500 billion appropriated to the Federal Reserve and the Treasury by the CARES Act passed on March 27. The Commission’s report summarizes how the two entities are using CARES Act funding for various lending programs, noting that funding for the aviation industry is not yet disbursed. The report concludes with a list of questions for the Federal Reserve and the Treasury on lending programs, borrower protections and allocation of funding. The Commission still lacks a chairman, to be jointly appointed by Speaker Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif., and Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sens. Bob Menendez, D-N.J., and Bill Cassidy, R-La., introduced on May 18 a revised bipartisan bill, the State and Municipal Assistance for Recovery and Transition (SMART) Act, which targets \$500 billion in emergency funding to every state, county and community in the country, while prioritizing assistance to the areas with the greatest need. 	

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Senate is in session during the week of May 18 with a number of votes planned on judicial nominees before the chamber breaks for Memorial Day. In the House, lawmakers are not expected to return to Washington until May 27 or 28 to vote on Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act reauthorization, with the schedule up in the air beyond that date. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The U.S. House of Representatives passed H.R. 6800, the Health and Economic Recovery Omnibus Emergency Solutions (HEROES) Act, on May 15 by a nearly party-line vote of 208-199. The bill establishes a federal fund to give hazard pay to essential workers; provides another round of direct payments to individuals and families; directs OSHA to develop an enforceable safety standard requiring employers to develop infection control plans for the workplace; funds COBRA subsidies for those who've lost employer-provided health care; extends unemployment benefits; and increases minimum SNAP benefits by 15%. The bill does not address liability protections for businesses that remained operational during the COVID-19 pandemic. One Republican, Rep. Peter King, R-NY., joined Democrats in passage and 14 Democrats voted against. There are no plans for the Senate to take up the House Democrats' HEROES Act. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Democrats also passed on May 15 a rule change to authorize remote voting by proxy and providing for official remote committee proceedings by a party-line vote of 217-189, with three Democrats voting against – Representatives Rick Larsen, D-Wash., Elaine Luria, D-Va., and Tom O'Halleran, D-Ariz. GOP leadership largely panned the rule change over security concerns and said such a dramatic departure from more than 200 years of precedent should have required a two-thirds majority to pass. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The House Education and Labor Subcommittee on Workforce Protections will hold a hearing, "Examining the Federal Government's Actions to Protect Workers from COVID-19," on May 20. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Capitol officials have decided to keep the Capitol complex closed to the public until June 8, which is when the District of Columbia's stay-at-home order expires. The decision was made in consultation with the Capitol physician and the House and Senate Sergeants at Arms. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> On May 15, The House returned to session. Members have gathered to vote on H.R. 6800, the Health and Economic Recovery Omnibus Emergency Solutions (HEROES) Act. Voting will last well into the evening. Physical distancing measures will be in place for the vote, as they were when the House last convened to vote on March 26. The House will also vote on a proposed rule change to authorize remote voting by proxy and providing for official remote committee proceedings. Both bills are expected to pass in near party-line votes. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> House Appropriations Committee Chairwoman Nita Lowey (D-NY) will offer a manager's amendment to the HEROES Act, intended to clarify and refine the text released on Tuesday. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Senate concluded its business for the week yesterday and will reconvene on Monday. There are no plans for the Senate to take up the House bill. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A vote is scheduled in the House for May 15 to consider H.R. 6800, the Health and Economic Recovery Omnibus Emergency Solutions (HEROES) Act. It is expected to pass in a party-line vote. 	

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> House Democrats released on May 13 their proposed rule change to authorize remote voting by proxy and providing for official remote committee proceedings (summary here). Importantly, the rule does not allow for a general proxy; the Member of Congress must explicitly direct each vote cast. The proxy voting system would only be temporary, however, and one lawmaker could only vote for up to 10 members. The proposal also orders a feasibility study for using technology to vote remotely in the future. A vote on the rules change is scheduled for Friday May 15. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Senate Judiciary Committee held on May 12 a hearing on “Examining Liability During the COVID-19 Pandemic.” During the hearing, Chairman Graham, R-S.C., asked the witnesses if the country would be better off if there were clear and official guidelines released by federal agencies, such as OSHA, that detail best practices for businesses reopening. All panelists said “yes.” Following the exchange, Chairman Graham said the sooner they can pass a regulatory framework, the better off everyone will be. He said he will pass this up to the Administration and encourage these guidelines be made. This must be done by defining limited liability protection and time-in-scope, without rewarding “bad actors.” It was clear via questioning that Senate Republicans seemed amenable to the idea that businesses need liability protection, whereas Senate Democrats argued that liability laws are critical to protecting workers. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In addition to the letter sent by ABA and 36 allied industry associations to the Chair and Ranking Member of the Senate Judiciary Committee, 21 State Attorneys General sent a similar letter urging the enactment of COVID-19-related liability protections for businesses, and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce’s Institute for Legal Reform shared its report looking at exposure liability, product liability, medical malpractice and securities litigation. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Speaker Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif., and House Majority Leader Steny Hoyer, D-Md., released on May 13 the details of their remote work plan. The proposal, known as proxy voting, would allow lawmakers to cast votes for colleagues who aren’t in the Capitol in person, marking one of the biggest changes to chamber rules in decades. Lawmakers are expected to vote on the proxy voting change on May 15. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> House Democrats released on May 12 the text of the Health and Economic Recovery Omnibus Emergency Solutions (HEROES) Act – full text here and summary here. The \$3 trillion relief package is a messaging bill, intended to help House Democrats lay their policy markers. This will not become law. The Democratic Caucus will host calls May 12-13 to walk through the text, and a vote is expected on May 15. Highlights from the proposal include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> \$500 billion for state governments; \$375 billion for local governments; \$20 billion for tribal relief; and \$20 billion for relief for territories. \$755 million to replenish funds left out of the first CARES package for the District of Columbia to assist with the fiscal impacts of COVID-19. \$3.6 billion for “contingency planning, preparation, and resilience of elections for Federal office.” <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Requires states and jurisdictions to establish and make publicly available contingency plans that enable voting in federal elections during a state of emergency. Requires at least 15 consecutive days of early voting for federal elections. Ensures that every voter can access no excuse absentee vote by mail. Goes 	

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<p>into effect in the November 2020 election and for each succeeding federal election. Prohibits states from requiring any form of identification to obtain an absentee ballot.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Another round of \$1,200 direct payments to Americans. ○ \$10 billion for small businesses. ○ \$10 billion for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Increases the SNAP benefit level by 15%. Increases the minimum SNAP benefit to \$30 per month. Waives all work requirements for SNAP. Directs USDA to allow the use of SNAP to purchase hot foods or hot food products ready for immediate consumption from authorized retail food stores. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Important to note regarding HEROES Act – neither Congressional Republicans nor the White House are in any hurry to legislate another round of relief. Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky, told reporters on May 11, “We have not yet felt the urgency of acting immediately. That time could develop, but I don’t think it has yet.” And when the time is right, Congressional Republicans have their own marker - Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., reiterated on May 12 on the Senate floor that he will insist on liability protection for employers in the post-coronavirus world. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions (HELP) Committee held on May 12 the first mostly remote hearing with health officials including Dr. Anthony Fauci, appearing remotely, and Committee Chair Lamar Alexander, R-Tenn., chairing from his home in Tennessee. During the hearing, Dr. Fauci, director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID) at the National Institutes of Health (NIH), stated that reopening states too soon could lead to “really serious” consequences. However, Dr. Fauci provided some good news, noting that the NIH vaccine trial “moved very quickly,” and they “hope to know ... in the late fall or early winter” If it is successful. Dr Fauci is “cautiously optimistic.” ADM Brett Giroir, Assistant Secretary for Health at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, said the U.S. expects to test 3.9% of the country during May. He also addressed vaccine costs during the hearing, stating that he would “certainly advocate” that everyone should be able to get the vaccine. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The Assistance and Gratitude for Coronavirus Heroes in Agribusiness who are Invaluable to the Nation, or the AG CHAIN Act, was introduced in the House afternoon May 12 by Representatives GT Thompson, R-Pa., and Dwight Evans, D-Pa. The bill would provide a federal tax holiday and a payroll tax exemption for all essential employees in the food and agriculture industry defined by recent Department of Homeland Security (DHS) guidance. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Ahead of the May 12 Senate Judiciary Committee’s hearing on liability, ABA joined with other industries in signing a letter asking Chairman Lindsey Graham, R-S.C., and Ranking Member Dianne Feinstein, D-Calif., to provide protection for essential businesses. Read the letter here. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● House Democrats are still expected to release a “CARES 2” bill early in the week of May 11 – likely late on May 11 or early May 12 – to address ongoing relief needs. The legislation is best characterized as an opening proposal from Democrats as bipartisan and bicameral negotiations with the Administration will be necessary to complete an eventual package. According to an Axios article, the proposal includes: 	

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Roughly \$1 trillion for state and local governments; ○ More money for hospitals and COVID-19 testing; ○ Roughly \$25 billion to keep the U.S. Postal Service afloat; ○ Expanded nutritional benefits, Medicaid funding and unemployment insurance (which they call ‘paycheck guarantee’); and ○ Another round of direct payments to Americans. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● In its first official action, the Select Subcommittee on the Coronavirus Crisis, chaired by House Majority Whip Jim Clyburn, D-S.C., sent letters on May 8 demanding that “large, public corporations immediately return taxpayer funds that Congress intended for small businesses struggling to survive during the coronavirus crisis.” Sent to specific companies, the letters ask recipients to confirm by May 11 if they will return the funds. If the funds will not be returned in all or part, the committee asks each company to produce “all documents and communications (1) between your company and the Small Business Administration and the Department of the Treasury relating to the PPP loan; and (2) between your company and any financial institution relating to the PPP loan, including all applications for a PPP loan” by May 15. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● On May 8, Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee Chairman Lamar Alexander, R-Tenn., said there are “not nearly enough” COVID-19 tests to safely reopen the country. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The House will not be back in session and voting before May 15. The Senate is in session. A number of House and Senate hearings and virtual round tables will be taking place during the week of May 11: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ May 12 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 10:00am: Senate Banking and Urban Affairs: “Oversight of Financial Regulators” ▪ 10:00am: Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions: “COVID-19: Safely Getting Back to Work and Back to School” / Dr. Robert Redfield, the head of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and Dr. Stephen Hahn, the commissioner of the FDA by video conference ▪ 2:30pm: Senate Judiciary Committee: “Examining Liability During the COVID-19 Pandemic” ○ May 13 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 10:00am: Senate Commerce, Science, and Transportation: “The State of Broadband Amid the COVID-19 Pandemic” ▪ 10:00am: House Financial Services Subcommittee on Consumer Protection and Financial Institutions = “Update from Prudential Regulators” ▪ 1:00pm: House Small Business: “A Conversation with SBA PPP Lenders” ○ May 14 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 10:00am: House Energy and Commerce Subcommittee on Health – “Protecting Scientific Integrity in the COVID-19 Response” 	

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 1:00pm: House Small Business – “First Look: SBA Office of Inspector General Preliminary PPP Report” 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Speaker Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif., is trying to finalize a multi-trillion-dollar coronavirus relief package, hoping to put the bill on the House floor during the week of May 11 — a timeline that some senior Democrats dismiss as unlikely. Pelosi had hoped to release the draft bill – which some Democrats worry could cost upward of \$2 trillion – on May 8 but infighting is making consensus difficult. Of note, this legislation will not incorporate House Republican proposals. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On May 8, Sens. Kamala Harris, D-Calif., Bernie Sanders, I-Vt., and Ed Markey, D-Mass., will release their Monthly Economic Crisis Support Act. It expands upon the \$1,200 sent to Americans as part of March’s coronavirus response bill (H.R. 748). The legislation would send a monthly \$2,000 check to people who make less than \$120,000, expand to \$4,000 to married couples who file taxes jointly, and also provide \$2,000 for each child up to three. Read the bill text here. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On May 7, the House Financial Services Committee announced a bipartisan agreement to host “virtual roundtables.” While not formal hearings, committee leadership will work together to develop a “standard practice” to follow for all virtual events. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The House Energy and Commerce Committee announced a pair of “Teleconference Forums” over the coming days. On May 8, the full committee will hold a forum to hear from three health experts on COVID-19 testing, contact tracing and surveillance. On May 11, Consumer Protection and Commerce Subcommittee members will hear from Federal Trade Commission Chairman Joseph Simons regarding consumer protection and privacy-related COVID-19 issues. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Twenty-four attorneys general co-signed a letter to congressional leadership calling for an overhaul of the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) on May 7. The letter asks that Congress limit access to those that need funding, ensure fair access, ensure fair distribution, direct the Small Business Administration (SBA) to better communicate with small businesses, provide more flexibility, increase transparency, improve technical support, direct the SBA to provide more lender guidance and assist the unbanked. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On May 7, President Donald Trump convened by phone the Opening Up America Again Congressional Group. The dialogue focused on a number of topics, including the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP), energizing the economy, medical billing, small business relief and more. You can read the White House press statement here. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) news: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ A bipartisan group of senators including Ron Wyden, D-Ore.; Chuck Grassley, R-Iowa; John Cornyn, R-Texas; Tom Carper, D-Del.; and Marco Rubio R-Fla., introduced on May 6 clarifying legislation to codify that small businesses are able to deduct normal business expenses covered by a forgiven Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) loan. The Senators said the recent interpretation of the Internal Revenue Service (IRS), which would 	

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<p>prohibit this practice, runs counter to congressional intent and the bill would restore application of the law as intended. You can read the news release here.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ In addition, a bipartisan group of 21 senators led by John Cornyn, R-Texas, and Robert Menendez, D-N.J., sent on May 5 a letter asking Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin and Small Business Administrator Jovita Carranza to raise the PPP non-payroll forgiveness cap from 25 to 50%. Currently, as a condition for loan forgiveness, no more than 25% of PPP funds can be used for non-payroll expenses, such as mortgage payments, rent or utility expenses. You can read the letter here. ○ Senators Michael Bennet, D-Colo., and Todd Young, R-Ind., introduced on May 5 legislation that proposed changes to the PPP. Their bill would: 1) extend the 8-week covered period to 16 weeks for non-publicly traded businesses with fewer than 500 employees; and 2) would create a new RESTART Program that would cover the next six months of payroll, benefits and certain operating expenses for companies experiencing at least 25% revenue loss. You can read a fact sheet here. ○ It was announced on May 7 that Rep. Jimmy Panetta, D-Calif., “is leading work on a bill that would clarify and ease rules on loan forgiveness and payroll requirements,” while Rep. Brad Wenstrup, R-Ohio., is leading a congressional letter geared toward “lengthening the forgiveness period and allowing businesses to use more of the loan to pay rent and suppliers.” Both members seek to address the non-statutory 75% payroll ratio required for forgiveness that has flummoxed borrowers. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sens. Tom Cotton, R-Ark.; Josh Hawley, R-Mo.; Ted Cruz, R-Texas; and Chuck Grassley, R-Iowa, sent a letter on May 7 to President Trump asking the administration to suspend “all new guest worker visas” for 60 days, and others for a year “or until unemployment has returned to normal levels.” You can read the letter here. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • House Minority Leader Kevin McCarthy, R-Calif., named on May 7 GOP members for Majority Whip Jim Clyburn's, D-S.C., coronavirus select committee, ending a partisan stalemate over the panel. Members include Minority Whip Steve Scalise, R-LA.; and Reps. Jim Jordan, R-Ohio; Blaine Luetkemeyer, R-Mo.; Jackie Walorski, R-Ind.; and Mark Green, R-Tenn. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • House Minority Leader McCarthy, R-Calif., announced on May 7 a “Republican-led China task force” to look into a number of China-related issues, including the origin of the coronavirus pandemic. Rep. Michael McCaul, R-Texas, the top Republican on the Foreign Affairs Committee, will head the effort. Other members include GOP Conference Chairwoman Liz Cheney, R-Wyo., and Reps. Jim Banks, R-Ind.; Andy Barr, R-Ky.; John Curtis, R-Utah; Anthony Gonzalez, R-Ohio; Darin LaHood, R-Ill.; Mike Gallagher R-Wis.; John Joyce R-Pa.; Adam Kinzinger, R-Ill.; Guy Reschenthaler, R-Pa.; Denver Riggleman, R-Va.; Elise Stefanik, R-N.Y.; Chris Stewart, R-Utah.; and Michael Waltz, R-Fla. You can read McCarthy’s statement here. 	

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> On May 6, the Senate Banking Committee held a hearing on President Donald Trump’s nomination of Brian Miller to be Special Inspector General for Pandemic Recovery. In this role, Miller would be placed in charge of overseeing a roughly \$500 billion Treasury fund created as part of Congress’s \$2 trillion CARES Act. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> On May 5, Senate Democrats, led by Leader Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y., Senate Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship Ranking Member Ben Cardin, D-Md., and Senator Jeanne Shaheen, D-N.H., sought unanimous consent on the Senate floor to pass legislation that would “provide additional, much-needed transparency and oversight of recently-created small business lending programs.” Senator Marco Rubio, R-Fla., chair of the Senate Small Business Committee, objected. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> On May 4, House Minority Leader Kevin McCarthy, R-Calif., with House Rules Committee Ranking Member Tom Cole, R-Okla., and House Administration Committee Ranking Member Rodney Davis, R-Ill., released a plan to re-open Congress based on four strategies: modifying existing practices and structures; employing a phased return with committees; deploying technology for “virtual” hearings in a progression; and accelerating active risk mitigation practices. They conclude that “every avenue should first be explored that preserves enduring institutional rules while prioritizing member health.” 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dr. Anthony Fauci is expected to now testify on May 12 before the Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions (HELP) Committee after being blocked by the White House from testifying in the House. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif., asked House Chairs to submit drafts for a “Cares 2” by close of business on May 4, with the goal of releasing a draft proposal by May 8 that could be ready for a floor vote as soon as the week of May 11. This is without consultation or input from House Republicans, signaling that the next round of negotiations may face even more partisan bickering than the last several rounds. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Senate came back in session on May 4. The Office of the Attending Physician released safety guidelines for the Senate’s return. The guidelines, based on Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidance, recommend offices limit the number of staffers that come to the Hill and suggest teleworking when possible. The guidelines strongly encourage the use of face coverings, but individuals retain the option of not using a face cover if they maintain a 6-foot distance from others. The House is delaying its return to Washington by at least one more week. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ABA joined other allied associations in signing a letter to House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif., Leader McConnell, R-Ky., Leader Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y., and Leader Kevin McCarthy, R-Calif., urging liability protections to help businesses cope with the coronavirus outbreak. Read the letter here. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Over the weekend of May 2, Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., and House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif., issued a joint statement “respectfully” declining an offer from the Administration to provide rapid coronavirus testing capabilities to Capitol Hill. Congress will continue to use the testing protocols the Office of the Attending Physician put in place until these speedier testing technologies become more widely available. However, in an interview 	

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<p>with Politico, Minority Leader Kevin McCarthy, R-Calif., said he disagrees with McConnell and Pelosi and wants rapid COVID-19 testing in the Capitol.</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minority Leader Kevin McCarthy, R-Calif., signaled in a <i>Politico</i> article that he has not decided whether to appoint Republicans to Speaker Pelosi’s coronavirus cash oversight panel. “I’m going to make that decision this week, I’ll announce it later this week.” 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Competing strategies on help for frontline workers who have kept working throughout the pandemic are emerging on Capitol Hill. Falling across largely partisan fault lines, Democrats favor direct payments to those on the front lines including food production workers, grocery clerks, retail and warehouse workers, and those engaged in delivery operations, while Republicans favor an approach that would suspend tax liability for these workers. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Sen. Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y., introduced a bill to create federal fund for direct payments to essential frontline workers capped at \$25,000 for each essential worker earning less than \$200,000 per year. The new federal fund would partner with entities engaged in “essential work” that would apply to the Heroes Fund to pass along to employees. No employer would be required to participate but would be “strongly encouraged to” according to Schumer who added that the fund would be widely advertised. Federal workers would also be covered. And Sen. Elizabeth Warren, D-Mass., said she’d like an “Essential Workers Bill of Rights” in the next relief package. Rep. Ro Khanna, D-Calif., leads the House version of the bill. ○ Rep. Bonnie Watson Coleman, D-N.J., along with Reps. Mark Pocan, D-Wis., and Salud Carbajal, D-Calif., penned a letter to House leadership with 150 cosigners calling for “hazard duty pay” for federal frontline workers and increased protections for federal frontline workers like meat and other food safety inspectors. ○ Republicans are taking a different approach that would suspend payroll taxes for essential workers earning less than \$50,000 per year until the end of the pandemic and suspend both payroll taxes and income taxes for those earning between \$50,000 and \$100,000. Sen. Joni Ernst, R-Iowa, announced a proposal through an op-ed last week. ○ Se. Mitt Romney, R-Utah, also proposed a hazard pay benefit – on top of regular pay – of up to \$12 an hour for essential workers facing health risks during the coronavirus pandemic. Romney’s proposal would have employers fund one-fourth of the pay bonus and the rest would be financed through a refundable payroll tax credit through the end of July. “Health care professionals, grocery store workers, food processors, and many others—the unsung patriots on the frontline of this pandemic—every day risk their safety for the health and well-being of our country, and they deserve our unwavering support,” Romney said in a statement. ○ The President reiterated during the last week in April his support for a payroll tax cut – something he has long supported – saying it would help both workers and their employers. 	

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Democrats are laying down their markers ahead of the next round of relief talks. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif., said she wants as much as \$1 trillion in aid for states and local governments. However, Republicans are reluctant to fund states and local governments at that level. Republicans, on the other hand, are now saying they will not agree to any coronavirus stimulus bill that does not include protections for employers from lawsuits in the post-coronavirus world -- called liability protections. A joint statement from Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., and House Minority Leader Kevin McCarthy, R-Calif., said, “As the nation continues fighting this pandemic and parts of our economy begin to emerge from shutdown, Senate and House Republicans are united in our demand that healthcare workers, small businesses, and other Americans on the front lines of this fight must receive strong protections from frivolous lawsuits.” 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rep. Ann Kuster, D-N.H., released a “Roadmap to Recovery” proposal to offer essential workers and their families \$25,000 in student loan debt forgiveness or “education credits.” 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sen. Chris Murphy, D-Conn., and Rep. Jimmy Panetta, D-Calif., are leading an effort to temporarily allow Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits to be used in restaurants, with backing from groups including the National Restaurant Association, National Council of Chain Restaurants and Congressional Hunger Center. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • House leaders are closer to a bipartisan agreement on allowing remote hearings but there is still no agreement on whether to allow remote markups and proxy voting on the House floor. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The U.S. Capitol’s closure to the public has been extended through May 16. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As discussions take place on the Hill about the next relief package, several issues are rising to the top: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Employer liability is being discussed. Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., is pushing for liability protections for businesses that reopen during the pandemic. However, Democratic leadership has rejected this proposal. ○ An ‘Essential Workers Bill of Rights’ is being championed by Sen. Elizabeth Warren, D-Mass. She argues that frontline workers “are risking their lives to keep America running. Congress has a responsibility to protect them and their families... Essential workers in all fields lack the basic safety equipment and guarantees they need, and many essential workers are low-wage workers who were underpaid with minimal job protections even before this crisis hit. The next relief package needs to put these workers front and center—and include our Essential Workers Bill of Rights.” ○ Whether or not we will see infrastructure included in the next relief bill is still to be determined. On a call with GOP Senators yesterday, Majority Leader McConnell said he will not support infrastructure in a COVID-19 bill. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • House appropriators will hold an in-person subcommittee hearing on May 6 at 10 a.m. on the federal government’s response to the coronavirus pandemic. The Labor-HHS-Education Subcommittee will hold the hearing in 2359 Rayburn. As of April 29, witnesses have not been announced. While the House is out of session during the week of May 4, hearings can still occur under House rules. 	

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The "Virtual Congress Task Force" held its second meeting on April 28 to discuss a bipartisan way that the House can function amid the pandemic. After the meeting, which included nearly 30 participants and was conducted via videoconferencing technology, House Majority Leader Steny Hoyer sent out a "Dear Colleague" letter where he sounded optimistic about finding a path forward in the coming weeks. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It was announced on April 28 that House Leadership has reversed course and will not bring the Chamber back in to session next week. House Majority Leader Steny Hoyer, D-Md., made the announcement, citing advice from the Capitol physician and a continuing increase in coronavirus cases in the Washington, D.C., area. The Senate will still come back into session on May 4. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sen. Joni Ernst, R-Iowa, had an op-ed published on FoxNews.com on April 24 in which she called for tax relief for essential, front-line workers, including those in the beverage industry. Sen. Ernst is proposing a federal tax suspension for essential workers (as determined by CISA) during the pandemic. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The House passed the Paycheck Protection Program and Healthcare Enhancement Act Thursday evening. President Donald Trump signed the bill into law today. The legislation provides \$484 billion, including \$310 billion for the Small Business Administration's (SBA) Paycheck Protection Program (\$60 billion set aside for smaller lenders), \$60 billion for SBA Economic Injury Disaster Loans and Advance Grants, \$75 billion for hospitals and \$25 billion for testing. Relief for states and localities is not included. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The House voted to establish the House Select Committee on the Coronavirus Crisis chaired by Majority Whip Jim Clyburn, D-SC., on April 23. The committee will provide oversight of the funds appropriated by Congress to address the coronavirus pandemic. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The House is expected to pass later in the day on April 23 the compromise bill to provide additional funds for the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) and Economic Injury Disaster Loan (EIDL) program, as well as needed funds for hospitals and COVID-19 testing. The overall package includes \$484 billion in funding. The package is the fourth in a series of coronavirus relief bills that has passed through Congress in less than two months, totaling \$2.7 trillion in federal funds to fight the pandemic. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In a joint statement, the seven leading organizations representing state and local governments at the federal level called on Congress today to "immediately provide robust, flexible relief" to state, territorial and local governments as part an interim relief package for the COVID-19 pandemic. See the Press Release. The groups were: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The National Governors Association, Council of State Governments ○ National Conference of State Legislatures ○ National Association of Counties ○ National League of Cities ○ U.S. Conference of Mayors ○ International City/County Management Association 	

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The National Governors Association sent a letter today to Leaders on Capitol Hill seeking support in the stimulus #4 package. The letter touches on state stabilization, an increase in Federal Medical Assistance Percentages, PPEs and Testing, Unemployment Insurance, Education for Students and Workforce, Small Business, Cost Sharing, the National Guard and Infrastructure. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The full text of the compromise bill passed by the Senate on April 21 can be found here, and a section by section document here. An in-person vote in the House is scheduled for the morning of April 23. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A bipartisan group of House members including House Minority Leader Kevin McCarthy, R-Calif.; House Majority Leader Steny Hoyer, D-Md.; and Reps. Jim McGovern, D-Mass.; Tom Cole, R-Okla.; Zoe Lofgren, D-Calif.; and Rodney Davis, R-Ill. — are considering several options to allow the House to function during the pandemic. They will review remote voting by proxy and reopening the House. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Senate passed a compromise bill on April 21 to provide additional funds for the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) and Economic Injury Disaster Loan (EIDL) program as well as needed funds for hospitals and COVID-19 testing. The overall compromise includes \$484 billion as follows: \$321 billion for PPP; \$50 billion for EIDL; \$10 billion for EIDL Advance grants; \$2.1 billion for Small Business Administration (SBA) administrative expenses; \$75 billion for hospitals; and \$25 billion for testing (research, development and deployment). It also clarifies agriculture enterprises are eligible for PPP. The bill makes no changes to the Coronavirus Relief Fund for state and local governments, so that will be an ongoing issue for Phase 4 of the Stimulus. The House is expected to consider the bill on April 23. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The bipartisan Problem Solvers Caucus, co-chaired by Representatives Josh Gottheimer, D-N.J., and Tom Reed, R-N.Y., released a “Reopening and Recovery ‘Back to Work’ Checklist” on April 20 that focuses on public health benchmarks and economic recovery priorities. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> While public statements from Congressional Republicans and Democrats indicate they are close to a deal on additional funds for the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP), we want to emphasize that talks are still ongoing. The package being discussed includes \$300 billion to replenish PPP coffers, \$50 billion in Economic Injury Disaster loans, \$25 billion for testing and an additional \$75 billion for hospitals. However, there are still several issues that need to be worked out. Once a final deal is struck, a vote in the Senate could come early this week, followed by a House vote slated for Wednesday, April 22. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The White House is in talks with Congressional Democrats on a compromise to refill the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP). According to reports from the Hill, there is bipartisan agreement that the PPP needs to be refilled however, Republicans are now aiming for more than the originally sought \$251 billion. Democrats are looking for \$75 billion for hospitals, along with additional dollars for community banks and a refresh of the Economic Injury Disaster Loan (EIDL). The small business rescue fund set up by Congress exhausted its \$350 billion funding capacity on the morning of April 16. Pressure is building for Congress to act this week on legislation to infuse another \$251 billion into the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) to keep up with staggering demand by small businesses across the country. Treasury 	

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<p>Secretary Steven Mnuchin has been meeting with Speaker Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif., and Senator Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y., but no breakthrough has been announced. Even if an agreement is reached, it is unclear how soon Congress could pass it with most lawmakers at home and a unanimous agreement in both the House and Senate required. Congressman Thomas Massie, R-Ky., is expected to force a roll call vote and Senators Rand Paul, R-Ky., and Mike Lee, R-Utah., who were not in Washington when the CARES Act was passed (Sen. Paul was infected with COVID-19, while Sen. Lee was quarantined out of caution), are also wild cards in the Senate.</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> On April 16, Rules Committee Chairman James P. McGovern, D-Mass., released his recommendation for rules changes that would temporarily implement remote voting for the House during the coronavirus pandemic. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> On April 14, U.S. Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., announced that the Senate will not be back in session before May 4. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> On April 13, House Majority Leader Steny Hoyer, D-Md., announced that, absent an emergency, the House will not be back in session before May 4. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Congress is at an impasse over the additional \$250 billion in small business aid. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif., and Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y., announced that they have no intentions to back off their goal to include an additional \$250 billion for state and local governments to the \$250 billion for Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) funding for which Senate Republicans are pushing. Senate Republicans insist that the small business funding is the only measure that can pass unanimously and it's the only money that is needed immediately given that the coffers for other programs are not yet empty. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> On April 11, the National Governors Association (NGA) called on Congress for an additional \$500 billion to “meet the states’ budgetary shortfalls that have resulted from this unprecedented public health crisis.” Unlike the federal government, states cannot run deficits and must cut budgets when revenue falls short. The CARES Act gives \$150 billion to states, although there are restrictions on how the money can be used — it is meant to assist in areas including housing, education and access to “healthy” food. However, governors say it is not nearly enough. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif., called the \$150 billion “a down payment.” 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> On April 10, Rep. Pramila Jayapal, D-Wash., co-chair of the Congressional Progressive Caucus, introduced legislation aimed at preventing mass layoffs by creating "a streamlined program to provide a three-month federal guarantee for 100% of worker salaries of up to \$100,000 to ensure employers of all sizes keep workers on the payroll and continue to provide employer-sponsored benefits.” 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> House Financial Services Democrats proposed a federal reinsurance program to insure small businesses from the effects of pandemics. The proposal would be triggered when industry losses exceed a \$250 million threshold with a \$500 	

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<p>billion cap on aggregate losses for insurers and the government. The proposal is part of continued debate over whether Congress will pass legislation addressing business interruption insurance in the wake of COVID-19.</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> On April 9, Senate Democrats voted against the approval of \$250 billion in new funding for small businesses that is urgently needed for the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP). The bill was blocked by Sen. Chris Van Hollen, D-Md. Sen. Van Hollen presented the Democrats' plan to spend an additional \$250 billion on hospitals and local governments that they want coupled with the small business aid. This was blocked by Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> On April 8, Speaker Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif., and Leader Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y., released a joint statement in response to the Administration's request for another \$250 billion to shore up the Small Business Administration's Paycheck Protection Program (PPP). In it, they expressed their desire to use those funds for businesses and communities that have been unable to access the current PPP funds, such as farmers, minority-owned businesses, non-profits, etc.), as well as provide additional funding for healthcare providers, state and local governments and a 15% increase to the maximum SNAP. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> On April 7, Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., announced that the Senate could move as early as Thursday, April 9, to approve approximately \$250 billion dollars in new relief to small businesses. Leader McConnell is working with Minority Leader Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y., to deliver more money to the Paycheck Protection Program, a popular \$350 billion program for businesses to cover payroll and expenses during the coronavirus pandemic. Small Business Chairman Marco Rubio, R-Fla., estimated the program needs \$200-\$250 billion and McConnell said he intends to pass new relief as soon as April 9 without a roll call vote. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> On April 6 House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, D-CA., hosted a call with the Democratic Caucus to discuss the next spending package, focused on expanding the funding provided for in the CARES Act. Reportedly estimated to cost more than \$1 trillion, the legislation would include additional unemployment and small business assistance. It is the Speaker's intention to draft legislation and bring it to the House floor this month (April). President Trump is reportedly supportive of efforts to expand small business relief and direct relief payments. Congressional Republicans also are in favor of providing increased funding to programs established by the CARES Act, and are exploring if additional corporate support is necessary. 	

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> On March 11, Democrats in the House and Senate introduced the “Resilient Elections During Quarantines and Natural Disasters Act of 2020.” If passed, the bill would require states to implement absentee voting during emergencies for any reason, including the current national emergency. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> On April 1, House Democrats announced their intention to use the fourth relief bill as an opportunity to incorporate components of their “Moving Forward” infrastructure framework, which includes clean water provisions; expanding broadband access and infrastructure investments such as repairing bridges; fixing bottle necks on roads; and improving transit. Read more here. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif., held a press conference on March 30 to outline Phase 4 stimulus package priorities: state aid, worker safety protections, free treatment for COVID-19 and addressing supply chain shortages. Additionally, Democrats are considering an infrastructure component. However, Senate Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., is pushing back on the idea of including infrastructure as it is not germane to COVID-19. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The U.S. House and Senate stands in recess until April 20. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> On March 27, the House passed the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act via voice vote and it was subsequently signed by President Trump. It is the largest rescue package in U.S. history. Provisions important to the industry include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <u>Vehicle Weights</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Language is included that clarifies that states can issue special permits for overweight vehicles and loads to allow for the free flow of critical relief supplies during the current coronavirus epidemic for the duration of the fiscal year. Feds are now on record supporting states to issue waivers, but states still need to grant. <u>Direct Aid to Americans</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> \$1,200/per person for individual filers making up to \$75,000 AGI. Those making up to \$99,000 AGI will receive reduced amounts. Aid is completely phased out at \$99,000 AGI. \$2,400 for joint filers making up to \$150,000 AGI. Those with AGI up to \$198,000 AGI will receive reduced amounts. Aid is completely phased out at \$198,000 AGI. Filers will receive \$500 for each child. <u>SNAP</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Funding increased by \$15.5 billion and work requirements are waived. No policy changes were included (i.e., funds used to buy household cleaning supplies or hot prepared foods). <u>Worker Retention</u> 	

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ An employee retention tax credit on wages up to \$10,000 per employee per quarter kept on an employer’s payroll through the end of 2020. Companies eligible for the tax credit must have fully or partially suspended operations due to a government order and suffered a significant decline in revenues. ○ Allow companies to defer the 6.2 percent Social Security tax on all wages up to \$137,700 for the rest of the year, though they'd have to pay it back in equal installments in 2021 and 2022. <p><u>Small Business Loans</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The Treasury Department updated its FAQ to answer questions about borrowers and businesses with multiple locations, as well as on affiliation rules. ○ The SBA is authorized to provide loans through its existing 7(a) program in amounts equal to two and a half months of payroll, with a maximum of \$10 million. If the borrower uses the loan to cover payroll, interest on debt, rent or utilities, the loans would be forgiven. ○ Previous drafts of the Act capped eligibility at businesses with 500 employees, but the latest version would broaden that to many of your customers (i.e., hotels, restaurants, bars, cafeterias, etc.) with up to 500 employees per location. <p><u>Unemployment Insurance</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The Act extends regular unemployment benefits to last an additional 13 weeks. In most states, laid-off workers can get a maximum of 26 weeks of benefits. ○ The Act would also add four months of \$600 weekly payments on top of the usual weekly unemployment checks. <p><u>Childcare</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The Act provides \$3.5B in Child Care and Development Block Grants for child care assistance to “health care sector employees, emergency responders, sanitation workers, and other workers deemed essential during the response to coronavirus by public officials, without regard to the income eligibility requirement...” 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● As of March 24, three Members of Congress – Rep. Diaz-Balart, R-Fla., Rep. Ben McAdams, D-Utah, and Sen. Rand Paul, R-Ky. – have tested positive for COVID-19 and are self-quarantining. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The U.S. Capitol Building, House and Senate Office Buildings are limited to Members of Congress, staff and those with “official business only.” 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The House of Representatives is not expected to return to the U.S. Capitol for legislative business until they are in a position to vote on the third piece of legislation related to the COVID-19 crisis, which is currently before the Senate. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The GOP run-off election in Alabama between Jeff Sessions and Tommy Tuberville has been postponed until July 14. 	