



COVID-19 LEGISLATIVE UPDATE 03/24/2020

Administration

- At a press conference Monday night, President Donald Trump stated “Our country wasn’t built to be shut down. This is not a country that was built for this.” He added “America will again and soon be open for business. Very soon. A lot sooner than three or four months that somebody was suggesting.”
- In an interview with Fox News, President Trump stated “I would love to have the country opened up and just raring to go by Easter.”
- The CDC [announced](#) they are moving forward with awarding \$560 million to state and local jurisdictions to help respond to the coronavirus outbreak. This funding was allocated under the Phase I coronavirus response bill.
- In an interview with CNN, FEMA Administrator Peter Gaynor indicated that the Trump Administration would be using the Defense Production Act to access 60,000 coronavirus test kits.

Senate

- Negotiations on the CARES Act are ongoing. Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-KY) said the bill is on the “five-yard line,” stressing the need to pass a bill today. McConnell has repeatedly expressed frustration that Democrats have blocked the Senate from invoking cloture on the motion to proceed on the bill.
- In a floor speech, Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer (D-NY) expressed optimism that a deal will be reached today, suggesting that the list of outstanding issues has been narrowed significantly and there are no issues which cannot be overcome.
- Negotiators have reportedly reached an agreement to include additional oversight measures for the \$500 billion credit program for large businesses, which had been a major sticking point.
- Senate Appropriations Committee Chairman Richard Shelby (R-AL) said the Appropriations Committee could hold virtual hearings on the President’s FY2021 budget request if the Senate goes into an extended recess following the passage of the Phase 3 bill.

House

- Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi (D-CA) indicated that the House could proceed on legislation via unanimous consent or through “paired voting,” which allows members to have their votes recorded without physically being in attendance.
- Pelosi told CNBC’s Jim Cramer that she is optimistic that an agreement can be reached in the next few hours.
- The House Rules Committee released a [report](#) on options for House Floor votes during the coronavirus crisis. The report found that remote voting is not a viable option and recommended that the House attempt to pass the Phase 3 package by unanimous consent.
- Politico has reported that House Republican leaders expect at least one of their members will object to passing the CARES Act by unanimous consent.
- The House met in pro forma session.

State/Local Governments

- The Alaska Democratic Party will hold its party-run presidential primary exclusively by mail and is moving back the deadlines for returning and tabulating ballots from April 4 to April 10.
- Pennsylvania postponed its presidential primary from April 28 to June 2.
- Washington, DC Mayor Muriel Bowser (D) ordered the closure of all nonessential businesses.
- New Jersey Governor Phil Murphy (D) issued an executive order suspending all elective surgeries and invasive procedures.



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Private Sector

- Passenger airline traffic is down 86 percent compared to the same period last year, according to TSA data.
- Ford [announced](#) that they would be working with GE Healthcare to expand production of a simplified version of GE Healthcare's existing ventilator design at Ford's production facilities in Michigan. Ford also announced they would be working with 3M to produce powered air-purifying respirators.