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Global

Total cases – 2,659,557

Total deaths – 185,494

United States

Positive tests – 843,981 (5% increase from prior day)

% Positive tests – 19%

Total # tests – 4,493,106 (11% increase from prior day)

Total deaths – 46,859 (8% increase from prior day)

Administration

- **President Donald Trump** signed an executive order on Wednesday temporarily curbing immigration in what he described as a bid to limit competition for jobs as the U.S. takes steps toward reopening the economy.
 - “In order to protect our great American workers I’ve just signed an executive order temporarily suspending immigration into the United States,” Trump said Wednesday evening at a White House press conference. “This will ensure unemployed Americans of all backgrounds will be first in line for jobs as our economy reopens. Crucially it will also preserve our health care resources for American patients.”
 - The order -- which halts the issuing of certain visas for the next 60 days -- had been expected since the president tweeted late Monday night that he planned to “temporarily suspend immigration into the United States.”
- **Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin** said he anticipates most of the U.S. economy will restart by the end of August after the virus has led to social distancing measures that have shuttered many businesses. “We’re operating under the environment that we are going to open up parts of the economy and we’re looking forward to, by the time we get later in the summer, having most of the economy” re-opened, he told Fox News.
 - Mnuchin suggested that after Trump signs the Senate-passed \$483 billion relief measure into law, the economy will have all the rescue funding it needs to cope with the pandemic-induced shutdown. Mnuchin said the funds aren’t economic stimulus, but rescue funding. By the end, small businesses will have had access to over \$600 billion in federal relief through the Small Business Administration and emergency disaster loans
- **The U.S. Treasury Department** released new guidance Thursday for the next round of funding for a government coronavirus relief program for small businesses that



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emphasizes companies must certify the request is necessary to limit large firms that have other options for coronavirus relief from applying.

- Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin has said the fund is intended for small businesses, and the guidance emphasizes that companies assess their economic need for a loan under the Paycheck Protection Program, or PPP, and “certify in good faith that their PPP loan request is necessary.”
- Treasury says it is unlikely that a public company with substantial market value and access to capital markets will be able to make the required certification in good faith that their PPP loan request is necessary
- Any borrower that applied for a PPP loan prior to the issuance of this guidance and repays the loan in full by May 7, 2020 will be deemed by SBA to have made the required certification in good faith
- Link to [guidance](#)
- **Health and Human Services (HHS) director Alex Azar** elevated a former labradoodle breeder to lead the department's day-to-day response to the coronavirus, [according to Reuters](#), despite his minimal experience.
 - Brian Harrison, who is chief of staff at the HHS, was made a key manager on the task force led by Azar in January 2020. "Everyone had to report up through him," one unnamed HHS official told Reuters.
 - The HHS task force coordinates the coronavirus response of numerous agencies, including bodies such as the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the National Institutes of Health (NIH).
 - Harrison, 37, had little significant public health experience or education at the time he was appointed, Reuters reported.
- **President Trump** said Wednesday that he would be tasking an existing White House council, led by Housing and Urban Development Secretary Ben Carson, with determining how to assist minority communities impacted by coronavirus.
 - “I’m directing the White House Opportunity and Revitalization Council led by Sec. Ben Carson to focus its effort on supporting underserved communities impacted by the coronavirus,” Trump said during a press briefing at the White House.
 - The President also said he would be asking South Carolina Republican Sen. Tim Scott to assist in the effort.
 - According to an executive order establishing the council, it was originally created “to carry out my Administration’s plan to encourage public and private



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investment in urban and economically distressed areas, including qualified opportunity zones.”

- **Fourth of July celebrations** will be held on the National Mall in Washington, D.C. this year, President Trump announced today at his coronavirus briefing.
 - “On July 4th, we’ll be doing what we had on the mall, as you know. We’re going to be doing it. Last year was a tremendous success,” he said.
 - Last year, Trump held a Fourth of July celebration at the Lincoln Memorial in what was called a “Salute to America.” The event included remarks from the President, military tank displays, music from military bands and military flyovers.
 - Trump said that attendance for the Washington event will likely be limited to “25% of what we had last year.”
 - “This year, most likely, we’ll be standing 6 feet apart,” he added.
 - The President also compared his Fourth of July celebration turnout at the Lincoln Memorial with Martin Luther King Jr.’s.
- **Dr. Anthony Fauci** championed the mitigation efforts implemented across the US and considers them the “basis for our being able to say that we can now think seriously about reopening America.”
 - Fauci’s comments come after numerous states, including Georgia and Tennessee, have said they would reopen parts of their economies soon.
 - Fauci concluded his remarks with a request for lawmakers around the country to be careful to avoid a “rebound” of coronavirus cases.
- **President Trump** said he disagreed “strongly” with Gov. Brian Kemp’s decision to open up parts of Georgia’s economy while the coronavirus pandemic continues to threaten the state.
 - “I told the governor of Georgia Brian Kemp that I disagree strongly with his decision to open certain facilities, which are in violation of the phase one guidelines for the incredible people of Georgia,” Trump said during his coronavirus task force briefing this afternoon. “But at the same time, he must do what he thinks is right. I want him to do what he thinks is right, but I disagree with him on what he’s doing, but I want to let the governors do — now, if I see something totally egregious, totally out of line, I’ll do [something]. But I think spas and beauty salons and tattoo parlors and barber shops in phase one, we’re going to have phase two very soon. It’s just too soon. I think it’s too soon.”
- **President Trump** defended the decision to reopen states amid the coronavirus pandemic, saying the virus will not “be coming back” in as many cases as the US saw earlier this year.



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- "And if it comes back, though, it won't be coming back in the form that it was. It will be coming back in smaller doses that we can contain. What (CDC Director Robert Redfield) was saying and I spoke to him at great length, he was saying if it should come back together, now you have the flu and you have the embers of corona," Trump said.
- The **US Department of Health and Human Services** announced the distribution of billions of dollars in additional federal coronavirus aid money to health care providers from the initial \$100 billion allocation in a media briefing Wednesday.
 - Some of the money from the CARES Act will go to reimburse caregivers who treated Covid-19 patients who had no health insurance, HHS Secretary Alex Azar told reporters. Some will also pay for testing uninsured Americans for Covid-19, said the administrator for the HHS' Health Resources and Services Administration, Thomas Engels.
- **Secretary of State Mike Pompeo** announced more than \$270 million in additional foreign assistance being provided in humanitarian aid and government assistance from the US to countries that need help responding to the Covid-19 outbreak.
 - This is part of the emergency supplemental funding provided by Congress for the pandemic – which totals \$2.4 billion.
 - None of the money is currently scheduled to go to the World Health Organization, given the hold on funding while the administration carries out its review.
- One hundred **U.S. Department of Agriculture inspectors** have tested positive for the coronavirus as the illness ravages the nation's meat processing plants.
 - The workers are part of the Food Safety and Inspection Service, which employs about 6,500 inspectors, a spokesperson for the agency confirmed Thursday. USDA is taking measures to supply masks to workers, though they currently may need to find them on their own.
- More than **4 million Americans** applied for unemployment benefits last week, bringing the five-week total to 26.5 million in the steepest downturn for the U.S. labor market since the Great Depression.
- About 100 **U.S. airport towers** would see reductions in the amount of time they are staffed by air-traffic controllers under a plan announced yesterday by federal aviation regulators. The Federal Aviation Administration said it's trying to keep controllers safe from Covid-19 and lessen the chance that towers will need to be closed as a result of infections or staffing shortages.



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- A top public health official who was helping lead efforts to find a coronavirus vaccine said he was removed from his post because he insisted on limiting the use of a drug Trump has pushed as a Covid-19 treatment, despite scant evidence it works. **Rick Bright** was abruptly pushed out of his position as the director of the Biomedical Advanced Research and Development Authority on Tuesday and given a smaller position at the National Institutes of Health.
 - The drugs Trump touted, hydroxychloroquine and chloroquine, “clearly lack scientific merit,” Bright said in a statement released by his lawyers yesterday. “I rightly resisted efforts to provide an unproven drug on demand to the American public,” he said. “Sidelining me in the middle of this pandemic and placing politics and cronyism ahead of science puts lives at risk.”
- **The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services** yesterday released an online coronavirus “Workforce Virtual [Toolkit](#)” for health-care decision-makers that includes information on funding opportunities, liability protections, and workforce training.
- The **White House** has taken a number of actions to bolster the health workforce to treat Covid-19 patients, including allowing medical practitioners to practice at the top of their license and across state lines and expanding telehealth services covered by Medicare. In one example, the administration has specific guidelines for different types of health-care providers on how they could expand the scope of their practices to respond to the coronavirus
- The **EPA** has announced enforcement actions targeting sellers of illegal products that claim to protect against viruses like the one causing Covid-19. Antimicrobial devices such air purifiers, ozone generators, and UV irradiation units aren’t required to go through the same EPA registration process as conventional pesticides. But they’re still bound by the same rules governing false or misleading claims under the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act.
- Workers critical to the Covid-19 fight include those who help produce pest control and other products that “clean, disinfect, sanitize, and ensure the cleanliness of residential homes, shelters, and commercial facilities,” the **Department of Homeland Security’s** updated [essential worker guidance](#) says. The new language isn’t a major change, but reemphasizes the need for pest control and cleaning products and services.
- **Sec. of State [Mike Pompeo](#)** says the U.S. has called for China to “permanently close its wildlife wet markets” and “I call on all ASEAN governments to do the same.”
 - “We urge all countries to embrace full and transparent information sharing,” Pompeo says



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- The **federal government** plans to distribute another \$20 billion to health providers whose businesses have been struck by the pandemic, adding to \$30 billion that was already distributed. The money is part of the \$100 billion set aside for hospitals, physician practices and other health-care providers in the \$2.2 trillion stimulus package meant to help people, businesses, and organizations amid the crisis. While some hospitals are inundated with Covid-19 patients, many are struggling financially after canceling elective procedures and office visits that are big money-makers for the systems.
 - The initial \$30 billion was distributed based upon providers' Medicare fee-for-service revenue, a simple calculation that let the government send the money quickly. But some hospitals said it resulted in hospitals that need the funding most getting shortchanged in the initial round
- Nationwide, small businesses, and some not so small, have grabbed \$349 billion during the **Paycheck Protection Program's** first phase earlier this month. Yet sole proprietors and contractors who account for around 80% of the 30 million small businesses largely got shut out of the loans program, advocacy groups claim. The remaining 5 million or so companies with payrolls appear to have won the lion's share of the PPP loans, as well as certain large restaurant companies that tapped the program.
- **CBP** is extending the closure of its Trusted Traveler enrollment centers until at least June 1, the agency said on Wednesday. In effect, that delays pending applications, since applicants have to do an in-person interview at one of the centers. The pending applications will remain active for longer, though, and existing program members can get an 18-month extension if they apply for renewal, even though they won't be able to go through the full process.
- The **U.S. Commodity Futures Trading Commission** says it will give futures brokerages more flexibility to account for Paycheck Protection Program loans on their balance sheets.
 - Firms accepting money from the government program to mitigate fallout from the coronavirus crisis can get relief related to net capital calculation requirements, CFTC says in Thursday [statement](#)
 - "This relief letter will help ensure that intermediaries, who play a key role in our markets, are able to continue supporting their customers' trading activities," Joshua Sterling, director of the CFTC's brokerage oversight unit, says in the agency's statement
 - Sterling says the relief also aligns with the approach taken by the Financial Industry Regulatory Authority, which oversees some of the same brokerages



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- The **United States** has signed onto a joint statement circulated by **Canada** at the **WTO** pledging not to impose food export restrictions in response to the coronavirus pandemic. G-20 agriculture ministers issued a similar statement this week, although not all G-20 countries signed the new document.
- **President Trump** spoke with Crown Prince Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan earlier Thursday and discussed cooperation in the fight against the coronavirus, including the donation of coronavirus test kits from the United Arab Emirates to the U.S., according to a White House statement.
- **President Trump** spoke with South Africa's President Cyril Ramaphosa today and offered additional assistance to combat the coronavirus outbreak, says White House spokesman Judd Deere.
 - The offer for additional assistance "builds upon 20 years of health and humanitarian support," Deere says in emailed statement
- New guidance summarizes how organizations should consider and manage their personal protective equipment (PPE) needs while ensuring the protection of workers during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic response. ([HERE](#))
- At President Trump's direction, the **Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS)** and the Assistant Secretary of Preparedness and Response (ASPR) released a new toolkit to help state and local healthcare decision makers maximize workforce flexibilities when confronting 2019 Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) in their communities. ([HERE](#))
- Today, the U.S. **Department of Health and Human Services (HHS)** through the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) awarded nearly \$165 million to combat the COVID-19 pandemic in rural communities. These investments will support 1,779 small rural hospitals and provide additional funding to 14 HRSA-funded Telehealth Resource Centers (TRCs) to provide technical assistance on telehealth to help rural and underserved areas combat COVID-19. ([HERE](#))
- **President Donald J. Trump** signed the bipartisan CARES Act legislation to provide relief to American families, workers, and the heroic healthcare providers on the frontline of the COVID-19 outbreak. \$100 billion is being distributed by the Administration to healthcare providers, including hospitals battling this disease. ([HERE](#))
- The **Trump Administration** is taking aggressive actions and exercising regulatory flexibilities to help healthcare providers contain the spread of 2019 Novel Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19). **CMS** is empowered to take proactive steps through 1135 waivers as well as, where applicable, authority granted under section 1812(f) of the Social Security Act (the Act) and rapidly expand the Administration's aggressive efforts against COVID-19. ([HERE](#))



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- **The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)** and the United States Department of Agriculture's (USDA) National Veterinary Services Laboratories (NVSL) today announced the first confirmed cases of SARS-CoV-2 (the virus that causes COVID-19) infection in two pet cats. These are the first pets in the United States to test positive for SARS-CoV-2. ([HERE](#))
- **CDC's optimization strategies for PPE** offer options for use when PPE supplies are stressed, running low, or absent. Contingency strategies can help stretch PPE supplies when shortages are anticipated, for example if facilities have sufficient supplies now but are likely to run out soon. Crisis strategies can be considered during severe PPE shortages and should be used with the contingency options to help stretch available supplies for the most critical needs. As PPE availability returns to normal, healthcare facilities should promptly resume standard practices. ([HERE](#))
- **The U.S. Food and Drug Administration** continues to announce new actions taken in its ongoing response effort to the COVID-19 pandemic. ([HERE](#))
- **U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Sonny Perdue** today announced Alabama has been approved to operate Pandemic Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT), a new program authorized by the Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA), signed by President Trump, which provides assistance to families of children eligible for free or reduced-price meals dealing with school closures. ([HERE](#))
- Today, **the U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Sonny Perdue** announced emergency benefit increases have reached \$2.0 billion per month for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) households across all 50 states and 3 territories to increase food security during the coronavirus national emergency. These emergency benefits represent a 40% increase in overall monthly SNAP benefits, significantly increasing food purchasing power for American families. ([HERE](#))
- **The U.S. Department of Labor's Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA)** has issued an alert listing safety tips employers can follow to help protect construction workers from exposure to the coronavirus. ([HERE](#))
- **The Defense Department** is moving to a tiered COVID-19 testing program to protect service members and ensure they can continue to do the nation's business, the vice chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff said. ([HERE](#))
- **U.S. Customs and Border Protection** will extend the temporary closure of Trusted Traveler Program enrollment centers until at least June 1, 2020. CBP is taking this precautionary measure to minimize the exposure of CBP personnel and the public to the novel coronavirus (COVID-19). ([HERE](#))



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Capitol Hill

- **The U.S. House** begins voting on two bills at 1:30pm today, and the second vote will be on passage of the \$484 billion interim relief package.
 - The first vote will be on establishing a House committee to oversee the coronavirus relief funds
 - The second vote, which is expected to begin at about 3:30pm or 4pm, will be on the Senate-passed relief package that replenishes a small-business loan program, gives aid to hospitals and provides funding for virus testing
 - Lawmakers will be voting in several groups in alphabetical order to allow for social distancing, and lawmakers are asked to stay in their offices when not voting
 - The House will recess for 30 minutes between votes to allow for the chamber to be cleaned
 - It will be the first time lawmakers have gathered in such a large group since March 27, when the last stimulus plan was approved, and they will be casting a roll-call vote under extraordinary circumstances to match the times.
- The **House** is expected to pass the bill around 6pm this evening with a large bipartisan majority.
- Unlike the **Senate**, which was able to pass the latest emergency package in a quick voice vote with only a handful of senators present, the possibility of an objection from either party means at least half of the 429 current **House** members must venture to Washington despite the risks from the coronavirus pandemic.
 - Debate on the spending bill, which is all but certain to pass and which President Donald Trump has promised to sign, will be held for two hours.
- The **House** also is voting today on a plan to establish a panel to oversee coronavirus spending. That vote will go first; then the House will take a 30-minute break so the chamber can be cleaned before members are brought back for the vote on the aid package. Each vote could take as long as an hour to finish given the restrictions.
 - Many elderly and at-risk lawmakers are expected to stay home, and only one committee hearing is scheduled -- by the Small Business Committee on the Covid-19 response
- **House Speaker Nancy Pelosi** said a “major package” of [aid](#) for state and local governments will be in the next stimulus legislation considered by Congress, setting up a conflict with Senate **Majority Leader [Mitch McConnell](#)**, who is urging a slowdown in doling out federal help.



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- The \$484 billion aid plan set for passage by the House on Thursday is an “interim” step to mitigate some of the economic damage wrought by the pandemic, Pelosi said Wednesday on Bloomberg Television.
 - “Now we have to go further to help state and local” governments, she said, without putting a price tag on the aid.
- Although **Trump** said Tuesday he favored aid for states, **McConnell** has said any aid to states and municipalities should be reviewed carefully and that states should be allowed to declare bankruptcy.
- **Senate Majority Leader [Mitch McConnell](#)** says on Fox News that any federal aid to states must be directly related to helping with the coronavirus and not be used to solve revenue problems.
 - **McConnell** says the federal government shouldn’t come to the rescue of states that made bad decisions unrelated to the virus or have underfunded pensions
 - **McConnell** tells Fox News that any future relief package won’t happen until after May 4, when lawmakers are now scheduled to return
- **Dick Durbin**, the No. 2 Democrat in the Senate, and 22 of his colleagues call on the Trump admin. to ensure Americans who lack Internet access and can’t file taxes electronically get their stimulus payments.
 - More than 21m people don’t have high-speed Internet availability, the senators write to Treasury Sec. Steven Mnuchin, citing FCC data
 - See April 22 letter [here](#)
- **Rep. Doris Matsui** will temporarily replace **Rep. Mark DeSaulnier** on the Rules Cmte as he recovers from non-coronavirus related pneumonia, House Speaker [Nancy Pelosi](#) says in statement.
- **House Ways and Means Chairman [Richard Neal](#)** says his panel plans to include assistance for the health-care industry, state and local governments as well as another round of stimulus payments and extended unemployment benefits into the fall in the next virus relief package.
 - “Our states and local governments are feeling the pain of slashed revenue from this pandemic. Without our support, essential workers who have been risking their lives are at risk of losing their jobs,” Neal says on the House floor
- **Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell** (R-Ky.) said today he favors allowing states struggling with high public employee pension costs amid the downturns of the coronavirus crisis to declare bankruptcy, rather than offering them a federal bailout. “I would certainly be in favor of allowing states to use the bankruptcy route,” he said in a response to a question on the Hugh Hewitt radio show. “There’s no good reason for it



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not to be available.” The host cited California as among the states that had given too much to public employee unions, and McConnell said he was reluctant to take on more debt for any relief,

- A new **House investigative panel** would be formed to probe the coronavirus outbreak and the federal government’s response under a [House resolution](#) also set for a vote today.
 - The resolution would establish a **Select Subcommittee on the Coronavirus Crisis within the House Oversight and Reform Committee**. The panel would include as many as 12 members appointed by Speaker [Nancy Pelosi](#) (D-Calif.), with as many as five recommended by minority leader [Kevin McCarthy](#) (R-Calif.).
 - The subcommittee would investigate the use of taxpayer funds for relief and stimulus spending, allegations of price gouging and profiteering, federal programs to expand virus testing and develop vaccines, and disparate effects of the virus on communities in the U.S., among other issues. The panel’s chairman, selected by the speaker, would be authorized to issue subpoenas.
 - The resolution would allocate \$2 million for the panel, which would disband 30 days after submitting a final report to the full House.
- In a [letter to Vice President Mike Pence](#), **Sen. Ed Markey** outlined nine principles to ensure that any Bluetooth-based contact tracing used for the pandemic doesn't bump up against Americans' civil liberties. "Any technology-assisted effort to leverage individuals' sensitive information for contact tracing purposes should take place on an 'opt-in' basis," the Massachusetts Democrat advises.
- A pair of **House Democrats** asked **Mnuchin** for details about how the department is handling the nearly \$1 billion in stimulus payments returned to government coffers. **Reps. Mike Thompson** (Calif.) and **John Lewis** (Ga.) requested the department to explain how it is going to ensure the payments land in taxpayers’ pockets at a time when the outbreak continues to keep businesses shuttered
- **House Natural Resources Committee Democrats** yesterday pushed back against Trump’s call for new aid to the oil and gas industry, citing a report that found nearly 10,000 drilling permits the industry sought on federal lands have gone unused. **Chairman Raul Grijalva** (D-Ariz.) and **Rep. Alan Lowenthal** (D-Calif.) argued the Government Accountability Office report calls into question years of Trump’s efforts to speed permit approvals for the oil and gas sector on federal lands in pursuit of what the administration terms U.S. “energy dominance.”



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- **Judiciary Antitrust Subcmte Chairman [David Cicilline](#)** says he wants the next big legislative virus aid package to include a ban on mergers during the pandemic except for companies on brink of collapse.
 - A deal moratorium should apply to companies that are not “truly failing or in bankruptcy,” the Democratic lawmaker says at an Open Markets Institute forum
 - “It is unthinkable that we would allow mega-mergers and private equity takeovers during this crisis”
- **Two bipartisan draft water infrastructure bills** unveiled this week by the Senate environment committee are a good start but will need even more funding in the wake of the coronavirus pandemic, water agencies and other groups said.
- **Over two dozen Republicans** in the House are calling on officials to create an exception to the **Federal Reserve’s** lending program that would let partnerships and S corporations who pay their shareholders on a quarterly basis receive low-interest emergency loans from the government. The latest stimulus measure prohibits companies that receive emergency loans from paying dividends or making other capital distributions to shareholders.
- **Sen. Ron Wyden** (D-Ore.) along with **15 other Democratic senators** sent a [letter](#) yesterday to leaders of the House and Senate calling on them to provide additional digital resources for state and local governments managing the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic. They specifically pushed for making the Unites States Digital Service and the Technology Transformation Service more readily available to state and local governments. Demand Progress, Lincoln Network, Public Knowledge and the Center for Democracy and Technology also supported the recommendations in the letter
- The **Congressional Progressive Caucus’ remote hearing** on [Facebook Live](#) scheduled for today was postponed until a later date due to scheduled House votes today. The event was focused on preventing layoffs during the coronavirus pandemic.
- **House Financial Services Cmte Chair Maxine Waters** says she is working to secure a \$100 billion renter assistance fund and \$75 billion homeowner assistance fund in the next stimulus package.
 - “We need to do much more to help renters, homeowners, people experiencing homelessness, and mom and pop landlords,” Waters says on House floor
 - Separately, Waters says her sister has the coronavirus and is dying in a hospital in St. Louis

State/Local

- The **mayor of Washington, D.C.**, and the governors of the two states surrounding the capital urged the U.S. government on Thursday to keep work-from-home policies in



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place for federal employees, after the White House released a plan to gradually re-open their offices.

- In a letter to the Office of Personnel Management, the leaders asked that the Trump administration “continue to implement broader telework policies for the federal workforce” while the coronavirus pandemic still poses a threat.
 - “This is a hard balancing act between ensuring the continuation of critical government functions and ensuring the safety and well-being of employees,” Maryland Governor Larry Hogan, Virginia Governor Ralph Northam and Washington, D.C. Mayor Muriel Bowser wrote.
 - Va. Gov. Ralph Northam posts letter to OPM in [tweet](#)
- **South Dakota Gov. Kristi Noem** releases a Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [report](#) on ways to reduce coronavirus transmissions at a Smithfield Foods Sioux Falls pork plant.
 - NOTE: Smithfield Foods shut a slaughter plant in South Dakota last week after hundreds of workers tested positive for Covid-19
- **Arkansas Gov. Asa Hutchinson** announced an incremental plan to open specific businesses over the next few weeks.
 - If the openings go well, he said, the state will open up even more businesses on May 4.
 - On April 27, elective surgeries will be allowed in clinics and hospitals, but they have to be simple procedures that don’t require an overnight stay. The patient has to have been tested for exposure to COVID-19 before the procedure and must not have any underlying health conditions.
 - Restaurants will open on April 29
 - Gyms and workout facilities on April 30
 - Beauty salons and barbers on May 1
 - Places of worship and larger venues on May 4
- **Colorado Gov. Jared Polis** said Wednesday that 150,000 Covid-19 tests will arrive in Colorado from South Korea by the end of the week, plus 150,000 swabs coming in May.
 - The state is partnering with Colorado State University to expand testing at skilled nursing facilities, including asymptomatic workers. Officials are also working to deploy “hundreds of thousands of antibody tests,” Polis said.
- The **Colorado Department of Public Health** announced Thursday it is now requiring all workers in critical businesses and critical government functions to wear “non-medical masks and gloves while at work to protect the health and welfare of the public,” according to a statement Thursday.



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- "The main reason to wear a non-medical mask is to protect others," the statement said.
 - The order, which will remain in place until May 17, defines critical businesses as banks, child care facilities, pharmacies, and grocery stores.
 - The statement also asks all Coloradans to wear a mask anytime they go outside, including their own backyards.
- **Mississippi Gov. Tate Reeves** said Wednesday he will likely not extend the state's shelter-in-place order, which is set to expire Monday.
 - Reeves suggested he might narrow the directive to apply only to the state's high-risk population, such as the elderly and those with preexisting conditions.
 - He said steps to fully reopen the state's economy might take weeks, and could happen incrementally by region or county. He promised the process would be cautious and gradual.
- **Montana's** stay-at-home order will be lifted Sunday, as part of a gradual and phased reopening of the state, Gov. Steve Bullock tweeted today.
 - His phase one measures outlined in a statement include giving local school districts the option to return to in-classroom learning beginning May 7.
 - Places of worship can become operational on April 26 in a manner consistent with social distancing between people who are not members of the same household.
 - Main street and retail businesses can become operational on or after April 27 if they can adhere to requirements to limit capacity and maintain strict physical distancing. Employers are directed to develop policies to keep employees and customers safe including teleworking when possible, enforcing social distancing protocols, and other measures.
 - Restaurants, bars, breweries, and distilleries can begin providing some in-establishment services beginning May 4.
 - Businesses where groups gather without the ability to social distance including movie theaters, gyms, and other places of assembly will remain closed.
 - Montana's travel quarantine will remain in effect.
- The **Nevada Gaming Control Board** has put out guidelines for the reopening of gaming establishments in the state once the temporary closures end.
 - Nevada operations are currently closed under the state's stay-at-home order. The guidelines would go into effect once that order is lifted or changed by the governor.



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- Establishments must send a reopening plan to the audit and enforcement divisions at least seven days before reopening, or as soon as possible, the memo said.
 - The board also listed 18 procedures that licensees should follow and have in place when reopening including that the establishment must comply with all prescribed local, state and federal Covid-19 health requirements.
- **Harris County Judge Lina Hidalgo** announced Wednesday that she will require people to wear face coverings in public to combat the spread of Covid-19 in her county, which includes Houston, Texas.
 - "I'm signing an order requiring folks who absolutely have to go out in public to wear a face covering," she said wearing a face mask at news conference with Houston's Mayor Sylvester Turner. "We have to use every tool in the toolbox."
 - The order will go into effect April 27 and will last for 30 days, said Hidalgo who emphasized that this new measure is "not a substitute for social distancing."
 - Turner will announce a plan tomorrow to distribute 70,000 face coverings "to vulnerable communities," the mayor's office tweeted today.
- Beginning today, all essential workers in **San Francisco, California**, can receive Covid-19 testing, **Mayor London Breed** announced at a news conference today.
 - The expanded testing is available to both public and private sector workers and any other resident with symptoms who cannot otherwise access testing, Breed said.
 - "We want to ensure all frontline and essential employees that leave their homes every day to serve our residents have a fast, easy, and accessible option for testing," Breed said. "We also want those who don't have insurance, or who lack access to health care or access to basic services to know they can be tested through CityTestSF and receive the support and health care they need."
 - Breed also announced approximately \$10.5 million is being allocated to a response and recovery fund to support vulnerable San Franciscans and small businesses during the pandemic.
- Stakeholders have been meeting to discuss how **North Carolina** might be able to ease restrictions while still protecting its residents, said Dr. Mandy Cohen, secretary of the state's Department of Health and Human Services.
 - "I look forward to sharing more ways in what easing restrictions in the state could look like in the coming days," Cohen said at a news conference Wednesday.



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- Cohen said decisions are currently being made on the state level, and not county-by-county.
- **Kansas Gov. Laura Kelly** said she signed an executive order to temporarily ease licensing restrictions on the state's healthcare workforce to "adjust to the urgent demands" Covid-19 has placed on the health care system.
 - "The actions I'm taking today will we move roadblocks and bolster the number of qualified health care workers who are able to contribute to our Covid-19 response at their full professional capabilities," Kelly said at a news conference Wednesday.
 - The governor said this measure will temporarily waive physician supervision or collaboration requirements from certain medical professionals who are assisting in the state's response efforts such as physician assistants and registered nurses.
 - The executive order will also permit registered nurses and licensed practical nurses "who hold a specialty license that is exempt, inactive, or has lapsed within the last five years to provide medical services appropriate to their qualifications," Kelly said.
 - She added that the order will also allow students enrolled in programs to become licensed, registered, or certified healthcare professionals to help in whatever appropriate roles are necessary to support a facility's response to the pandemic.
- **California Gov. Gavin Newsom** on Wednesday encouraged hospitals to move forward with scheduled surgeries.
 - Newsom emphasized those surgeries include important medical procedures like heart surgery and cancerous tumor.
 - Elective procedures like cosmetic surgery are not a priority, he said.
 - Newsom said allowing hospitals to perform scheduled surgeries is the first phase in returning to normalcy in California.
- State officials have been asked to draft a plan for reopening parks and beaches in **Rhode Island, Gov. Gina Raimondo** announced on Wednesday.
- **Oklahoma** has become the fourth state to announce plans to reopen its economy, but some say the decision is premature in a week when the state saw a spike in new cases.
 - The plan will start with businesses like hair salons and pet groomers reopening first on Friday, followed by churches and movie theaters on May 1.
- **Pennsylvania Gov. Tom Wolf**, speaking at a news conference on Wednesday, said he wants to reopen the state in three phases beginning May 8.



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- The governor's office broke down the phases into three colors: red, yellow and green:
- The red phase, which currently applies to the whole state, has the sole purpose of minimizing the spread of Covid-19 through strict social distancing, non-life sustaining business and school closures, and building safety protocols.
- As regions or counties move into the yellow phase, some restrictions on work and social interaction will ease while others, such as closures of schools, gyms, and other indoor recreation centers, as well as limitations around large gatherings, remain in place. The purpose of this phase is to begin to power back up the economy while keeping a close eye on the public health data to ensure the spread of disease remains contained to the greatest extent possible.
- The green phase eases most restrictions by lifting the stay-at-home and business closure orders to allow the economy to strategically reopen while continuing to prioritize public health. While this phase will facilitate a return to a "new normal," it will be equally important to continue to monitor public health indicators and adjust orders and restrictions as necessary to ensure the spread of disease remains at a minimum.
- **Georgia Gov. Brian Kemp** responded on Twitter to President Trump's comments that he disagreed "strongly" with the decision to reopen some businesses in the state.
 - "Just like the thousands of businesses currently operating throughout Georgia, I am confident that business owners who decide to reopen will adhere to Minimum Basic Operations, which prioritize the health and well-being of employees and customers," Kemp tweeted.
- **Maryland Gov. Larry Hogan** said that he will introduce his state's reopening plan on Friday.
 - During a news conference today, Hogan described the plan, "Maryland Strong Roadmap to Recovery," as "a safe, effective and gradual plan, which will allow us to reopen, to rebuild and to recover just as soon as it is safe for us to do so."
 - Hogan said the plan has "four essential building blocks that are needed to be solidly in place before we can be in position to begin lifting restrictions. He said the four parts include:
 - Expanding the state's testing capacity
 - Increasing hospital surge capacity
 - Increasing the supply of protective medical equipment
 - Developing a robust contact tracing operation



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- **Michigan Gov. Gretchen Whitmer** announced that she is evaluating the state's stay-at-home order and plans to make an announcement at the end of the week.
 - Speaking to reporters on Wednesday afternoon, Whitmer said the "data we've received in the last week has shown me that it's time to reevaluate the stay home, stay safe order."
- There are at least, 6,010 cases of coronavirus in Boston, and 196 people have died from the disease, **Boston Mayor Marty Walsh** said at a news conference Wednesday.
 - The city is still not at its peak of cases and the surge is going to continue, he said.
 - Walsh announced a fourth round of funding through the Boston Resiliency Fund. A distribution of an additional \$1.7 million in funds will be given to at least 20 organizations that support community health centers, veterans, individuals experiencing homelessness, neighborhoods experiencing higher rates of coronavirus, and the Boston Muslim community during Ramadan, Walsh said. The money will also go towards medical equipment for frontline and essential workers.
- **California Gov. Gavin Newsom** said there "is no date" for when the state could reopen and residents could return to normalcy.
 - "No one wants to share the timeline for the return to normalcy than I do," Newsom said at his daily press conference. However, "There is no date," he said.
- **California Gov. Gavin Newsom** detailed a call with President Trump focused on coronavirus testing materials.
 - As the state increases testing capacity, the overwhelming need is supplies, specifically test swabs, Newsom said he told Trump during a call Wednesday.
 - The President promised that California will receive 100,000 test swabs this week, 250,000 next week, and more the week after, Newsom said.
- Starting Thursday, coronavirus testing will be available to all critical workers that are on the front lines -- regardless of whether they have symptoms, **Los Angeles Mayor Eric Garcetti** announced in a news conference today.
 - "Health care professionals, grocery store workers, first responders, and critical government personnel can get a test even if you don't have symptoms," Garcetti said.
 - "We want to make sure that they are healthy and that they have the peace of mind knowing they're healthy."
- **Puerto Rico's** Democratic presidential primary will not take place as scheduled on Sunday and has been postponed indefinitely in response to the coronavirus pandemic.



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- The vote, originally set for March 29, was first delayed until April 26. Charles Rodriguez, chairman for the Democratic Party of Puerto Rico, said he, along with the president of the Puerto Rico State Commission on Elections, chose to further delay the primary indefinitely while the pandemic persists.
- **New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo** said the state is going to do more coronavirus testing in African-American and Latino communities.
 - He said that while New York did not have same health disparities that other states saw, he still thinks it's important to address the issue.
- **New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo** reiterated that nursing homes are a top priority for the state to prevent the spread of coronavirus. The state will perform an investigation into nursing homes to make sure they are following additional rules during the coronavirus pandemic, he said.
- **Myrtle Beach Mayor Brenda Bethune** said she agrees with South Carolina Gov. Henry McMaster's [decision to reopen some non-essential businesses](#) and lift restrictions on beach access.

International

- **Indonesia** will temporarily ban domestic air and sea travel beginning Friday until early June, barring a few exceptions, to prevent further spread of coronavirus, Transportation Ministry spokesperson Adita Irawati said today.
 - The ban on air travel will be in place until June 1, and the ban on sea travel will be in place until June 8, Irawati said. Cargo transportation is exempt from this ban.
 - The government also imposed restrictions this week preventing people traveling home for Ramadan and Eid.
- **French President Emmanuel Macron** told mayors that school attendance will be voluntary when classes resume, his spokesperson said.
 - Macron said that parents who do not wish to send their children to school would not be obliged to do so.
- **France** has outlined a plan to begin reopening schools starting on May 11.
- **Russia's** government has not set a date for ending its nationwide lockdown, Kremlin spokesperson Dmitry Peskov said Thursday, as concerns grow about the impact of coronavirus on the country's economy.
- **China** is donating an additional \$30 million to the World Health Organization to support its fight against the coronavirus pandemic, according to a tweet from China's Foreign Ministry spokesperson Hua Chunying Thursday.



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- **Scotland's First Minister Nicola Sturgeon** has indicated there'll be no changes to coronavirus restrictions in the short term, warning that a full "return to normal" may not happen until next year.
- Prayers and breaking of fasting will be done at home during the month of Ramadan in **Malaysian**, state news agency Bernama said Thursday.
 - The rules also prohibit Friday prayers from being held at mosques.
 - The report quoted the Minister of Islamic Affairs Senator Datuk Seri Dr Zulkifli Mohamad Al-Bakri, who said the decision was made after taking into account the Covid-19 pandemic and the country's Movement Control Order (MCO).
- The **Spanish** parliament voted to approve the extension of the state of emergency for the third time until May 9, prolonging the country's stay-at-home order to eight weeks in total.
 - The state of emergency was first decreed on March 14, which ordered severe restrictions on movement and business.
- **Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez** argued for another extension during a speech on Wednesday morning.
- There will be no knightings or awarding of other honors at **Buckingham Palace** in June, and the annual Garter service at Windsor Castle – where Knights of the Garter process with the Queen – has also been called off, a Royal Communications statement Wednesday said.
- "For practical reasons in the current circumstances all investitures due to be held at Buckingham Palace in June have been postponed. The annual Garter service at Windsor Castle has been cancelled," the statement said.
- From Monday next week, wearing a face mask on public transport and in stores will be mandatory in every **German** state. Chancellor Angela Merkel has advocated that people wear masks.

Other

- Seven additional big cats at **New York's Bronx Zoo** have tested positive for Covid-19, according to the Wildlife Conservation Society, the non-profit organization that runs the zoo.
 - That makes a total of eight big cats who contracted coronavirus at the famed zoo in New York City.
- **Harvard University** decided to return federal fund allocated to them under the CARES Act Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund after saying they would not do so when President Trump said he would be calling on the university to return the funds the day before.



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- Even though they did not apply for the support, the university said in a statement that “the intense focus by politicians and others on Harvard in connection with this program may undermine participation in a relief effort that Congress created and the President signed into law for the purpose of helping students and institutions whose financial challenges in the coming months may be most severe.”
- **Twitter** has expanded its ban on coronavirus misinformation to include tweets that spread false and misleading claims about 5G technology and posts that incite people to acts of violence against cell towers, the company said in a blog post on Wednesday.
 - The social media giant said the new policies add to existing bans on unverified claims that risk creating “widespread panic, social unrest, or large-scale disorder.”
- Antibody testing could help identify who can donate convalescent plasma for the treatment of Covid-19, according to the **American Red Cross**.
 - The American Red Cross said in a statement on Wednesday that it is working to implement antibody testing to help screen for recovered Covid-19 patients who could donate blood plasma to help ill patients fight the disease.
 - The idea is that convalescent plasma, the liquid part of blood, from recovered patients contains antibodies that could help strengthen the immune response of other patients still battling infection. Last week, the US Food and Drug Administration announced that patients who are fully recovered from Covid-19 for at least two weeks are encouraged to consider donating plasma.
- Eleven **Native** tribal organizations affected by coronavirus -- including the hard-hit Navajo Nation -- are suing the US federal government over relief money set aside by Congress for Native Americans.
 - The CARES Act earmarks \$8 billion to be split among **Indian** tribes, but the lawsuit says the Treasury Department is preparing to include Alaska Native Regional Corporations in the group. These private corporations were established in a lawsuit settlement decades ago for the benefit of Alaskan Natives, but the new complaint argues they are not true tribal organizations and are not entitled to the money.
 - The Navajo Nation’s government employs more than 5,000 people, according to the lawsuit, and revenue has dried up as tribal businesses have shut down. As of Wednesday night, the Nation had confirmed 48 Covid-19 deaths and more than 1,200 infections.



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- The **New York Stock Exchange** might reopen in phases after May 15, two sources who were on a conference call with New York Stock Exchange chief operating officer Michael Blaugrund told CNN.
 - Blaugrund was speaking with NYSE employees, heads of firms and brokers on the 40-minute call. He said when the floor does open, there will be a reduced head count on the floor and social distancing guidelines will be followed, according to the two sources.
- “Though **Yale** is experiencing great budgetary pressure as a result of the pandemic, the university has decided not to seek these emergency funds,” Yale University says in [statement](#) on its website.
 - Yale says it’s eligible for \$6.9m from the Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund
 - “We hope that the Department of Education will use Yale’s portion of the funding to support colleges and universities in Connecticut whose continued existence is threatened by the current crisis”
- **Sweetgreen** says it returned a Paycheck Protection Program loan of \$10 million after determining other small businesses needed the funds more.
 - Sweetgreen executives say in a Medium [post](#) that after learning the federal rescue program had run out of funds, “we quickly made the decision to return the loan”
 - “Sweetgreen is a private company and while we are not required to disclose any of this information, we’ve always believed in full transparency, especially in times like these”
- With the 146th **Kentucky Derby** now scheduled to run on Sept. 5, the home of the famed Triple Crown race will now host a virtual "Run for the Roses" on the original date of the race.
 - The virtual race, set for May 2, will pit all 13 of the Triple Crown winners against each other utilizing “data algorithms including historical handicapping” to determine a winner.
 - Organizers look to raise \$2 million for coronavirus emergency relief funds.
- The **U.S. Chamber of Commerce** urged the Trump administration to take an expansive view of which products qualify for tariff exclusions, rather than stick with its current slow process that requires companies to file a lot of paperwork. It also called for U.S. officials to work with other countries to temporarily remove all tariffs on medical products that could be used to fight the coronavirus.
 - "Identifying and explaining the rationale for specific product exclusions is a wasteful, time-consuming, and burdensome process at a time of national crisis



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when all public and private resources should be devoted to securing the inputs needed to combat the virus as quickly and cost-efficiently as possible," the group said.

- "Rather than requiring U.S. companies to petition the government for product exclusions, we recommend that USTR eliminate all medical tariffs immediately," the Chamber added.
- **Gilead's** potential antiviral drug for the coronavirus has flopped in its first randomized clinical trial, FT [reports](#), citing draft documents published accidentally by the World Health Organization and seen by the Financial Times.
 - The Chinese trial showed remdesivir did not improve patients' condition or reduce the pathogen's presence in the bloodstream.
 - Gilead warned that the post included "inappropriate characterisations of the study," FT says
 - Gilead shares fell as much as 6.2%