

COVID-19 Daily Digest



Today's White House Press Briefing after the Senate passes \$484 billion funding package.

Today's News: Tuesday, April 21

Senate Passes \$484 Billion Funding Package

This bill, in total, is broken down as follows:

- \$322 billion for the Paycheck Protection Program
 - \$250B unrestricted funds to replenish PPP
 - \$60B of PPP funding set aside for smaller institutions. This 60B is equally divided between assets less than \$10 billion and assets between \$10 billion and \$50 billion
 - \$100 billion for Health Funding
 - \$75B for hospitals (same language as PHSSEF from CARES)
 - \$25B for testing. \$11 billion of this will be distributed to states, while the rest would go to national groups for research, development, and deployment of testing
 - \$60 billion for Economic Injury Disaster Loans (EIDL)
 - \$10 billion for EIDL Advance grants

- \$2.1 billion for Small Business Administration to cover administrative expenses
- This bill clarifies that agriculture enterprises are eligible for PPP and EIDL

FDA Authorizes First Test for Patient At-Home Sample Collection

The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has authorized the first diagnostic home test for the novel coronavirus. Officials today issued an emergency use authorization for LabCorp to allow testing of samples that would be self-collected by patients at home using a nasal swab before being mailed to LabCorp for analysis. The option to test yourself at home would make testing much more convenient for patients and would greatly reduce the amount of personal protection equipment needed for health providers to collect and test samples in person. LabCorp has said that the tests will initially be given to health care workers and first responders, and it is unclear how many tests are currently available. Patients who wish to receive at home test in the future will have to fill out a questionnaire and receive a recommendation from a healthcare provider to obtain the test.



Kim Jong-un(der the Weather)

Last night, *CNN* reported in a carefully worded article that "The U.S. is monitoring intelligence that suggests North Korea's leader, Kim Jong-un, is in grave danger after undergoing surgery, according to a U.S. official with direct knowledge." This imprecise language leaves open the possibility that the report is false; unofficial intelligence is being monitored by U.S. officials out of an abundance of caution while credibility is assessed. It is notable that the 36 year-old leader missed the celebration of his grandfather's birthday just six days ago, an event he is unlikely to have skipped without good reason. However, South Korean officials pushed back on rumors regarding Kim's health last night, questioning the accuracy of the reports and saying they have not noticed unusual travel patterns in the country.

Little is known about the coronavirus's toll on North Korea - which has reported zero cases, despite sharing a long, porous border with China - but experts on the country say tens of thousands have been quarantined so far, and it is extremely unlikely that North Koreans are not suffering from widespread, undiagnosed outbreaks of COVID-19. The Hermit Kingdom's secrecy, coupled with Kim's absence last week, has led to rampant, baseless speculation that Kim himself might be suffering from the virus. The young dictator is known to have severe health problems related to his diet and heavy smoking habit, and would certainly be an at-risk patient for COVID-19.

In conclusion... well, who knows? Perhaps Kim, whose family famously worships the 1990s Chicago Bulls, is sheltering in place with his buddy Dennis Rodman, the former Bulls forward, and streaming the Last Dance on ESPN like most of America.



Buddy System Voting in Congress?

Democrats in the House are exploring options for Members to vote by proxy in the age of COVID-19; the plan calls for Members who cannot travel to Washington to pair up with another Member of the House entrusted to vote on their behalf. While many in Congress argue that this is a necessity, especially with modern day technological advantages that so easily facilitate communication, this changes over 200 years of House precedent. Republicans have pushed back against this change, saying that amidst a crisis is not time to rethink centuries old precedents without studying the issue.

Nonessential North American Border Restrictions Extended

The Department of Homeland Security has announced they are extending restrictions on nonessential travel between the U.S., Mexico, and Canada for another month. The decision was made in collaboration with our North American partners, who have been working closely with the United States to slow the outbreak.

USMCA Update

As we inch closer to the deadline that the U.S. targeted for the U.S.-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA) go into effect, there has been increasing consternation that industries would not have the ability to meet deadlines and adjust to the Agreement's new procedures and requirements. Today, USTR published a [request for petitions](#) that would allow producers of passenger vehicles and light trucks to request "an alternative to the standard staging regime for the rules of origin" that USMCA put into place. The alternative would provide automakers with additional time and a different phase-in for the new ROO requirements. In order to be considered, producers must submit a draft plan no later than July 1, 2020, with a final alternative staging plan no later than August 31, 2020.

In addition to USTR's action, U.S. Customs and Border Protection released its [Interim Implementing Instructions](#) for USMCA. The Instructions provide "guidance with respect to preferential tariff claims under the USMCA" and include information on how importers and other parties can "file a protest to contest a denial of preferential tariff treatment." Additionally, the document details how CBP will calculate Regional Value Content (RVC); provides extensive information on the new Automotive Rules of Origin and Procedures, including the calculation of Labor Value Content; and details the updated procedures for Rules of Origin for Textiles and Textile Apparel. This memo will continue to be updated, according to CBP, as regulations are added.

Southern States Start to Loosen Restrictions

Georgia, South Carolina, Tennessee, and Texas have started to loosen restrictions around social distancing and have taken steps to reopen their economies. Governor Kemp (GA) faces criticism from health officials and local leaders who say his decision could result in more coronavirus cases as the state has yet to see a declining trajectory of coronavirus

cases that President Trump's guidelines lay out.

- Georgia Gov. Kemp (R-GA) announced that gyms, fitness centers, bowling alleys, barber shops, cosmetologists, and massage therapists and others can begin to reopen. Next Monday, restaurants, theatres, and private social clubs will reopen.
- South Carolina Gov. Henry McMaster (R-SC) issued an executive order to reopen public beaches and allow retail businesses to reopen beginning Monday as long as they followed social distancing measures.
- Tennessee Gov. Bill Lee (R-TN) announced he would not be extending the state's stay-at-home order and will allow some businesses to open as early as next Monday, with the vast majority of businesses to resume operations on May 1.
- Texas Gov. Greg Abbott (R-TX) announced retail businesses will be allowed to reopen this Friday.

Money Can't Buy Everything

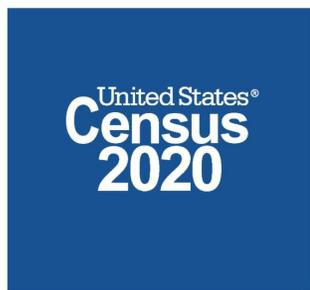
Former Michael Bloomberg spent \$1,221,777,405.26 on personal contributions to his unsuccessful 2020 Presidential campaign - a staggering figure so high that we didn't even bother to fact check the claim that it is a new all-time record

Pour Some Out: National Spelling Bee Canceled for First Time Since 1945



Dwight Schrute recollects misspelling "failure"

Shape
your future
START HERE >



Census 2020

The 2020 Census is happening now. You can respond online, by phone, or by mail.

Click the logo to learn more and to fill out your Census online.

