

Washington Update: March 23

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In a major late breaking development, Senate Democrats did not vote for cloture by a 47-47 vote on the third stimulus bill that Senate Republicans had been advancing, H.R. 748, the CARES Act. Senator GOP Leader Mitch McConnell switched his vote to no so he could move to reconsider at some point and five

Republican Senators are in self-quarantine.

At this point, negotiations between the Senate, House, and Administration will be ongoing on H.R. 748. During his floor remarks, Senate Democratic Leader Chuck Schumer said that he had spoken to Treasury Secretary Mnuchin and that there is a desire to reach an agreement.

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi broke off talks early yesterday with Senator McConnell. Speaker Pelosi sent her members a “Dear Colleague” stating that they will be finalizing their own bill, the Take Responsibility for Workers and Families Act.

The House Appropriations Committee is leading the House effort, which also involves Ways and Means, Energy and Commerce, Financial Services, and Education and Labor. House Democrats are looking for more funding for hospitals/community health centers, medical supplies, refundable tax credits, more worker protections, conditions on money to employers, grants to keep small businesses from closing and a significant expansion of direct payments to Americans.

Democrats on the House Ways and Means Committee are looking at expanding Medicaid and telehealth, no-cost COVID-19 health provisions, 90-day prescription refills, unemployment insurance for self-employed, provisions for borrowing from 401(k)s, net operating loss carry forward, employer retention credit, and Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) expansion from previous supplemental funding bill.

They have scheduled to have a House Democratic caucus call on Tuesday at 2pm.

