***Synopsis***

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**Coronavirus Supplementals**

*Status update*

As more states go on lockdown, primaries are delayed, stores, restaurants, and offices close, and American life basically comes to a halt, talk of a third and even fourth supplemental bill is swirling even before the Senate passes the second one. As of Tuesday evening, the Johns Hopkins University COVID-19 dashboard (which incorporates data from the public and private sectors) is reporting 108 deaths from coronavirus in the United States, and 6,423 confirmed cases, even as reports climb of people with symptoms being unable to access testing.

During a pro forma session on Monday, the House officially passed (via unanimous consent) a set of technical corrections to the second supplemental, as negotiated by Treasury Secretary Mnuchin and House Speaker Pelosi (D-CA). The corrections concerned the guarantee for paid sick leave for most employees.

The Senate is expected to pass that second bill this week. Senate Majority Leader McConnell (R-KY), on Tuesday, said he will keep his chamber in session until both the second and an as-yet-undrafted third supplemental are passed. In a caucus call Monday, House Democratic leaders indicated they will probably not reconvene until that third bill is ready.

In the meantime, the Department of Defense announced Tuesday it will provide up to five million respirator masks, about 2,000 deployable ventilators, and other personal protective equipment to the Department of Health and Human Services for distribution to civilian hospitals. The supplies will come from DoD’s strategic reserves. Since the DoD ventilators are different from what is usually used in civilian settings, military personnel will have to provide training on their use.

DoD has also opened 14 of its testing labs to process COVID-19 tests of non-DoD personnel, with another two labs to be made available soon. The Department is also considering making its two hospital ships available, although the USNS *Comfort* is currently undergoing maintenance. Since the ships and deployable medical tents are more geared towards trauma care, Defense Secretary Esper said they could be used to handle trauma cases if civilian hospitals become overwhelmed with coronavirus patients.

***Supplemental bills***

For those keeping track at home, here is a fast rundown of the various supplemental coronavirus bills.

Supplemental #1: Coronavirus Preparedness and Response Supplemental Appropriations Act, 2020 (HR 6074)

Passed both House and Senate, March 4 and 5; signed into law March 6

This $8.3 billion bill is primarily aimed at bolstering the federal response, with additional money for the FDA, CDC, NIH, and the Public Health and Social Services Fund. It also contained money for the Small Business Administration to make loan guarantees, and for several State Department programs.

Supplemental #2: Families First Coronavirus Preparedness and Response Supplemental Appropriations Act, 2020 (HR 6201)

Passed by the House March 13 (technical corrections approved March 16); pending before the Senate

This legislation is aimed to bolster medical and food security programs to help people gain access to free COVID testing and needed treatment, and to increase food assistance programs such as SNAP. It also expands access to paid sick leave (including to care for family members), and increases the availability of unemployment insurance. States receive a temporary increase in the Medicaid FMAP for the duration of the current public health emergency.

The Senate is expected to vote on this Wednesday. McConnell has reportedly told Republican Senators who do not love this bill to “gag and go for it anyway,” noting that any shortcomings can be addressed in the third supplemental.

Supplemental #3: Name to be determined

Still being drafted; could top $800 billion

Tuesday, McConnell said he intends to craft the next supplemental at “warp speed,” and the Senate will stay in town until it is completed. Republican lawmakers appear to be embracing the White House’s proposal to send most Americans at least one (and possibly two) checks for $1,000 over the next one to two months. The idea is far from completely fleshed out, but it will likely have some element of means testing and take into consideration family size (perhaps $500 will be sent for each child in the home).

Treasury Secretary Mnuchin reportedly wants more money to provide small businesses with emergency loans to get through the economic crisis.

The White House is also looking to provide money for airlines, casinos, and cruise lines hit hard by the economic situation. Sen. Warren (D-MA) issued a statement that any corporation receiving bailout money should be held to a number of conditions, including a multi-year prohibition against stock buybacks and the payment of stock dividends, employee representation on boards, and employee protection in case the company declares bankruptcy. Several other prominent Democratic lawmakers joined her in calling for strings being attached to help, especially for the airlines, such as elimination of excessive fees for luggage and other services.

This bill could potentially also include additional money for DoD and the Department of Veterans Affairs. Neither Department received money directly from the first two supplementals. The VA has warned the White House and Congress that additional money will be needed to test and treat veterans (there are more than 30 veterans with confirmed COVID diagnoses in the VA system). DoD’s heightened response in aid of NIH vaccine research and support to the civilian medical system will also require additional money.

Supplemental #4: No name yet

Still just a rumor, but this one might have something to do with infrastructure. More will come clear (hopefully) after the third bill is done.