

COVID-19: State and Federal Responses Updates

Tuesday, August 4, 2020

- There are 18,445,787 confirmed COVID-19 cases in 188 countries/regions, including 4,763,746 in the U.S. 11,036,083 of those cases have recovered.
 - 52,503,206 people have been tested in the U.S, with California leading testing efforts.
- France announced that gatherings of up to 5,000 would be allowed, marking a new phase of reopening.
- In Beirut, a warehouse explosion killed at least 78 people and injured more than 4,000. Officials believe it was caused by improper storage of highly explosive materials.

KEY UPDATES:

Federal:

- Democratic VP announcement could come any day. Speculation continues on who former Vice President Biden will choose to be his running mate. Without the ability to have a traditional kind of rally, we also don't know how and where an announcement would take place.

State:

- Rhode Island, facing an increase in COVID-19 cases, was placed on the restricted travel list by Massachusetts, New York, Connecticut and New Jersey. Visitors from Rhode Island to those states will have to quarantine for 14 days upon arrival or produce a negative COVID-19 test taken in the 72 hours prior to arrival.
- Arizona, Kansas, Michigan, Missouri and Washington State headed to the polls today for primary elections.

All Federal:

TRUMP ADMINISTRATION

COVID Phase 4: Negotiations continue among Administration officials and Congressional leaders. White House Chief of Staff Mark Meadows told reporters he's not "optimistic there will be a solution in the very near term." Some of the main points of contention include unemployment benefits, funding for the United States Postal Service, schools, the business liability shield, and election protections for State and local governments. The Administration is said to be offering new proposals to Democrats in order to reinvigorate talks. However, if negotiations fail to advance, Chief of Staff Meadows announced that the Administration is considering a series of executive actions to resolve some issues, like evictions, unemployment, as well as the payroll tax; he hopes enough progress is made soon so those actions are unnecessary.

- **Art of the No Deal:** Minority Leader Chuck Schumer (D-NY) ribbed the Republican negotiating team, Treasury Secretary Mnuchin and White House Chief of Staff Meadows. Senator Schumer turned to Secretary Mnuchin and said: You're supposed to be a good influence on Meadows, he's not supposed to be a bad influence on you. In other words, the Treasury Secretary that cut deals with Democrats is being tempered by the conservative chief of staff.

2020 Census: The Census Bureau is ending all counting efforts for the 2020 Census a month earlier than planned.

Federal Reserve: Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis President Neel Kashkari told CBS's "Face the Nation" that Americans are saving more because they aren't going out as much during the pandemic, and as a result there would be less need to borrow from abroad to finance additional fiscal aid.

- "So while historically we would worry about racking up too much debt, we're generating the savings ourselves. That means Congress has the resources to support those who are most hurting," he said.

He also suggested that the U.S. economy could benefit if the nation were to 'lock down really hard' for four to six weeks, so the virus could be brought under control.

Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) Updates

- [Updated summary of PPP Round 2 data](#)

SENATE

COVID Phase 4: It's interesting to note that Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-KY), as of now, has not participated in these negotiations deferring to the Administration to take the lead. The Majority Leader did take the time to blame Minority Leader Schumer and House Speaker Pelosi for standing in the way of agreement by preventing Committee chairs in both parties from engaging to resolve key issues that could advance talks.

- "Every day the script is the same," Senator McConnell said. "And the script is we had a pleasant conversation, but we don't feel like making a deal." The Senator also said he's prepared to support a package even if he has "some problems with certain parts of it."

It also is important to remember that government funding expires in 57 days. Earlier, Senate Appropriations Committee Chairman Richard Shelby (R-AL) proposed that government funding could be included in the next stimulus package.

SEC Nominations: On Wednesday, the Senate Banking, Housing and Urban Affairs Committee plans to vote on the nominations of Hester Maria Peirce and Caroline Crenshaw to be members of the Securities and Exchange Commission.

Extended Relief: Senate Banking Committee Chairman Mike Crapo (R-ID) sent a letter to the leadership of the Federal Reserve, Office of the Comptroller of the Currency, Federal Deposit Insurance Corp., National Credit Union Administration, Department of Housing and Urban Development and the Federal Housing Finance Agency calling on the agencies to extend economic relief measures that Congress established in March. It also calls on them to use their existing authority to continue eviction protections and looser lending rules.

PPP: Senators Marco Rubio (R-FL) and Susan Collins (R-ME) have separately introduced a bill to extend the PPP past its August 8 expiration date. The two proposals would continue the PPP at least through the end of this year.

HOUSE

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-CA) has delayed the start of the August recess in the interest of reaching an agreement on the next relief package.

ELECTIONS 2020

Convention Update: The Republican National Convention will include a mix of virtual and live appearances as well as a surprise on each of its four nights later this month. The convention will focus on President Trump's objectives for a second term and will include daily themes such as "heroes," on Monday, "promise" on Tuesday, "opportunity" on Wednesday, and "greatness" on Thursday.

Primaries: Several states, including Arizona, Michigan, Missouri, and Washington, are holding their primaries today. However, all eyes will be on the Senate Republican primary results in Kansas, since that seat will be pivotal to whether the Republicans can hold their majority in the Senate.

The race for the Republican bid for the open Senate seat in Kansas is against conservative Kris Kobach and Congressman Roger Marshall (R-KS). Many Republicans fear that Kobach is too conservative and if he becomes the nominee it would put the race squarely in the toss-up category. President Trump has refused to endorse Congressman Marshall prior to the primary. Democrats haven't won a Senate race in Kansas in nearly a century.

- "Some people without brains do an awful lot of talking, don't you think?" L. Frank Baum, The Wonderful Wizard of Oz.

All State:

- Many states had to reverse their reopening process after seeing a spike in cases.
 - More information on the status of each state, and specific workplace requirements, can be found [here](#).
- States have been providing temporary relief for remote notarization during the COVID-19 pandemic. A full list is available on the National Notary Association's [website](#).

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