

March 17, 2020 – Updated at 3:30pm ET

TO: USTOA Members

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Administration

- The White House plans to deploy more staff to help hospitals test patients for COVID-19 in an effort to “rapidly increase supplies of test kits and cope with shortages across the country.”
- The White House has issued a call-to-action to the tech industry, asking them to analyze data and scholarly articles on COVID-19 using artificial intelligence.
- Airlines have asked both the Administration and Congress for \$25 billion in immediate assistance for passenger airlines, and \$4 billion for cargo carriers. They’ve also asked for \$29 billion more in loan guarantees and relief from federal excise taxes. As reported yesterday, the President has indicated that his Administration will fully support the airlines through this time.
 - The Airport industry has also requested \$10 billion.
- The Federal Register Notice outlining the Schengen Area travel restrictions was officially published in the Federal Register today. The [document](#) also adds Boston Logan International Airport (BOS) and Miami International Airport (MIA) to the list of airports screening passengers.
- Small Business Administration Disaster Declarations have been declared by the following states:
 - [California](#)
 - [Washington, Idaho, Oregon](#)
 - [Maine, New Hampshire](#)
 - [Connecticut, Massachusetts, New York, Rhode Island](#)
 - This opens up eligibility for small businesses in these states to begin the application to receive disaster loan assistance.
- Reports throughout Tuesday indicate that the Treasury Department is preparing to unveil a package of \$850 billion including more than \$50 billion for the airline industry and \$250 billion for small-business support.
- Secretary Mnuchin on Tuesday mentioned unveiling a specific program for businesses of 500 employees and under. Details about this program have not yet emerged.
- Secretary Mnuchin also discussed an additional \$1 trillion of potential liquidity into the market and reports indicate that the overall government stimulus could reach over \$1 trillion.
- Secretary Mnuchin also discussed possibly sending checks to adults across the United States.

- Secretary Mnuchin stated that individuals will be able to defer up to \$1 million in tax payments to the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) for 90 days in light of the Coronavirus outbreak. He also stated that corporations will be able to defer up to \$10 million in tax payments.
- Vice President Pence discussed two ways that the Department of Defense can be helpful on expanding medical capacity, both of which the Administration is reportedly considering:
 - Mobilize the USACE to help with hospital bed shortages and renovations of existing facilities.
 - Inventorying field hospitals and mobilizing and deploying them.
- The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services have drastically increased telehealth capabilities and offerings including loosening certain Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPPA) requirements so doctors can use their own phones, for example.
- The major telehealth expansion reduces stress medical offices and preservation of personal protective equipment (PPE).

Congress

- The House passed a revised Coronavirus emergency bill last night by Unanimous Consent (UC), meaning there were no objections.
- The bill primarily makes technical corrections to the bill that passed the House last Friday, which reportedly made changes to the Medicaid reimbursement and small business tax credit sections.
 - We are doing a deeper dive on the changes and will report back.
- House leadership have told Members that they will be given 24 hours' notice to return to the Capitol. It is possible the lower chamber resumes legislative action on March 24 to consider a third Coronavirus relief package.
- The Air Line Pilots Association and the Association of Flight Attendants have requested that any Congressional relief package contain labor protections and direct payroll subsidies for airline and airport workers.
- Conversations occurred yesterday on incorporating parts of the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee's surface transportation bill into an economic relief package responding to COVID-19.
- House Democrats wrote the Administration yesterday raising concern that the October 1, 2020 deadline for new REAL ID regulations may now even be less realistic given the COVID-19 situation.
- Leader Schumer, in consultation with his Ranking Members, is preparing a new comprehensive proposal (for Coronavirus legislation part 3) that will provide an immediate infusion of at least \$750 billion to combat COVID-19 and the economic crisis facing every American.
- Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin met with Senate Republican leadership last night and is meeting with the full caucus at lunch to pitch

an \$850 billion package. There is a sense of urgency and rumors are that they will try and push to get this done this week, but there is still a lack of clarity.

- Senate Republican leaders and the Administration have discussed combining the House-passed package and an additional, third government stimulus package, which would be based on the Administration's \$850 billion request.
- Senate Democrats on Tuesday afternoon unveiled more details about their \$750 billion proposal. At the top level it would include
 - \$400 billion in emergency appropriations focused on:
 - Medical Surge: hospital beds, ventilators, masks and equipment, ensure affordable care for COVID 19 patients.
 - Child Care: a large injection of federal funding for child care, especially for health care workers needed to respond to the crisis.
 - Small Business: Low interest loans and loan forgiveness.
 - Seniors: rental, food and financial assistance as well as home based health care.
 - Public Housing: rental, mortgage and utilities assistance.
 - Schools and Children: Protections for students of all ages, whose schools may be closed and are thus lacking basic needs, including housing and meals.
 - Public Transportation relief: Relief for public transportation to ensure continued operations until normal ridership resumes.
 - State and local relief like Community Development Block Grants, Economic Development Administration (EDA) Grants, and FIRE Grants for Governors, Mayors, Tribes, and Fire Departments to mitigate and recover.
 - Resilient infrastructure like broadband internet connectivity so that American workers and students stuck at home can manage amidst the crisis.
 - \$350 billion for the social safety net focused on:
 - Unemployment Insurance:
 - Increased Benefit Size.
 - Waiving the waiting period.
 - A 13 week extension for current enrollees.
 - Expanding work sharing eligibility to avoid layoffs.
 - Automatic extensions during recession.
 - Open up unemployment insurance to gig workers and the self-employed.
 - Increasing the Federal Medical Assistance Percentage (FMAP) percentage for Medicaid to states and automatic extensions during the recession

- A 15 percent benefit increase for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and automatic extensions during the recession.
- Cancelling monthly student loan payments and having the federal government pay.
 - Six months of forbearance for all federally backed mortgages.
 - A moratorium on all evictions and foreclosures.
 - Businesses who receive money through a stimulus must provide mandatory paid sick leave and a \$15 minimum wage for all direct employees.
- It is still possible that the Senate may consider either only the House-passed or a combined package this week. If the Senate alters the House-passed legislation or combines it with an additional package, the House would have to return to Washington, DC to pass the legislation.

Other News

- Ohio Governor Mike DeWine announced last night that the state's health department will order all polling places not to open for Tuesday's primary elections due to COVID-19, however a judge has denied postponing the primary election until later this year.
- Additionally, Arizona, Florida, and Illinois are expected to host their primary elections despite concerns.
- The Transportation Security Administration (TSA) continues to see workers fall ill due to the COVID-19. Most recently, cases have been reported in Chicago and Atlanta.
- The Department of Transportation has asked that all staff who are eligible to telework to begin teleworking to the maximum extent possible.
- A cruise ship carrying passengers that are infected with COVID-19 is expected to dock in Cuba today. More on that can be found [here](#).
- Testing has increased and there were as many as 8,000 tests yesterday alone reported by the Association of Clinical Labs.
- While there are currently few details, President Trump did respond affirmatively to providing financial assistance specifically for companies like Boeing and General Electric during the White House press conference Tuesday afternoon.