May 26, 2020

TO: USTOA Members  
FR: Terry Dale  
  
Below is our COVID-19 Update for May 26, 2020:

**Congress**

**Updates at 7:00pm ET**

**Senate Activities**

* Senate Majority Leader McConnell said this morning that there’s “likely to be another bill” but that it will “not be the $3T that the House passed last week.”
* Leader McConnell asserted an extension of the enhanced unemployment benefits will not be happening in future relief, consistent with the Administration’s posture. He has also pushed back on the House’s rule changes to allow remote voting by proxy.
* Leader McConnell is committed to trying to pass the Senate’s Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) legislation, which the upper chamber failed to act on late last week. As a reminder, the Senate bill would extend the current 8-week period during which businesses must use funds to have loans forgiven to 16 weeks and the House bill would extend it to 24. Majority Leader Hoyer has indicated the House and Senate are close to a deal.
* Senate Republicans continue to reiterate that any additional assistance must include liability protections for businesses operating during the pandemic. As we have been reporting, Senator John Cornyn (R-TX) is working on legislative language.
* The Administration issued a report to Congress entitled [COVID-19 Strategic Testing Plan](https://www.democrats.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/COVID%20National%20Diagnostics%20Strategy%2005%2024%202020%20v%20FINAL.pdf" \t "_blank). Minority Leader Schumer, Speaker Pelosi, House Energy and Commerce Committee Chairman Frank Pallone (D-NJ), and Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee Ranking Member Patty Murray (D-WA) expressed disappointment. The statement said:
* “This disappointing report confirms that President Trump’s national testing strategy is to deny the truth that there aren’t enough tests and supplies, reject responsibility and dump the burden onto the states.”

**House Activities**

* The House will return this week to vote on bills not related to the COVID-19 pandemic for the first time since the beginning of the outbreak. House Majority Leader Steny Hoyer (D-MD) said that he cannot predict when the House would pick up its normal slate of legislative activities.
* The House has begun proxy voting and will allow voting from outside the US Capitol. 33 Members of the House have told the Clerk that they will not be present for votes this week and designated a proxy. Active proxies in the House can be tracked [here](https://clerkpreview.house.gov/ProxyLetter" \l "AllProxies" \t "_blank).
* House Republican Leaders have been encouraging their Congressmen and Congresswomen to not use the proxy voting system. Only retiring Rep. Francis Rooney (R-FL) voted to change the rules.
* House Minority Whip Steve Scalise (R-LA) suggested that Republicans will institute legal proceedings after the remote voting procedure is used.
* Majority Leader Hoyer has said that he has not ruled out voting on individual parts of the $3T relief bill, including billions of dollars for state and local governments, a provision some Republicans want Leader McConnell to take up.
* Rep. Brian Higgins (D-NY) continues to call on the Administration to cast a wider net on what is considered “essential travel” between the United States and Canada. Rep. Higgins said that travelers going to safely visit their families, check on their property, and pursue business interests should be considered essential.
* House Natural Resources Chairman Raúl Grijalva (D-AZ) is considering issuing a subpoena to the Interior Department, if it does not provide details on how it is deciding to reopen national parks around the country. Chairman Grijalva is concerned about the plans in place to handle the safety of visitors to the parks.

**Updates at 12:00pm ET**

**Senate Activities**

* The Senate is in recess this week and returns to Washington, DC next week.
* Senate Appropriations Committee Chairman Richard Shelby (R-AL) visited the White House where he stated that the VA Mission Act should be considered emergency spending.
  + The program, which allows veterans the ability to see doctors in their own communities as opposed to the VA, costs $12.5B per year and declaring it an emergency would remove it from the budget’s bottom line and would give the Senate Appropriations Committee additional money to spend on other priorities.
  + House Minority Leader McCarthy (R-CA) disagrees.
* The Alaska Delegation [voiced their support](https://www.energy.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/2020/5/delegation-ferc-approval-is-major-milestone-for-alaska-lng-project" \t "_blank) for the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission’s (FERC) decision to continue processing applications for new natural gas projects and liquefied natural gas export facilities, despite calls from the Democratic party to stop.
* Senator Tammy Duckworth (D-IL), Ranking Member of the Senate Commerce, Science, and Transportation Committee’s Subcommittee on Transportation and Safety, wrote a letter to the President opposing his recent decision to replace Mitchell Behm as the acting inspector general at the Department of Transportation (DOT) with Skip Elliot. The full letter can be found [here](https://www.duckworth.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/20.05.22%20-%20Senator%20Duckworth%20Letter%20to%20POTUS%20-%20Reinstate%20USDOT%20IG%20-%20Final.pdf" \t "_blank).
* Today, Senate Armed Services Committee Chairman Jim Inhofe (R-OK) and Ranking Member Jack Reed (D-RI) announced the full committee and subcommittee markup schedule for the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for Fiscal Year 2021. All markups will be conducted at the Secret level, with the exception of the Subcommittee on Personnel markup, and therefore will be closed to the press and public. The full press release can be found [here](https://www.armed-services.senate.gov/press-releases/inhofe-reed-announce-fy-2021-ndaa-markup-schedule" \t "_blank) and the schedule is:
  + Monday, June 8:
    - 2:30 PM – Subcommittee on Readiness – Russell SR-232A (CLOSED)
    - 4 PM – Subcommittee on Strategic Forces – Russell SR-232A (CLOSED)
  + Tuesday, June 9:
    - 9:30 AM – Subcommittee on Emerging Threats and Capabilities – Russell SR-232A (CLOSED)
    - 11 AM – Subcommittee on Airland – Russell SR-232A (CLOSED)
    - 2 PM – Subcommittee on Personnel – Dirksen SD-G50 (OPEN – please see press RSVP information in the Press Release)
    - 3:30 PM – Subcommittee on Seapower – Russell SR-232A (CLOSED)
    - 5:30 PM – Subcommittee on Cybersecurity – Russell SR-232A (CLOSED)
  + The NDAA will be considered by the Full Committee on the following dates:
    - Wednesday, June 10, 9:30 AM – Dirksen SD-106 (CLOSED)
    - If needed: Thursday, June 11, 9:30 AM – Dirksen SD-106 (CLOSED)

**House Activities**

* The House returns from recess this Wednesday and Thursday. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi proffered an agenda that includes consideration of:
  + [The Law Enforcement Suicide Data Collection Act](https://docs.house.gov/billsthisweek/20200525/BILLS-116s2746-SUS.pdf" \t "_blank);
  + T[he TRUTH Act](https://docs.house.gov/billsthisweek/20200525/BILLS-116hr6782-SUS.pdf" \t "_blank);
  + [H.R. 6886 – Paycheck Protection Program Flexibility Act of 2020,](https://www.congress.gov/bill/116th-congress/house-bill/6886/text?q=%7B%22search%22%3A%5B%22hr+6886%22%5D%7D&r=1&s=1" \t "_blank) which would, among other things, extend the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) loan lifetime from 8 weeks to 24 weeks; and
  + Potential reauthorization of the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act.
* As part of House Democrats’ broader agenda, the Speaker included:
  + Surface transportation/highway bill;
  + Flood insurance;
  + Water infrastructure; and
  + The reauthorization of the Violence Against Women Act.
* The House was initially expected to pass all 12 of its annual appropriations bills off the floor by June. However, the House wants to continue to focus on the COVID-19 relief package, and thus will delay consideration of the appropriations bills.
* House Natural Resources Committee Chairman Raul Grijalva (D-AZ) continues to voice his concern that the Administration is reopening federal parks/lands for political reasons and that the reopening plans lack precautions to protect human health and safety due to the pandemic. He has also indicated that he has received little information from the Administration to date on reopening parks.
* Rep. David McKinley (R-WV), along with House Energy and Commerce Committee Chairman Frank Pallone (D-NJ), Rep. Yvette Clark (D-NY), Rep. Paul Tonko (D-NY), and Rep. John Shimkus (R-IL), introduced [legislation](https://www.congress.gov/bill/116th-congress/house-bill/6987?q=%7B%22search%22%3A%5B%22hr+6987%22%5D%7D&s=1&r=1" \t "_blank) Friday to expand the PPP to include payments for waste and recycling collection services as covered utility payments for calculating the eligible amount of forgiveness on a PPP loan.
* Rep. Steve Cohen (D-TN) [introduced a bill](https://www.congress.gov/bill/116th-congress/house-bill/6965/text?q=%7B%22search%22%3A%5B%22congressId%3A116+AND+billStatus%3A%5C%22Introduced%5C%22%22%5D%7D&r=45&s=2" \t "_blank) on Friday to provide cash reimbursements for cancelled airline flights and tickets during the COVID-19 pandemic.
* Rep. Connor Lamb (D-PA) i[ntroduced a bill](https://www.congress.gov/bill/116th-congress/house-bill/6981?q=%7B%22search%22%3A%5B%22congressId%3A116+AND+billStatus%3A%5C%22Introduced%5C%22%22%5D%7D&s=2&r=29" \t "_blank) on Friday to extend the covered period for loan forgiveness and the rehiring period under the CARES Act.
* Rep. Vicky Hartzler (R-MO) [introduced a bill](https://www.congress.gov/bill/116th-congress/house-bill/6976/text?q=%7B%22search%22%3A%5B%22congressId%3A116+AND+billStatus%3A%5C%22Introduced%5C%22%22%5D%7D&r=34&s=2" \t "_blank) on Friday to provide liability protection for non-profit organizations during the COVID-19 pandemic.
* Veterans Affairs (VA) Secretary Robert Wilkie is scheduled to testify on Thursday before the House Appropriations Committee on the agency’s response to the COVID-19 pandemic, which has killed more than 1,000 patients under VA care. Reports indicate that around 1,300 sick patients have been administered the controversial drug hydroxychloroquine.

**Administration**

**Updates at 7:00pm ET**

* White House Economic Advisor Larry Kudlow told reporters that the President is supportive of having a payroll tax cut included in the next stimulus package. He also said that the Administration may support a “back to work” bonus but that they would not support an additional plus up in unemployment benefits.
  + A proposal is being offered by Senator Rob Portman (R-OH) that would provide unemployed workers with an extra $450 weekly bonus for a limited time, in addition to wages, if they return to work.
* As we reported this morning, the Administration is threatening to move this year’s RNC Convention in Charlotte, citing a lack of certainty in reopening the North Carolina economy by a Democratic Governor. Both Florida and Georgia have shown an interest in hosting the event.
* Governor Andrew Cuomo (D-NY) will meet with President Donald Trump in Washington on Wednesday. Governor Cuomo said that he plans to raise a number of issues, including the need for large-scale investments on infrastructure projects to “jump-start the economy” as well as federal aid to state and local governments.
* Glenn Fine, who was removed last month as the Pentagon’s acting watchdog by the President, has resigned from the Department of Defense’s inspector general’s office.
* In a letter to Congress, Amtrak has requested $1.5B in funding in the coming fiscal year to maintain their minimum service levels. The letter can be found [here](https://ustoa.com/r/ustoa-filemanager/source/resources/2020-05-26-amtrak-letter-to-congress-minimum-service.pdf).
* As a part of the Gateway Program, the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) granted New Jersey $91.5M to replace the Portal North Bridge, which carries about 450 Amtrak and New Jersey Transit trains per day, in addition to other upgrades on Amtrak’s Northeast corridor, its busiest route.
  + About $55M is set to go towards replacing a 50-foot clearance above the river to improve train speed. The replacement is expected to cost $1.7B. New Jersey Transit agreed to borrow up to $600M to contribute to the local share of the work, and officials have said they’d like to complete the work in 2026.
* US Trade officials are considering changing which European goods to include on its $7.5B retaliation list related to government subsidies for airplane manufacturer Airbus. A federal register notice is expected to be issued tomorrow in which the United States Trade Representative will be taking public comment on any changes to the current list which took effect last fall.
* Trump National Security Advisor Robert O’Brien said in an interview on “Meet The Press” that the cover-up of the virus that the Chinese government did is “going to go down in history along with Chernobyl.” He added that “we are in a different world” than where we were when trade negotiations began with China.
* The Administration is signaling a broader crackdown on the Chinese communications sector, extending beyond companies that the U.S. has already placed under harsh scrutiny. The Administration may remove operation licensing from the few companies remaining in the U.S., including China Telecom and China Unicom. This could mark the end for any Chinese telecommunications companies being able to do business in the United States.
  + The main reasoning coming from Washington is that the Chinese government could surveil U.S. citizens and American technology and that they have been previously deceptive about their operations.
* The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) and the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) are urging governors to recognize telecommunication workers as essential and to help ensure that they have the appropriate resources and personal protective equipment (PPE). All letters that FCC Chairman Ajit Pai and Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency Director Chris Krebs wrote to all governors and District of Columbia Mayor Muriel Bowser can be found [here](https://linkprotect.cudasvc.com/url?a=https%3a%2f%2fdocs.fcc.gov%2fpublic%2fattachments%2fDOC-364566A1.pdf&c=E,1,Rx0L26uz597CNNv_dK-WkT97Ltz3YauzDoMdyVyoVtm3PHNr0XiW_R8fz1DqfFiH-OE96ZZsZDhfkAFEh22z5j7MdwGOe9yrTNRNJgiN2qb7rVtAjGM,&typo=1" \t "_blank).

**Updates at 12:00pm ET**

* The White House over the weekend announced new travel restrictions to and from Brazil. The restrictions will go into effect this evening at 11:59pm. Brazil currently has nearly 350,000 confirmed cases of COVID-19, the second-most in the world behind the United States. As of yesterday, the country had confirmed more than 11,000 new cases in the previous 24 hours.
  + The proclamation suspends entry for any individual that is a non-U.S. citizen who has been in Brazil within 14 days immediately preceding their attempt to enter the United States.
  + Green card holders, close relatives of U.S. citizens, and flight crew members are exempt.
* Dr. Deborah Birx and Dr. Anthony Fauci said over the weekend that it is inevitable that there will be a second wave of COVID-19. The President continues to assert that the country will not close if there is a second wave.
* On Friday, the Trump Administration released long-awaited rules on how government-backed small business loans can be forgiven, but reports indicate that the rules fall short of what employers and lawmakers are demanding for the PPP. The two sets of rules detail the [requirements for loan forgiveness](https://home.treasury.gov/system/files/136/PPP-IFR-Loan-Forgiveness.pdf" \t "_blank) and [the lenders’ responsibilities in the forgiveness process](https://home.treasury.gov/system/files/136/PPP-IFR-SBA-Loan-Review-Procedures-and-Related-Borrower-and-Lender-Responsibilities.pdf" \t "_blank) as well as the Small Business Administration’s (SBA) procedures for reviewing loans to determine borrower eligibility.
  + The SBA said in the rules that banks must issue decisions on borrowers’ loan forgiveness applications no later than 60 days after receiving them and that the agency will send payment to the lender within 90 days.
  + The rules also explain how SBA will review some loans to determine whether borrowers should have received the aid in the first place.
* The President continues to indicate that he may select a new location other than Charlotte, NC for the RNC Convention this year if North Carolina restricts access to the event.
* In a recent report to Congress, titled the COVID-19 Strategic Testing Plan, the Administration pledged to buy 100M swabs by the end of this year to distribute to states to help expand the nation’s testing capacity. The report, which has not been immediately made public, was delivered to lawmakers on Sunday and reports indicate that it doubles down on the Administration’s stance that individual states, not the federal government, should have the primary responsibility for carrying out COVID-19 tests.
* The President is expected to broaden existing bans on foreign workers. Reports indicate that he is expected to extend and expand restrictions on foreign workers coming into the United States during the pandemic, but few other details have been released. The Administration received pressure from both Congress and anti-immigration groups in recent months to broaden and expand the April Executive Order that barred several categories of foreign workers from entering the country for a temporary period.
* DOT is alleging that the Chinese government is making it impossible for U.S. airlines to resume flights to China and that it has delayed multiple Chinese charter flights.
  + United and Delta want to restart flights to China next month, but reports indicate that Chinese authorities have not been responsive to the request, leading DOT to require Air China, China Eastern Airlines Corp, China Southern Airlines Co., Hainan Airlines Holding Co. and their subsidiaries to file flight schedules and other details by Wednesday. The order also requires Chinese carriers to notify the department of any proposed changes they intend.
  + The order does not impose any restrictions or penalty on the four airlines from China serving U.S. markets, but it serves as a warning after repeated objections by the U.S. failed to see action.
* On Friday, DOT issued a set of new exemptions allowing airlines to suspend service to certain points. 15 airlines were given permission to stop flying to 75 airports during the pandemic. The full list, which includes 11 exemptions each for United and Delta and five each for JetBlue, Alaska, and Frontier, can be found [here](https://www.reuters.com/article/us-health-coronavirus-usa-airlines/u-s-grants-tentative-ok-for-15-air-carriers-to-suspend-service-to-75-airports-idUSKBN22Y330" \t "_blank).
* The National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) on Friday petitioned the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) to reconsider approval of Ligado Networks’ 5G plan because of worries it could impact GPS signals. The full petition is [here](https://ustoa.com/r/ustoa-filemanager/source/resources/ntia-ligado-petition.pdf).
* A Federal judge denied the Administration’s request to delay an upcoming hearing on California’s request to block the rewritten Waters of the U.S. rule.
  + The Administration asked for more briefing time, which would have meant the Navigable Water Protection rule would have been in effect for weeks before the judge could decide on a preliminary injunction.
* The Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) and the Department of Energy (DOE) partnered with the U.K. National Cyber Security Centre late last week and issued security guidance for industrial control system operators. The guidance outlines potential impacts of a cyber incident and lists the most common IT and operational technology flaws that CISA saw in Fiscal Year 2019. The guidance can be found [here](https://linkprotect.cudasvc.com/url?a=https%3a%2f%2fwww.cisa.gov%2fsites%2fdefault%2ffiles%2fpublications%2fCybersecurity_Best_Practices_for_Industrial_Control_Systems.pdf&c=E,1,j_SS5ZTLVMoLdlM2Q29yBWqtyJhT60s36xtXtskDcsO9eqRxulPfPdIE2RMJGa6aaJdLbo3rHUbTO6sYYrTCrTgcqOKY8ECROAFtMAIOGgArkXC5u6ecPq8xcP8,&typo=1" \t "_blank).
* The President has indicated he may be changing his posture on the phase one China trade deal to counter a message from Joe Biden that he has been soft on China to preserve the trade deal. Top Administration officials also said that any potential gains from the Phase 1 trade deal could soon be eclipsed.
* On Friday, the Department of Commerce added 33 Chinese companies and institutions to its blacklist, effectively barring U.S. companies from exporting technology or doing business with them. The new list includes Qihoo 360 Technology and advanced cloud robotics tech company CloudMinds. More information on the companies added can be found [here](https://linkprotect.cudasvc.com/url?a=https%3a%2f%2fwww.commerce.gov%2fnews%2fpress-releases%2f2020%2f05%2fcommerce-department-add-two-dozen-chinese-companies-ties-wmd-and&c=E,1,Y1mBuN_-PdEFOgEIV_0W3ecTapR7NxFo0SjXWfUUAc4aWLIJE86POqXVaBbYQJ_4GZDNyEq6oDm3YL6O9d5EThVbJ8MUU0B0BKk3ANtML6pjKdCPEg,,&typo=1" \t "_blank).
* The Administration is [seeking public comment](https://www.ntia.doc.gov/files/ntia/publications/fr-secure-5g-implementation-plan.pdf" \t "_blank) on an implementation plan for a White House 5G security strategy pursuant to a 60-day statutory deadline in the Secure 5G and Beyond Act that was signed into law on March 23.
* The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) updated their guidance on the spread of transmission of COVID-19 on Friday. They now claim that while it is possible that the virus can spread from contaminated surfaces, it is not the main source of transmission. The updated guidelines can be found [here](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/how-covid-spreads.html" \t "_blank).
* The Federal Reserve Bank of New York is hosting a Virtual Forum Focusing on Small Businesses Amid the COVID-19 Crisis. The forum will focus on challenges faced by minority owned businesses, the role of community financial institutions, and actions that philanthropic, nonprofit, and government organizations can take to help recovery. Registration information can be found [here](https://linkprotect.cudasvc.com/url?a=https%3a%2f%2fwww.newyorkfed.org%2fnewsevents%2fevents%2fregional_outreach%2f2020%2f0527-2020&c=E,1,SnllTpPTSYGu9NGYSO4daPTPqXO1BuxnARg1DqSVhUtans2rIKnbh0RgY41M6FRkmGgQWLqAP3LjLDzaI-K2yp0eBkOynNekRuaRvvDpM9qWZChbjrsXPB8,&typo=1" \t "_blank).
* Federal Register Notices
  + The Department of Education extended the Fiscal Year (FY) 2021 application amendment period for Impact Aid Program (IAP) applications. The notice can be found [here](https://linkprotect.cudasvc.com/url?a=https%3a%2f%2fwww.federalregister.gov%2fdocuments%2f2020%2f05%2f26%2f2020-10147%2fimpact-aid-program-extension-of-the-application-amendment-deadline&c=E,1,44vyoUU0IqqcxeFF6FWbyaNl3ey9kZHfW00zYCGHoqGbtkM9elMakUrGheISd3p4w1VHiq4pCnVDP-joax7jztQSYTiuZxO-GNP3gMWj34ce&typo=1" \t "_blank).
  + The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) is authorizing unlicensed standard-power access points that will operate under the control of an automated frequency coordination system in portions of the 6 GHz band, opening the entire 6 GHz band for unlicensed indoor low power access points, and will permit unlicensed client devices to communicate with both the standard-power and low-power access points. The notice can be found [here](https://linkprotect.cudasvc.com/url?a=https%3a%2f%2fwww.federalregister.gov%2fdocuments%2f2020%2f05%2f26%2f2020-11236%2funlicensed-use-of-the-6-ghz-band&c=E,1,aij2nKYSh5RpcCqnDH9FFcEKOTg2aAlWxDhSUzlg9X7n-SMRmGINhdbNRrl9LVa7zffGb-fXF8HeLi4FkPm1Gr1dz5RxI2dkuMcgPHuKISygHaUyDKuU&typo=1" \t "_blank).
  + The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) announced the availability of $1.25 million in Fiscal Year (FY) 2016 Public Transportation Innovation Program funds to demonstrate and evaluate innovative technologies and designs to improve the state of good repair for transit agencies. The notice can be found [here](https://linkprotect.cudasvc.com/url?a=https%3a%2f%2fwww.federalregister.gov%2fdocuments%2f2020%2f05%2f26%2f2020-11129%2fcompetitive-research-funding-opportunity-ftas-public-transportation-innovation-program&c=E,1,Hsv45CwFBaT_MIW3DxKTiOmzg3zQaj7nIxFfW3qPzq_RzFdr1LaeBYaX7y6h9qStcEL0aGHB3dfWJVlkpZyjifV4PvAgJAp3JBr3dMUaBSBG8cicGDbXxFcp0q8,&typo=1" \t "_blank).
  + The Food and Drug administration (FDA) announced the availability of a variety of new guidance for COVID-19. The notice can be found [here](https://linkprotect.cudasvc.com/url?a=https%3a%2f%2fwww.federalregister.gov%2fdocuments%2f2020%2f05%2f26%2f2020-11238%2fguidance-documents-related-to-coronavirus-disease-2019-covid-19-availability&c=E,1,lI4w1dihGH7WOcKAnyRts4MEyHvWjBT12d5-zBgDjSoUMA9Ux9GKEu49HX_rbZiWirSWhCP2KgkUDwT3msnP6oZR2BpQMCrDCCBTSZQ4s-30doyazgU,&typo=1" \t "_blank).
  + The Small Business Administration (SBA) is extending the date by which certain Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) borrowers may repay their loans from May 14, 2020 to May 18, 2020 for some recipients. The notice can be found [here](https://linkprotect.cudasvc.com/url?a=https%3a%2f%2fwww.federalregister.gov%2fdocuments%2f2020%2f05%2f26%2f2020-11292%2fbusiness-loan-program-temporary-changes-paycheck-protection-program-second-extension-of-limited-safe&c=E,1,opyR0Ydrvi5roYFD_iWU9PBYtC-f43vHomyjsCmz-1JEQxy0oa-o9DciAajqxSkCzkZ7Mt558Wmxkz-dnHyfKzxQZUNJWydUSwNeUNhzfQyTr5LDcw,,&typo=1" \t "_blank).

**Other News**

**Updates at 7:00pm ET**

* Life Care Centers of America, a multi-state chain of nursing homes, along with the industry at large, are lobbying for liability protections from lawsuits from patients’ families.
* Michigan Governor Gretchen Whitmer (D) announced loosening restrictions to help reopen the economy. The loosening restrictions allow doctors' appointments, gatherings of 10 or less and auto sales by appointments. Whitmer has been one of the strictest governors in the country as it pertains to stay-at-home restrictions.
* The pandemic has been reported to have caused massive delays in the self-driving vehicle industry [according to](https://linkprotect.cudasvc.com/url?a=https%3a%2f%2fwww.detroitnews.com%2fstory%2fbusiness%2fautos%2fmobility%2f2020%2f05%2f26%2fcarmakers-push-forward-evs-self-driving-hits-pandemic-speed-bumps%2f3077855001%2f&c=E,1,UAilGj-2gpQlfSJUqGWJ8_4N2sKRRgtk_FDlG4HdzTs4EQm9kizTiOr4XPKZTkj5bhioyUpKwMK4z2F8mBrBszHhi345rDoymDwNsjc87qENhOYZhWl8&typo=1" \t "_blank) The Detroit Local News. Ford Motors is postponing the deployment of their autonomous vehicles for a year, Waymo (Alphabet’s self-driving car subsidiary) has suspended their production and General Motors is shutting down Maven, their self-driving subsidiary.
* The Federal Reserve Bank of New York will be hosting a virtual forum entitled, “Too Important to Fail: Minority-Owned Businesses Navigating COVID-19 and Beyond.” The forum will cover specific challenges facing minority-owned small businesses, the role that Community Development Financial Institutions (CDFIs) and other socially responsible capital providers can play to support equitable economic recovery and actions that philanthropy, financial institutions, nonprofits and government can take to ensure an equitable recovery.
  + For more information and to register, click [here](https://linkprotect.cudasvc.com/url?a=https%3a%2f%2fwww.newyorkfed.org%2fnewsevents%2fevents%2fregional_outreach%2f2020%2f0527-2020&c=E,1,z1A6ieNoo_dsINmeW6907g9qFjQFqES2_F9vQy54KF80d0sRHSFShEozWcFrzJfOq5GUTd7qj1hEJWL00L2RxCeMwg4hFVGo-xiPC_129jRJrlKw4cTXKtrSHfw,&typo=1" \t "_blank).
* General Motors will not be able to add second shifts to its plants in Flint, MI and Fort Wayne, IN this week because the company’s suppliers in Mexico are not ready to support increased operations at this time.
* The New York Stock Exchange’s trading floor now has plexiglass barriers to keep traders apart. Additionally, the number of traders on each floor is limited to a quarter of the usual and masks are required. Traders are also required to avoid public transit.
* Twenty states in the U.S. reported an increase in new COVID-19 cases for the week ending May 24. These twenty states are up 13 states from the prior week.
  + South Carolina had the biggest weekly increase at 42%. Alabama’s and North Carolina’s rates rose 27% and 26%, respectively. Georgia, which was one of the first states to reopen, saw cases rise 21% after two weeks of declines.
* Real estate companies are taking advantage of the PPP, despite rules meant to bar landlords and other property owners from utilizing the funds. A legal loophole with the program allows real-estate companies to apply through related business units, such as management or construction companies.
* Washington D.C. has had 13 consecutive days of decline in COVID-19 cases. If all continues to go well, Mayor Muriel Bowser says she will announce steps to reopen on Friday.
* Boeing is developing computer models that simulate the cabin environment and could ultimately inform decisions by airlines, health officials, and regulators on how to prevent the spread of COVID-19.
  + Airbus is also exploring other methods of reducing the spread of the virus including self-cleaning materials, a disinfectant that can last for five days, and touchless devices in lavatories.
* Aviation Week is holding an interactive webinar on what the next three months will bring for airlines, aircraft manufacturers, suppliers, and other facets of the aviation industry. The webinar will also cover what could happen once all government relief runs out. More information on the webinar, including the panelists and registration, can be found [here](https://linkprotect.cudasvc.com/url?a=https%3a%2f%2fregister.gotowebinar.com%2fregister%2f6002574132195941131&c=E,1,1JbTfOHjJWvs-a46pkaF1ys_UGnpMXEWxG2fg0_4c51_GQupQZHQTe7F2DZGIz7Ol51tFgpwUIhOdEUx0Jkpgj_5Soj1QJ6kOJ_3U-4uWxYSQ23ErYPhjQ,,&typo=1" \t "_blank).
* [The New York Times reported](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/05/26/technology/china-coronavirus-surveillance.html" \t "_blank) that China’s apps that were made to track the virus may outlast the spread of the virus, stirring privacy fears. The article states that while the worst of the outbreak seems to be over with, the apps used to monitor the virus have a potential to be a permanent fixture of everyday life.
* British Prime Minister Boris Johnson plans to reduce the role of Huawei in the U.K.’s 5G network in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. The Prime Minister has reportedly instructed officials to draft plans that would reduce Huawei’s involvement in building the U.K.’s 5G phone network to zero by 2023.
* China’s build out of 5G is on track after being delayed due to the COVID-19 outbreak. The country is attempting to add 10,000 new 5G wireless base stations a week across the country after a brief disruption. China's roll out of 5G is part of a broader digital infrastructure package meant to help transform the Chinese economy via next generation technology like artificial intelligence, big data and internet of things.
* The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), the European Union’s privacy regulatory body, has come under fire, notably from a leading German regulator Johannes Caspar, for a failure to enforce privacy rules against the big tech companies. Caspar called for an overhaul of the rules system as a whole to be able to properly hold companies accountable for privacy breaches amid slow decisions on consumer data privacy breaches from Twitter and WhatsApp, a Facebook company.

**Updates at 12:00pm ET**

* A World Health Organization (WHO) official said Sunday that the United States leaving the organization would be “unimaginable.” The official cited the United States as a founder of the WHO and stated that the WHO has benefited from the generosity and support of the people of the United States since its inception. The remarks come almost one week after the President sent a letter to the WHO threatening to permanently halt funding to the organization.
* Nearly 30 states have changed rules of practices for this year’s primaries or general elections in response to the pandemic. According to the Washington Post, the new policies affect around 86.6 million registered voters, including more than 40 million people who now have the temporary right to cast an absentee ballot due to COVID-19.
* Yesterday, Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe lifted a COVID-19 state of emergency in Tokyo and four other remaining areas. President Abe also unveiled a new stimulus package worth about $930B to provide financial support for companies hit by the pandemic.
* Current projections have the economy contracting by 6% to 7% this year and that unemployment will remain in double-digit percentages for the near future.
* The Alliance for Automotive Innovation continues to defend the Environmental Protection Agency’s (EPA) auto emissions rollback. The Alliance specifically stated that the EPA and the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) “lawfully exercised their discretion in setting their standards in accordance with the applicable statutory requirements.”
* Mexico’s President Andrés Manuel López Obrador is hoping that setting USMCA’s entry into force as July 1 will help the country draw more investment.
  + The Mexican auto industry is set to be considered an essential business and therefore allowed to resume operations on June 1, but companies can start earlier with proper safety protocols.
  + Reports indicate regional issues as some Mexican states struggle with the spread of COVID-19. Auto industry groups in the country are calling on specific regional governments where they are seeing issues urging them to allow for a gradual reopening of auto manufacturing plants.
* A new report from Facebook and the Small Business Roundtable was issued and examines the impacts of COVID-19 on small and medium sized businesses and their needs to economically recover. The full report can be found [here](https://linkprotect.cudasvc.com/url?a=https%3a%2f%2fdataforgood.fb.com%2fwp-content%2fuploads%2f2020%2f05%2fSMBReport.pdf&c=E,1,i_vCaaHWOH0PIdl74H3YEV5J9L4agb86_Fa-q_xq1UVQuleOpsiY-kJcVJ054aqxN8hrkteu_rqwkUbTYrwYxjXRnYm95poFmf2_qsIDm88TK4g3O-CpxptJrQ,,&typo=1" \t "_blank).
* Tyson Foods, the largest meat processor in the United States, has transformed its facilities across the country after workers tested positive for COVID-19. Precautions have included establishing on-site medical clinics, screening employees for fevers at the beginning of their shifts, requiring the use of face coverings, installing plastic dividers between stations, and more.
* At least 20 states have taken action in the past two and a half months to limit the legal exposure of the nursing home industry. As we have reported, nursing homes have experienced significant death and have been at the forefront of the discussion of liability protections in light of the pandemic.