June 15, 2020

TO: USTOA Members

FR: Terry Dale

|  |
| --- |
|  |

Below is our COVID-19 Updates for June 15, 2020:

**Congress**

**Updates at 7:00pm ET**

**Senate Activities**

* As a reminder, the Senate is expected to pass H.R. 1957, the Great American Outdoors Act tonight.
* The Senate Appropriations Committee will receive testimony tomorrow from Federal Communications Commission (FCC) Chairman Ajit Pai regarding FCC’s airwaves auctions.
	+ Senator John Kennedy (R-LA) is expected to press Chairman Pai on the latest developments regarding the FCC’s proposed auction of the 5G-friendly airwaves of the C-Band, which is currently scheduled for this December. Chairman Pai will be the sole witness.
* Senate Majority Whip John Thune (R-SD) indicated that it is unlikely that the Senate will consider its policing reform legislation before the July 4 recess. This would mean that the legislation would contend for Floor time with additional COVID-19 relief in the three weeks before the Senate currently plans to leave for the August recess.

**House Activities**

* Members of the House Transportation and Infrastructure (T&I) Committee have introduced over [120 amendments](https://transportation.house.gov/committee-activity/hearings/06/12/2020/full-committee-markup%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank) to H.R. 2, the INVEST in America Act, in advance of the markup on Wednesday. Republicans are also expected to offer a substitute amendment, ahead of or during the markup on Wednesday.
	+ Some notable amendments include creating a new grant program for cybersecurity at Amtrak, instituting a transportation workforce outreach program, and boosting evacuation routes.
		- However, many of the amendments either increase funding for specific programs or adjust definitions for provisions that are already contained in the bill.
* Majority Whip Jim Clyburn (D-SC), and a group of House Democrats are requesting information from the Treasury Department and the Small Business Administration (SBA) regarding Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) loan recipients. In the [letter](https://coronavirus.house.gov/sites/democrats.coronavirus.house.gov/files/2020-06-15.Select%20Committee%20to%20Mnuchin%20Carranza-%20SBA%20re%20PPP.pdf%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank), Majority Whip Clyburn expressed concern that funds intended for small businesses in rural and underserved areas were being diverted to wealthy borrowers.
	+ Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin announced plans to discuss PPP oversight, likely including publicly releasing the names of PPP recipients with Senate Small Business Committee members.
* A group of bipartisan Florida lawmakers, including Reps. Kathy Castor (D-FL), Darren Soto (D-FL), Francis Rooney (R-FL) and Matt Gaetz (R-FL) wrote a letter to Interior Secretary David Bernhardt asking him to explain whether the Interior Department has plans to release a new offshore drilling proposal and if the Interior Department would support a permanent ban on drilling off of Florida’s coast, as was reflected in the House-passed [H.R. 205, the Protecting and Securing Florida’s Coastline Act of 2019](https://www.congress.gov/bill/116th-congress/house-bill/205/text?q=%7B%22search%22%3A%5B%22hr+205%22%5D%7D&r=1&s=2" \t "_blank). The letter can be found [here](https://ustoa.com/r/ustoa-filemanager/source/resources/6-15-20-fl-lawmakers-letter.pdf).
	+ As a reminder, both Florida Senators Marco Rubio (R-FL) and Rick Scott (R-FL) previously voiced their opposition to drilling off Florida’s coast.
* House Oversight and Reform Government Operations Subcommittee Chairman Gerry Connolly (D-VA) sent letters to 24 inspectors General requesting agency safety oversight plans for employees to return to their offices during the COVID-19 pandemic.
	+ Chairman Connolly specifically asked the federal auditors to examine agency procedures for bringing workers back to offices and cited an internal email from the Internal Revenue Service recalling certain workers it deemed “mission-critical” to its offices, effective April 27.
* Reps. Jim Cooper (D-TN), Mike Turner (R-OH) and Elise Stefanik (R-NY) wrote a letter to House Armed Services Committee leadership on Friday questioning a potential conflict of interest with respect to the FCC’s April sign-off of Ligado Networks’ 5G plans. The full letter can be found [here](https://linkprotect.cudasvc.com/url?a=https%3a%2f%2fecfsapi.fcc.gov%2ffile%2f10611211677783%2fPaiLigado_conflict%2520of%2520interest_FINAL.pdf&c=E,1,lRg-QzzGR6YNl4AIcFkHxFEWbpvaNZ-EAERU4p9z6ByydfJFCbXK8KSOqK5j4OnQjiIcocFeAu0PuFTdWYKtKDv4bLOZzui1KF_SkrF7BdMumsQBwghra66g&typo=1" \t "_blank).
	+ The lawmakers point to a key allegation that FCC Chairman Pai relied on airwaves principles created by a current FCC advisory board chairman, Dennis Roberson, who has led that group while simultaneously consulting for Ligado.
* The House Homeland Security Committee will hold a hearing this Thursday at 4:00pm entitled “Climbing Again: Stakeholder Views on Resuming Air Travel in the COVID-19 Era.” The Committee, chaired by Representative Bennie Thompson (D-MS), will receive testimony from the following witnesses:
	+ Kevin M. Burke, President and Chief Executive Officer, Airports Council International-North America
	+ Sara Nelson, International President, Association of Flight Attendants-Communications Workers of America
	+ Neema Singh Guliani, Senior Legislative Counsel, American Civil Liberties Union
	+ Tori Emerson Barnes, Executive Vice President for Public Affairs and Policy, U.S. Travel Association

**Updates at 11:00am ET**

**Senate Activities**

* The Senate will continue to consider H.R. 1957, the Great American Outdoors Act, today and expects to pass the legislation and send it to the House this week.
	+ Procedural votes on the legislation, including waiving a budget point of order, passing the substitute amendment that contains the actual legislative language, and then invoking cloture on the entire bill, are set for 5:30pm this evening.
* Ahead of Wednesday’s hearing on aircraft certification, a new draft of the “Aircraft Safety and Certification Reform Act,” legislation being drafted by Senate Commerce, Science, and Transportation Committee Chairman Roger Wicker (R-MS) and Ranking Member Maria Cantwell (D-WA), became public on Friday. The updated draft would make more significant changes to the Federal Aviation Administration’s (FAA) Organization Designation Authorization (ODA) process. An updated draft of the bill language can be found [here](https://ustoa.com/r/ustoa-filemanager/source/resources/6-15-20-aircraft-safety-and-certification-reform-act-of-2020.pdf). The changes to the legislation came about after negotiations following increased advocacy efforts by the families of those who died in the two 737 MAX crashes. Some of the changes include:
	+ The FAA would be required to sign off on new members of a company’s ODA unit;
	+ A requirement that FAA engineers and inspectors act as advisers for private employees with compliance responsibilities;
	+ Prohibiting companies to limit consultation with the FAA;
	+ Removing FAA’s authority to issue “design and production organization certificates”;
	+ Prohibiting the FAA from rewarding certification employees for meeting schedules or quotas;
	+ Requiring the FAA to institute an anonymous safety concerns process and prohibiting manufacturers from retaliating against whistleblowers; and
	+ Requiring the FAA to establish an automation and human factors “Center of Excellence” and an “Office of Continuing Education” for engineers and inspectors.
* Sen. James Lankford (R-OK) announced in an interview this weekend that Senate Republican police reform legislation would be released on Wednesday. Though there is opposition on the use of chokeholds from Republicans, including Sen. Lankford, Sen. Tim Scott (R-SC), House Minority Leader Kevin McCarthy (R-CA) and even President Trump, the Senate bill may not include a Federal ban on the tactic.
	+ Sen. Scott also laid out the three major tracks of the Senate bill, namely that localities must provide information to the Department of Justice in situations where there is serious bodily harm, reforming training and tactics and a focus on officer misconduct.
	+ The Senate bill will not, however, decrease or end qualified immunity, a center piece of House Democrats’ legislation that Sen. Scott views as a “red line” issue.
* Sen. Josh Hawley (R-MO) is preparing legislation aimed at reforming protections for social media companies under Section 230 of the Communications Decency Act. The newest proposal would require platforms to stop selling targeted advertising in order to retain Section 230 protections.
* A bipartisan group of lawmakers, led by Sens. John Cornyn (R-TX), Marco Rubio (R-FL), and Gary Peters (D-MI) introduced [H.R. 1710](https://www.congress.gov/116/bills/s1710/BILLS-116s1710is.pdf?source=email" \t "_blank), legislation aimed at Chinese jet bridge manufacturer CIMC-Tianda. CIMC-Tianda is making a new push into the U.S. market. The company had been found guilty of intellectual property theft by a Houston District Court in 1998. The legislation would require the FAA to bar state-owned enterprises from using government funds if they had previously been found guilty of misappropriating intellectual property.
	+ The legislation is another example of actions against Chinese state-owned enterprises seeking to compete in the U.S. market.
	+ Reps. Ron Wright (R-TX) and Mark Veasey (D-TX) have introduced companion legislation in the House.
* Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee Chairwoman Lisa Murkowski (R-AK) sees the next COVID-19 relief package as aimed more at recovery than relief. Specifically, Sen. Murkowski is focused on the recovery of the clean energy sector, according to a recent interview, which has seen 600,000 jobs lost due to the pandemic.
* Senate Commerce, Science, and Transportation and Armed Service Committee leadership struck a deal on Friday to include their Spectrum IT Modernization Act, S. 3717, in this year’s National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA).
	+ The bill would require the Commerce Department to develop a plan to better manage federal airwaves, which many wireless companies support turning over to them.
	+ The Armed Services panel marked up the bill late last week.
* The Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee will host a hearing on the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on the energy sector. The hearing will feature testimony from:
	+ Mr. Stephen Nalley, Deputy Administrator, U.S. Energy Information Administration
	+ Mr. David Turk, Acting Deputy Executive Director, International Energy Agency
	+ Ms. Lisa Jacobson, President, Business Council for Sustainable Energy
	+ Mr. Frank J. Macchiarola, Senior Vice President of Policy, Economics and Regulatory Affairs, American Petroleum Institute
	+ Ms. Jackie Roberts, President, National Association of State Utility Advocates

**House Activities**

* The House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee will mark up their surface transportation reauthorization, H.R. 2 – The INVEST in America Act, on Wednesday at 10:00am. Amendments are already being filed on the Committee’s website, and can be found [here](https://transportation.house.gov/committee-activity/hearings/06/12/2020/full-committee-markup%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank).
	+ As we reported Friday, some changes have been made to the text in consultation with Republicans, including new provisions on toll credits and the numbering of highway interchanges.
	+ However, those changes do not address all issues raised by Republicans, who were not consulted in the initial drafting of the legislation.
* The House Judiciary Committee will mark up H.R. 7120, The Justice in Policing Act of 2020, on Wednesday. This legislation is House Democrats’ proposal on police reform.
* The House Energy and Commerce Committee will hold a hearing on Tuesday on the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on the energy sector. The hearing will feature testimony from:
	+ The Honorable Ernest J. Moniz, President and Chief Executive Officer, Energy Futures Initiative and Former Secretary, U.S. Department of Energy
	+ Gregory Wetstone, President and Chief Executive Officer, American Council on Renewable Energy
	+ Rich Powell, Executive Director, ClearPath
* Multiple large tech companies have reportedly been given a Sunday deadline to determine if their CEOs will be available for a House Judiciary Antitrust Subcommittee hearing related to its investigation into the tech sector. As of late yesterday, none of the companies that were invited had responded.
* Rep. Pramila Jayapal (D-WA) is preparing a broad moratorium on facial recognition that would apply to both police and commercial use. Rep. Jayapal said the recent protests have again renewed conversations around how facial recognition contributes to racial profiling by police officers.
	+ Rep. Jimmy Gomez (D-CA) is also working on legislation related to facial recognition that would restrict its use by local and state law enforcement.

**Administration**

**Updates at 7:00pm ET**

* The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) revoked the emergency authorization of hydroxychloroquine and chloroquine for COVID-19 patients. The drugs were promoted by President Trump as potential effective measures against COVID-19 despite questions about their safety and effectiveness.
* The Federal Reserve Board announced updates to the Secondary Market Corporate Credit Facility (SMCCF) to begin buying corporate bonds to support market liquidity and increase availability of credit for large employers. The announcement can be found [here](https://linkprotect.cudasvc.com/url?a=https%3a%2f%2fwww.federalreserve.gov%2fnewsevents%2fpressreleases%2fmonetary20200615a.htm&c=E,1,BfdfRBdz9YLiIlA6ftqPE7ZxWN2SgzUW159og-VnqqUqd8cO275HDTA5xqDfRBUSImBzChJ_mgO4BCoB2haCglDIwAf2bhr7W8tO5WqLqZhY&typo=1" \t "_blank).
* The Federal Reserve [announced](https://linkprotect.cudasvc.com/url?a=https%3a%2f%2fwww.bostonfed.org%2fnews-and-events%2fpress-releases%2f2020%2ffederal-reserves-main-street-lending-program-opens-for-lender-registration.aspx%3fsource%3demail&c=E,1,T6tK6yur3rsWQ8pshvgP2aeorRpMm2Z8XITz6DGpOmeEK95FBJwbx9hrnC9X3mWs62MWLgV--ARskqrz-rWsT9n3aDahVjbMoLQdeA0lA7GqQtpFr_gxwc3VYA,,&typo=1" \t "_blank) its $600B Main Street Lending Program for midsize businesses and said that banks can now register to participate. In the program, the Federal Reserve will buy 95% of a bank loan to a company with up to 15,000 employees or up to $5B in annual revenue. The program is designed to help businesses that are too large to qualify for the PPP.
	+ The Federal Reserve Board also announced that they will be seeking public comments on their proposal to expand the Main Street Lending Program to nonprofit organizations and provide them access to credit. The notice can be found [here](https://linkprotect.cudasvc.com/url?a=https%3a%2f%2fwww.federalreserve.gov%2fnewsevents%2fpressreleases%2fmonetary20200615b.htm&c=E,1,Y1Rm8WP-PKlMxCCCkh8C8S3aJa5lBGyCC3_g4Qbf_iPraI--jifZXZuecPvercfydoVBFAO1wNnsijM6k37Fun76yws85CkNAlfBgCX6tnQSYhewXAOcG5gxOkk,&typo=1" \t "_blank).
* The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) announced the launch of a summer Aeronautical Information Series. The series will discuss a wide variety of topics including Data Standardization, Notices to Airmen changes and how aeronautical information impacts the drone community. To register, click [here](https://www.eventbrite.com/e/aeronautical-information-optimization-summit-delivering-data-that-matters-registration-107259987510?utm_campaign=post_publish&utm_content=EBLinkEvent&utm_medium=email&utm_source=eventbrite&utm_term=shortLinkViewMyEvent" \t "_blank).
* The SBA sent a note to lenders involved in the PPP to focus on borrowers in vulnerable and disadvantaged communities. Overall, nearly $130B remains in the PPP. The note can be found [here](https://ustoa.com/r/ustoa-filemanager/source/resources/sba-note-6-15.pdf).
* The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) awarded the Ohio Department of Transportation $4.4M to complete a project that will allow companies to deploy partially automated trucks on the I-70 highway.
* Secretary of State Mike Pompeo is reportedly planning a trip to Hawaii to meet with Chinese government officials. It is unclear what the exact impetus behind the meeting is, but China’s handling of COVID-19 and the current Phase One trade deal between the United States and China are likely to be discussed.
* The Department of Commerce issued a new rule that would ensure United States industries’ ability to more fully contribute to standards-development activities in the telecommunications sector and to contribute to standards development bodies. The announcement can be found [here](https://linkprotect.cudasvc.com/url?a=https%3a%2f%2fwww.commerce.gov%2fnews%2fpress-releases%2f2020%2f06%2fcommerce-clears-way-us-companies-more-fully-engage-tech-standards&c=E,1,R1SIuo29Z_bw9MTAb27dFAow2RWWRxud31JMugxz_LIN5WNSWW2iOqMpU5Mq4JrlCEg7Fr44bZ-nCrd_rb0omd-fxFDDJlcynBjH01ZtGhAbGAJrBsFLm0WBmw,,&typo=1" \t "_blank).
	+ The announcement specifically cites how U.S. participation and leadership in standard-setting influences the future of 5G, autonomous vehicles, artificial intelligence, and other cutting-edge technologies.

**Updates at 11:0am ET**

* White House trade adviser Peter Navarro signaled on Saturday that President Trump may be looking at a topline of $2T for the next COVID-19 relief package. This number would be twice what Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-KY) had previously suggested as the maximum. Navarro also once again doubled down on the White House’s desire for a payroll tax cut and indicated that the President is hoping for a focus on returning manufacturing to the United States.
* White House economic adviser Larry Kudlow reiterated on Sunday that the Administration does not support an extension of the additional $600 weekly unemployment benefit, that expires at the end of July. He also mentioned that the Administration is working to craft a separate benefit that would be tied to an incentive to return to work.
* In response to the Department of Transportation’s (DOT) move to formally define part of its consumer protection authority, consumer advocates and some Democratic lawmakers raised concern, saying that formalizing the definitions will limit the agency’s ability to respond.
	+ As a reminder, the proposed rule would codify what DOT considers to be “unfair and deceptive practices”, with the intent of aligning the definitions used by DOT with those that are used by the Federal Trade Commission (FTC).
	+ In addition to criticisms by Democratic lawmakers, two Democratic FTC Commissioners also criticized the proposal.
* The U.S. Export-Import Bank’s (EXIM) board of directors voted Friday to give Congress 35 days’ notice of two potential transactions, both involving commercial aircraft.
	+ The notification is required for deals that exceed $100M in value or that involve the export of nuclear energy equipment to give lawmakers a chance to weigh in before the board votes whether to approve the deals.
* Small oil refiners have petitioned the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to grant them economic hardship status going back to 2013. The petition would pave the way for the EPA to exempt small refiners from 2020 Renewable Fuel Standard requirements.
* The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) is holding the first of three sessions this week on autonomous vehicle (AV) testing.
	+ According to DOT, the aim of the series is to “raise awareness” and “facilitate greater public understanding” around AV testing. DOT is also working on a new web platform that will give the public more information about where and how testing is happening
	+ Several major AV developers are expected to participate in the conversations throughout the week, but today's participants will be Secretary Elaine Chao, along with NHTSA chief James Owens, Federal Highway Administration Administrator (FHWA) Nicole Nason and Finch Fulton, DOT's Deputy Assistant Secretary for transportation policy.
* The U.S. and the United Kingdom (U.K.) will start round two of trade talks today as they work to sign a deal before the November election in the U.S. However, trade experts said it is likely that only a partial deal could be reached by November given the number of major issues being discussed.
* Federal Register Notices:
	+ The Department of Education issued a notice of waivers granted under Section 3511 of the CARES Act. The notice can be found [here](https://linkprotect.cudasvc.com/url?a=https%3a%2f%2fwww.federalregister.gov%2fdocuments%2f2020%2f06%2f15%2f2020-12794%2fnotice-of-waivers-granted-under-section-3511-of-the-coronavirus-aid-relief-and-economic-security&c=E,1,CG8WRIArXrSiGwSxEdkGJrQUIDnQ7DkuQDIoXoT7jjylQACqwVFWyyWxACZS4Fiu1u_zWubnBLtVTz3oPA0l6B9eLPZkWDLkXctvVJXh-A_5JpHniXQcVjEb&typo=1" \t "_blank).
	+ FAA issued a notice and request for comment on automatic dependent surveillance broadcast-out performance requirements to support Air Traffic Control Service. The notice can be found [here](https://linkprotect.cudasvc.com/url?a=https%3a%2f%2fwww.federalregister.gov%2fdocuments%2f2020%2f06%2f15%2f2020-12849%2fagency-information-collection-activities-requests-for-comments-clearance-of-renewed-approval-of&c=E,1,qJSPXVsDz6JurSHb4koIzWXRn24HvW606OQL14vigsh1-8PODH3tCOD_rnyU97wWuDY_fdALWmgLspqxwAYdvdsPhreu8M0eb3ImsSqrkKt59SpgFwLy8uc,&typo=1" \t "_blank).
	+ The Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation issued a final rule on the allocation of assets in single-employer plans and benefits payable in terminated single-employer plans. The notice can be found [here](https://linkprotect.cudasvc.com/url?a=https%3a%2f%2fwww.federalregister.gov%2fdocuments%2f2020%2f06%2f15%2f2020-12883%2fallocation-of-assets-in-single-employer-plans-benefits-payable-in-terminated-single-employer-plans&c=E,1,yWh6KbzUu-fGVgr3Z9tzsbZNL3iZmhI6BB7T_fh5A7onJX26Qla68xBE75Ujh9PgvK6vwmsN4A89t3cV7d6gPeqtV154XinD4eMO8Ut2rdCjXfohFOc,&typo=1" \t "_blank).

**Other News**

**Updates at 7:00pm ET**

* The Supreme Court ruled on Monday that the Title VII provision of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 applies to LGBT+ workers. The decision protects LGBT+ workers from being sanctioned or fired due to their sexual orientation. The ruling was decided by a 6-3 vote, with Justices Neil Gorsuch and John Roberts joining the liberal Justices on the court (Ginsburg, Sotomayor, Kagan, and Breyer).
	+ The United States Chamber of Commerce announced their support of the ruling.
* Airlines for America announced that its member airlines will step up enforcement of facial covering policies for passengers. According to the [statement](https://linkprotect.cudasvc.com/url?a=https%3a%2f%2fwww.airlines.org%2fnews%2fmajor-u-s-airlines-announce-increased-enforcement-of-face-coverings%2f&c=E,1,-YPlvf5v6REQr9fD9uoz-smyeuyqQSOXYBl8DakznQSdNADDK1gL3M1R0qgxG9dQyMKf-lNCp3ZwvIQbGVQ0O8jXMlxzu52ES81zbECyTekhrbpMKv5nWifkmnU,&typo=1" \t "_blank), its member airlines will:
	+ Clearly articulate its individual face covering policy in communications with customers, which may require passengers to acknowledge the specific rules during the check-in process;
	+ Have crew members announce specific details regarding the carrier’s face covering policy including the consequences passengers could face for violating the policy once on board; and
	+ Determine the appropriate consequences for passengers who are found to be in noncompliance of the airline’s face covering policy up to and including suspension of flying privileges on that airline.
* More than 27,000 jobs were lost in the clean energy sector in May, an encouraging number after April saw over 400,000 jobs lost. However, the [report](https://linkprotect.cudasvc.com/url?a=https%3a%2f%2fe2.org%2freports%2fclean-jobs-covid-economic-crisis-may-2020%2f&c=E,1,hb4u8JeRVrQ9o2QrZ9QCVePsf15a0RC_7ZOLxjc5Bn2iI4T2ANRaAu3UnD8K0TwLaUGZAFkwE-pjAEL2BffwFMOkCxjsKj0cUld1VU5FysZDDi0,&typo=1" \t "_blank) from BW Research warned that the depletion of the federal Paycheck Protection Program could hit the sector hard, which has now shed over 620,000 jobs during the pandemic. For comparison, the oil and gas sector lost some 100,000 jobs in total so far due to the pandemic.
* Lear Corporation, an automotive technology company based in Pine Grove, Pennsylvania, will add capacity to their factories to make 500,000 face masks a week.
* After dozens of new cases of COVID-19 were detected in Beijing over the weekend, the government took immediate steps and deployed 100,000 workers to test citizens who could have been exposed.
	+ The Chinese government has authorized strict controls in order to prevent the virus from spreading, including mandating masks and closing gyms and movie theaters.
* British Prime Minister Boris Johnson said that the United Kingdom and the European Union could strike a deal on their future, post-Brexit relationship in the next six weeks.
* Amazon CEO Jeff Bezos has agreed to testify before the House Judiciary’s Antitrust Subcommittee to face questions from the panel about the tech company’s competitive practices.
* Norway’s public healthy body suspended a COVID-19 contact tracing app and deleted all data collected by the technology, following an order from the country’s data protection body. The data protection body cited that the app presented a “disproportionate risk to privacy given the low download rates.”
	+ This comes amid multiple proposals in Congress on privacy issues associated with the COVID-19 pandemic and specific practices.

**Updates at 11:00am ET**

* COVID-19 cases continued to rise across the U.S. this weekend including in Texas, Alabama, North Carolina, South Carolina, Florida, and Washington state. Overall, nearly 800 Americans are still dying daily from the virus.
* The employee retention tax credit that was created to provide additional COVID-19 relief for businesses is barely being used. One payroll processing company indicated that less than 1% of its 600,000 clients have used the tax credit.
	+ As a reminder, the tax credit is 50% against up to $10,000 in wages paid to each employee. The credit is refundable meaning if it exceeds the business’ payroll tax burden, the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) pays the business the difference.
* The Supreme Court is set to rule on the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program, the Obama-era program that shields undocumented immigrants who were brought to the United States as children from being deported, in the coming weeks. If the court rules against the program, Congress would be forced to act before the election. Some 700,000 immigrants participate in the DACA program.
* The National People’s Congress Standing Committee in China is working on drafting and passing a national security law relating to Hong Kong, which could happen by the end of this month.
	+ The Standing Committee is expected to cover four areas in their new law, including succession, subversion, terrorism, and foreign interference in Hong Kong affairs.
* WTO Director-General Roberto Azevêdo and trade leaders from the 13 members of the Ottawa Group will meet virtually today to discuss the impacts of the pandemic while adapting trade rules to prepare for future crises.
	+ The group is led by Canada and includes Australia, Brazil, Chile, the European Union, Japan, Kenya, Mexico, New Zealand, Norway, Singapore, South Korea and Switzerland.
* Pittsburgh-based online retailer Online Stores filed a complaint with the FTC related to Google’s refusal to allow online advertising for face masks, citing that the refusal is raising the price for consumers and harming competition. The company also cited that Google’s ban violated the FTC Act, which prohibits unfair or deceptive conduct.
	+ As a reminder, in early March, Google instituted a blanket ban on all ads for medical face masks “out of an abundance of caution” to prevent price-gouging and scams seeking to profit off the current pandemic.