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SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE

Transcript of Speaker Pelosi, Chairman Neal Media Availability Following Meeting on Families First Coronavirus Response Act

MARCH 12, 2020

PRESS RELEASE

Washington, D.C. – Speaker Nancy Pelosi and Chairman of the Ways and Means Committee Richard E. Neal spoke to members of the press on the path forward in passing the Families First Coronavirus Response Act. Below is a full transcript:

Speaker Pelosi. Well, hello. What are you doing here?

Q: Same thing you are.

[Laughter]

Q: We're just going to report on what you're doing.

Speaker Pelosi. Well, you can go home this evening. We have – are near to an agreement subject to the exchange of paper. We hope to have an announcement tomorrow. Richie?

Chairman Neal. No, I think that's fair. I think that the discussions went on all day. I think there were some differences of opinion, but we felt that putting together something that the American people could see cooperation on between the two parties in this difficult moment would be a confidence builder. And I think that we approached it that way. The Secretary spent more time on the phone with the two of us today than I think that he would –

Speaker Pelosi. Want to ever again.

[Laughter]

Chairman Neal. Desire.

Q: What are the outstanding issues?

Speaker Pelosi. Well, those are just subject to paper. We resolved most of our differences, and those we haven't we will continue the conversation, because there will obviously be other bills. So –

Q: Are you confident, then, that something will be able to pass tomorrow? Confident enough to do a vote? Are you expecting to do a vote sometime in the daytime, as the markets are watching?

Speaker Pelosi. One way or another.

Q: What are your concerns about when the markets open tomorrow, considering the shock of today?

Speaker Pelosi. That was very shocking. Of course, other things that work, in terms of the price of oil, and – but this virus and – I'm not going to go into that, because what we're trying to do is be in a

positive vein and go forward in a way, working together, so that we can have people be tested, tested, tested. That's what's really important.

And what we did – an \$8.3 billion bill to advance that agenda. And now with this bill – with the masks and all the rest, that we are enabling the testing to happen. The most important thing for us is to be able to take a measure of what the challenge is in our country, and we want to do that working together.

Chairman Neal. And I think the reminder of all important data is here. I think that's a prime consideration.

Q: Madam Speaker, could you give a sense of what you do anticipate you'll be doing, since you've been dealing with this legislatively for some time now? I mean –

Speaker Pelosi. Well, hopefully we will be able to take inventory, find out the extent of the crisis in our country, give people confidence to be tested, that it will be free, and so they don't have to be worried about entailing any cost. And also the fact that we want to give them confidence and, in doing so, with a package that is For The People.

This is a package For The People. It's about paid sick leave. It's about family medical leave. It's about Unemployment Insurance. It's about feeding the – it's about our children who are out of school and need to be fed. It's about seniors and people with disabilities. So, this goes to the actual heart of what our purpose is.

And at the beginning of – I'll go back to where I began, it's about testing, testing, testing. Testing and that.

And all of the – I yield to the distinguished Chair of the Ways and Means Committee to attest that what we're doing are stimuli.

Chairman Neal. Right. The key phrase in stimulus is confidence. We all acknowledge that when you have an economic downturn, that it's going to increase spending and we think that that public investment, as it relates to public health, is issue number one.

Q: Madam Speaker, have you been briefed at all on any other actions that the Administration might need to take to ensure the safety of the public, in terms of restricting travel or air travel?

Speaker Pelosi. We are working on getting this bill done.

Thank you, all.

Staff. Thank you, all. Thank you.

Q: Is it fair to say you have an agreement, in principle, subject to getting the language precise?

Speaker Pelosi. Excuse me?

Q: Is it fair to say you have an agreement in principle, so long as the language invoked –

Speaker Pelosi. No. No. I would say it's fair to say: we're close to an agreement, subject to the exchange of paper, and we hope to have an agreement tomorrow.

Staff. Thank you.

Chairman Neal. Thank you, folks.

