

Durbin Comments About Senate Partisan Coronavirus Response Legislation

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WASHINGTON – U.S. Senate Democratic Whip Dick Durbin (D-IL) today slammed Senate Republicans’ newly proposed “emaciated” partisan coronavirus response legislation, which leaves out assistance for renters and home owners, hungry families, the census, safe elections, hospitals and health clinics, and state and local governments. In a speech on the Senate floor, Durbin also called out Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-KY) for wasting nearly four months since the House passed the *HEROES Act* with dithering and delay, which allowed the \$600 weekly federal unemployment benefit to expire at the end of July.

Nationwide, nearly 30 million Americans are relying on unemployment benefits to put food on the table and pay for rent and health care. As of August 15, approximately 760,000 Illinoisans were claiming some form of unemployment benefits.

“We face a challenge as a nation. Which party will stand up for America to weather this crisis and come out strong? The Democrats have a proposal. We’ve had it for four months. Republicans tomorrow will offer a ‘skinny,’ some say ‘emaciated’ version of that proposal... what we have from Senator McConnell is a small effort at a time when

America needs a substantial effort to deal with not only the situation facing our economy, but also the coronavirus,” Durbin said.

Durbin continued, “Tomorrow is a symbolic partisan vote on the Republican side when it should be much more. And after it is finished – and we know the outcome – perhaps then the Republican Leader in the Senate will be willing to sit down and negotiate... that’s what it takes. Not a speech on the floor, not a press release, not a symbolic vote, but something much more significant—the willingness to sit down and acknowledge the obvious... if both parties do care to help the unemployed, to help businesses, to make sure that our health care providers have the resources that they need, then we can start to address this coronavirus, this pandemic with the leadership that has been so lacking in the months that we’ve faced this year.”