



## COVID-19 3/27 PM UPDATE

### ***COVID-19 3/27 PM Update***

#### Globally

Total cases – 590,594

Total deaths – 26,943

#### In the United States

Total cases – 100,717

Total deaths – 1,544

#### ***Administration***

- **President Donald Trump** signed into law a sweeping coronavirus relief package (H.R. 748) Friday, the third of what is likely to be multiple bills aimed at easing the economic effects of the pandemic. His signature came just hours after the **House** passed the measure by a voice vote, and less than 48 hours after it received unanimous approval from the **Senate**.
- The **Joint Artificial Intelligence Center**, which heads Pentagon development of AI, is deep in conversation with U.S. Northern Command and the National Guard Bureau about the possibility of using artificial intelligence to respond immediately to the new coronavirus outbreak at home, said Lt. Gen. Jack Shanahan, the center's director. It could use data from commercial, academic, and government sources to coordinate the efforts to mitigate harm from the virus, identify infection hotspots, and possibly even direct the deployment of Guard forces and resources
- The **Agriculture Department** announced that it is easing requirements to obtain H-2A and H-2B visas after lobbying from farm groups.
- Millions of **immigrants** will be denied free Covid-19 tests in the middle of a public health crisis because **Medicaid** excludes some green-card holders, young immigrants brought to this country as minors, and others. Legislation that Trump signed into law March 18 carries a Medicaid state option to cover testing for the uninsured. But because the program is tied to Medicaid's immigration standards, some green-card holders, Deferred Action for Childhood Arrival (DACA) recipients and many other people lawfully residing in the U.S. are left out
- In response to the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, **U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services** announced that it is adopting a measure to assist applicants and petitioners who are responding to requests for evidence (RFEs) and notices of intent to deny (NOIDs) dated between March 1 and May 1, 2020.
  - For applicants and petitioners who receive an RFE or NOID dated between March 1 and May 1, 2020, any responses submitted within 60 calendar days after the response

deadline set forth in the RFE or NOID will be considered by USCIS before any action is taken.

- The **SBA** has committed, in a briefing to House Financial Services committee this morning, that they will issue regs on the 7A small business loans within 48 hours of the President signing the bill.
- The **Trump administration** said Friday it is delaying a shift to cleaner-burning, summertime gasoline after the coronavirus pandemic caused a plummet in demand and left storage tanks full of winter-grade fuel.
  - The **Environmental Protection Agency** decided to relax those requirements for at least 20 days in response to pleas from refiners and gasoline distributors [worried about their ability](#) to drain tanks and other equipment, as coronavirus-spurred lockdowns keep cars off the roads. The EPA warned of potential fuel shortages without a waiver, because refiners and distributors otherwise are required to stop selling winter gasoline on May 1.
- At least 36 sailors aboard the **USS Theodore Roosevelt** have now tested positive for the novel coronavirus, U.S. official says. Navy officials expect the number to continue to grow.
- **President Trump** has invoked the **Defense Production Act** for the first time, requiring General Motors to supply ventilators.
  - "Today, I signed a Presidential Memorandum directing the Secretary of Health and Human Services to use any and all authority available under the Defense Production Act to require General Motors to accept, perform, and prioritize federal contracts for ventilators," Trump said in a statement.

### **Capitol Hill**

- The **Senate** is currently in recess until April 20. The **House** left without a fixed return date.
- Reps. **Joe Cunningham** (D-S.C.) and **Mike Kelly** (R-Pa.) have tested positive for the coronavirus, making them the fourth and fifth member of Congress to contract the virus.
- Sens. **Amy Klobuchar** (D-Minn.) and **Ron Wyden** (D-Ore.) are pushing for more money to help state election officials phase in safer voting procedures, particularly mail-in ballots, arguing the funding included in the current virus economic relief package isn't sufficient.

### **State/Local**

- The **North Dakota** Department of Corrections is giving inmates in the state's prisons access to free calls and video chats to communicate with their friends and family as well as free cable to encourage social distancing.
- **Democratic Gov. J.B. Pritzker of Illinois** is sending healthy folks to a state website so their skills can be matched with organizations that work with the homeless or seniors, or deliver meals.
- **Kentucky Democratic Gov. Andy Beshear** of Kentucky announced that non-essential state employees were being reassigned to work at food banks.
- **Rhode Island Gov. Gina Raimondo** is stationing National Guard troops at bus and train stations to collect contact information from anyone arriving from New York and to direct them to self-quarantine. State police are stopping cars with New York license plates coming into the state
- **Arizona Gov. Doug Ducey** [classified golf courses](#) as essential businesses that can remain open during the pandemic.
- **Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis** said travelers coming from Louisiana to Florida must do a mandatory 14-day self-isolation, as New Orleans becomes a potential coronavirus "hotspot."

- All public beaches in **Los Angeles County** are being closed in an effort to thwart the spread of coronavirus, County Supervisor Janice Hahn announced.
- **Virginia** does not have enough personal protective equipment (PPE) or testing material to keep up with demand, Gov. Ralph Northam said during a news conference Friday.
- The hospital ship USNS Mercy has arrived at the **Port of Los Angeles** bringing with it 1,000 hospital beds, 800 medical staff, emergency rooms and ICUs to provide relief for shore-based hospitals overwhelmed by the COVID-19 pandemic.
- The **United States Conference of Mayors** questioned officials in 213 municipalities and found serious shortages that underscored the “scope and severity” of the crisis. The organization, a nonpartisan association of mayors from across the country, urged the federal government to provide more support.
  - More than 90 percent — or 192 cities — said they did not have an adequate supply of face masks for police officers, firefighters and emergency workers. In addition, 92 percent of cities reported a shortage of test kits and 85 percent did not have a sufficient supply of ventilators available to local health facilities.
- A [new analysis](#) from the **University of Washington** projects that even with strict social distancing from coast to coast, more than 81,000 people in the U.S. — and more than 1,400 in Washington state — could die from COVID-19 by the first of July.
  - Modeling from the UW’s Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation (IHME) forecasts that hospitalizations will generally peak in mid-April, with 64,000 more patients than licensed beds nationwide. The shortfall in ICU beds is estimated at more than 17,000.
- **California Gov. Gavin Newsom** on Friday announced a temporary ban on evictions statewide for those affected by the novel coronavirus. The measure prevents the evictions of renters over the nonpayment of rent through May 31.
- **North Carolina Gov. Roy Cooper** has issued a stay-at-home order for the state starting 5 p.m. ET Monday.
  - The order also limits gatherings to no more than 10 people.
- **West Virginia Gov. Jim Justice**, speaking at a news conference Friday, asked anyone coming into the state to quarantine for 14 days.
  - Officials said they are concerned people will enter West Virginia to escape Covid-19 hot zones.
- The mayor of **Fort Lauderdale, Florida**, Dean Trantalis, has issued an emergency declaration requiring residents to stay at home in an effort to slow spread of coronavirus in the city. Travel is restricted in the city to visiting essential businesses only.
- **Oklahoma Gov. Kevin Stitt** suspended elective surgeries on Tuesday in an executive order.
  - On Friday, Stitt's office issued a clarification that classifies abortion services as elective if they are not deemed a medical emergency.
- **Alabama Gov. Kay Ivey** announced Friday she is ordering the closure of all nonessential businesses in the state due to the coronavirus outbreak. All nonessential businesses are being asked to close at 5 p.m. on Saturday. Ivey said they have broken their nonessential businesses into four categories:
  - Entertainment, athletic venues, nonessential “close contact” service establishments, and nonessential retail stores.
  - The businesses will remain closed through April 17.
- **Vermont Gov. Phil Scott** said in a news conference today that he has closed in-person instruction for the remainder of the school year, but is asking schools to continue virtual learning.

## *International*

- **Turkey** bans all international travel and domestic intracity travel for 30 large cities including Istanbul, Ankara, İzmir amid the worsening COVID-19 outbreak.
- More than 80 poor and middle-income countries have sought financial help from the **International Monetary Fund** in recent weeks as they struggle to cope with the economic fallout from the Covid-19 epidemic.
  - Kristalina Georgieva, the head of the IMF, said the world economy had entered a recession “as bad or worse” than the global financial crisis of 2008-09 and that the fund needed to increase its firepower to deal with the unprecedented number of requests for help.
- Airports are set to reopen Sunday in **China’s** Hubei province, where the coronavirus outbreak was first recorded late last year, as the number of locally transmitted cases in mainland China dramatically decreased in recent weeks.

## *Private Sector*

- **Disneyland** in California and **Walt Disney World** in Florida will remain closed until further notice, according to a statement from The Walt Disney Company.
- **Amazon** has announced that it will donate 3.5 million euros (approximately \$3.8 million) to support those most affected by the coronavirus outbreak in France.
- **US stocks** finished the session in the red on Friday, but that didn’t keep major indexes from posting one of their best weeks ever after a monstrous rally between Tuesday and Thursday.
  - The **Dow** closed 915 points, or 4.1%, lower. It recorded its best week since June 1938, gaining 12.8%.
  - The **S&P 500** finished down 3.4%, for a weekly gain of 10.3% — its best since March 2009.
  - The **Nasdaq** Composite fell 3.8%. On the week it’s up 9.1% — its best performance since March 2009.
- Gig workers for the grocery delivery app **Instacart** are planning an emergency strike starting Monday to protest the company’s lack of worker protection during the covid-19 pandemic, a move that is likely to cause waves in the already-disrupted grocery space.
- The **Paris menswear** and **haute couture fashion weeks** have been canceled due to the coronavirus outbreak, the French Federation of Haute Couture and Fashion said in a statement on Friday.
- **Italian conglomerate the Armani Group’s** production plants have now switched to manufacturing single-use overalls for health care workers battling coronavirus, the company said in a statement on Facebook.
- **Apple** on Friday released a website and an iOS app that allows users to screen themselves for coronavirus symptoms, marking another response to the pandemic by a major tech platform.
  - Both tools were developed in partnership with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, as well as the White House’s Coronavirus Task Force and the Federal Emergency Management Agency, Apple said in a statement to CNN. The app and website include a questionnaire and information about the novel coronavirus.