



## COVID-19 5/6 UPDATE

### **COVID-19 5/6 Update**

#### **Global**

Total cases – 3,711,425

Total deaths – 259,695

#### **United States**

Positive tests – 1,212,123 (4% increase from prior day)

Total deaths – 71,463 (2% increase from prior day)

Total # tests – 7,544,328 (4% increase from prior day)

#### **Administration**

- **President Donald Trump** declared Tuesday that the U.S. must begin to reopen its economy immediately, even if it leads to more Americans falling sick and dying from the coronavirus outbreak.
  - “Will some people be affected? Yes. Will some people be affected badly? Yes. But we have to get our country open and we have to get it open soon,” Trump said at an event with Native Americans in Phoenix.
  - But Trump is seeking to move past the outbreak anyway, encouraging states to abandon social distancing measures and allow businesses to reopen, though he has said it should be done “safely.”
- **President Trump** appeared to reverse course on the decision to [wind down the coronavirus task force](#), instead rebranding it. He tweeted today that the task force will “continue on indefinitely” and shift its focus to “SAFETY & OPENING UP OUR COUNTRY AGAIN.”
  - Trump touted his administration’s success in procuring personal protective equipment and testing, even though many experts say there is not nearly enough testing available.
  - He also said that task force members may be added or subtracted “as appropriate” and will “also be very focused on Vaccines & Therapeutics.”
  - Trump’s tweets come after a series of statements from the White House on Tuesday that the task force, led by Vice President [Mike Pence](#), may be shuttered
- **President Trump** says he will add two or three people to the coronavirus task force to focus on reopening the economy.
  - Trump says new task force members may be announced by Monday
- **Vice President Mike Pence** said **the White House** is considering disbanding the coronavirus task force as early as Memorial Day.



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- "We're having conversations about that and about what the proper time is for the task force to complete its work and for the ongoing efforts to take place on an agency-by-agency level," Pence said today.
- He noted that the White House has begun to discuss a "transition plan with FEMA."
- **Pence** said the discussions are a "reflection of the tremendous progress we've made as a country."
- Pence said Dr. Deborah Birx would remain in her role "every bit as long as we need to."
- **President Trump** says the spike in unemployment due to coronavirus pandemic is "artificial."
  - Trump says U.S. will make a comeback when economy reopens
- **President Trump** appeared to back off his claim that a coronavirus vaccine would be developed by the end of the year.
  - Trump was asked if he was still convinced that a vaccine would be developed by the end of the year. The President responded, "You can never be convinced."
  - He continued: "I can't be convinced of anything, but I think that we have a really good shot of having something very very substantial."
  - **Trump** added that "we are doing really great" and he is getting daily reports from companies working to develop a vaccine.
- **Treasury Dept** releases [guidance](#) on how to return economic impact payments inadvertently sent to individuals.
  - "Deceased and incarcerated individuals do not qualify to receive Economic Impact Payments," Treasury says in [tweet](#)
- "Well run States should not be bailing out poorly run States, using CoronaVirus as the excuse!," **President Trump** says in Twitter [post](#).
  - **Trump** says "the elimination of Sanctuary Cities, Payroll Taxes, and perhaps Capital Gains Taxes" must be considered as well as lawsuit indemnification and business deductions for restaurants and entertainment businesses
- **President Trump** and his advisers are weighing a range of business and investor tax cuts for the next coronavirus aid package, including a reduction in the capital gains rate, New York Times [reports](#), citing unidentified administration officials and outside experts familiar with the plans.
  - Ideas also include measures that would allow companies to deduct the full costs of investments made now or in the future.



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- The **Department of Health and Human Services** bought 10 million “reusable” N95 respirators on condition that those masks receive emergency use authorization by the FDA, according to an HHS spokesperson. The contract with the medical supply distributor American Medical Depot lists the respirators as having a 14-day reusability. However, the respirators—made by Nexera Medical—are only approved for single use by the Food and Drug Administration, American Medical President Akhil Agrawal said in an emailed statement.
- The **Trump administration** is extending until May 14 the date companies can return loans from a popular coronavirus relief program without penalty. The Treasury Department and Small Business Administration had set May 7 as the date for firms to repay loans from the Paycheck Protection Program, but said in updated guidance posted yesterday that it’s extending the repayment date by a week
  - **Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin** also clarified that the program wasn’t designed for large companies with access to other sources of capital after public outrage that chains like Shake Shack had swooped in to get loans during the program’s initial round of funding. Shake Shack and many others gave the funds back.
  - Mnuchin noted that companies could be exposed to criminal liability for improperly taking loans and initially gave firms until May 7 to return the money without penalty.
- After several delays in getting funding from a popular government coronavirus relief program, almost **two-thirds of small businesses owners** who applied have gotten money, a new survey shows. Now the owners say they are most concerned about getting their customers back as some states lift stay-at-home orders.
  - Of the 77% who applied for a Paycheck Protection Program loan, 61% had money deposited in their account from their lender as of May 1, according to a National Federation of Independent Business poll of its members. That’s much improved from a previous survey, which found that only 20% had gotten funding as of April 17.
- The **Department of Health and Human Services** responded Tuesday evening to the filing of [a whistleblower complaint](#) by ousted vaccine director Dr. Rick Bright.
  - The complaint comes after Bright formally filed an extensive whistleblower complaint Tuesday alleging his early warnings about Covid-19 were ignored and he raised concerns about the safety of a drug that President Trump touted as a potential treatment to the coronavirus.



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- “We are deeply disappointed that he has not shown up to work on behalf of the American people and lead on this critical endeavor,” an HHS spokesperson said in a statement. “Dr. Bright was transferred to NIH to work on diagnostics testing – critical to combatting COVID-19 – where he has been entrusted to spend upwards of \$1 billion to advance that effort.”
- By the time the **US Department of Agriculture** [announced a \\$19 billion aid package](#) on April 17, farmers were already dumping milk and destroying fresh produce as demand from restaurants evaporated.
  - It could be weeks longer before any of the money, most of which was appropriated by Congress in March as part of its \$2.2 trillion economic stimulus package, gets to the farmers who need it.
- **President Trump** says that he closed the border to people traveling from China earlier this year against the recommendations of coronavirus task force members Anthony Fauci and Deborah Birx.
  - **Trump**, in interview with ABC News, says the doctors told him “it’s gonna blow over” advising against a China travel ban.
- **Pentagon**, in coordination with HHS, signs contract with 3M for increased production of 26m N95 medical-grade masks per month, starting in Oct., spokesman Lt. Col. Mike Andrews says in statement.
  - New contract taps CARES Act funding, will be managed by Pentagon’s Joint Acquisition Task Force and expands industrial capacity to “ensure a sustainable supply chain of N95 respirators and resupply the Strategic National Stockpile,” Andrews says
  - 3M will design, procure and implement necessary production facilities and equipment to expedite existing delivery schedule and increase N95 production by at least 312m annually within next year, Andrews says
  - 3M to expand facility in Aberdeen, S.D., and also perform initial production work in Wisc., Andrews says
- **Federal courts** need \$36.6 million to address “emergent needs” in combating the coronavirus outbreak, including enhanced courtroom cleaning, health screenings, and teleworking infrastructure, the Administrative Offices of the U.S. Courts, the administrative arm of the judiciary, announced yesterday
- **Defense Secretary Mark Esper** signaled he’d protect major weapons programs from budget cuts and continue to target older “legacy systems” if the Pentagon is faced with flat or reduced funding amid surging federal spending to combat the coronavirus crisis. “My inclination is not to risk any of the modernization programs” but “to go back and



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pull out more of the legacy programs,” Esper told reporters. “We need to invest those dollars into the future.” Esper acknowledged that the Pentagon, which has been looking at flat budgets beyond its \$705 billion fiscal 2021 request, may face new pressure in the wake of about \$3 trillion in unanticipated federal spending related to the virus pandemic.

- **Agriculture Sec. Sonny Perdue** sent [letters to governors](#) across the nation and [leadership of major meat processing companies](#), according to emailed statement from USDA.
  - Letters establish the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s expectations for the implementation of President Trump’s executive order signed last week
  - “Plants should resume operations as soon as they are able,” Perdue says in letter to stakeholders
  - “I exhort you to do this; further action under the Executive Order and the Defense Production Act is under consideration and will be taken if necessary”
- U.S. economy is likely to shrink about 40% in second quarter before a rebound in the following three months, **Kevin Hassett**, an economic adviser to President Trump, says in Fox Business interview.
- **U.S. Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin** is increasing the amount of debt he plans to issue in quarterly refunding auctions to a record high of \$96 billion to provide government funding as the economy heads into a recession caused by the coronavirus.
  - The department [announced](#) plans Wednesday to auction the first re-booted 20-year bond on May 20, with an initial offering size of \$20 billion, and began to focus on overall issuance increases to longer-term debt.
  - “Treasury’s borrowing needs have increased substantially as a result of the federal government’s response to the Covid-19 outbreak,” it said in a statement.
- **Treasury** has raised an “unprecedented” \$1.46 trillion on net since the end of March, the department said.
  - “Over the next quarter, Treasury’s cash balance will likely remain elevated as Treasury seeks to maintain prudent liquidity in light of the size and relative uncertainty of Covid-19 related outflows,” Treasury said.
- The **Trump administration** was sued over a provision in the coronavirus relief package that bars U.S.-citizen children of undocumented immigrants from getting stimulus payments. A group of seven children and their parents claim the law violates the children’s constitutional rights. The Trump administration also is being sued by citizens denied virus aid because they are married to undocumented immigrants



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- **U.S. Secretary of State [Michael Pompeo](#)** and **South Korean Foreign Minister Kang Kyung-wha** discussed the coronavirus outbreak, bilateral cooperation, issues on the Korean peninsula and mutual concerns in a phone call, South Korea's foreign ministry says in a statement.
- **Wells Fargo & Co.** received inquiries from federal and state agencies regarding its offering of loans as part of the Small Business Administration's Paycheck Protection Program, the firm said in a [filing](#) Tuesday.
- The **U.S. Justice Department** requested data from 15 to 20 of the largest PPP processors as [part of](#) a preliminary inquiry into the program, a top official has said. As of now, the inquiries seem to be focused on clients, not the banks themselves
  - **Massachusetts Attorney General Maura Healey** has also [requested](#) information from Wells Fargo and other major banks on how PPP loans were handed out and what types and sizes of businesses have gotten funding
  - Banks won't be required to meet the usual liquidity demands when it comes to involvement in Federal Reserve facilities meant to help ease economic strain stemming from the coronavirus crisis, the Fed and other agencies say Tuesday.
- Bank participation in the Money Market Mutual Fund Liquidity Facility and the Paycheck Protection Program Liquidity Facility won't require adherence to so-called liquidity coverage ratio, the Fed, **Office of the Comptroller of the Currency** and **Federal Deposit Insurance Corp.** say in statement
  - The agencies say the interim final rule is effective immediately, but they will take public comment on it for 30 days
  - The rule makes no other changes to LCR requirements put in place after 2008 financial crisis as a cushion against stress conditions
- Nine states have asked the **Labor Department** for \$36 billion in federal advances to cover the astronomical cost of unemployment payouts amid the pandemic, with Illinois topping the list with an \$11 billion request, according to new information provided to POLITICO Tuesday night by the agency.
  - California (the first state to borrow) plans to request the next-highest amount: \$8 billion total in May and June. Texas will ask for advances totaling \$6.4 billion in May, June and July and New York will ask for \$4.4 billion in those three months.
- To support the flow of credit to households and businesses, **the federal bank regulatory agencies** today announced an interim final rule that modifies the agencies' Liquidity Coverage Ratio (LCR) rule to support banking organizations' participation in the Federal



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Reserve's Money Market Mutual Fund Liquidity Facility and the Paycheck Protection Program Liquidity Facility. ([HERE](#))

- The **Internal Revenue Service Office of Chief Counsel** today announced the Settlement Days program will continue remotely enabling unrepresented taxpayers to work towards resolving their pending United States Tax Court case despite "stay-at-home" orders in many jurisdictions. The first two events are for docketed cases with place of trial in Detroit or Atlanta. Future events may be scheduled in other cities throughout the United States. ([HERE](#))
- **U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development Secretary Ben Carson** today announced the allocation of \$380 million in supplemental administrative fee funding to all Public Housing Authorities (PHA), including Moving to Work (MTW) PHAs. The two months of additional funding may be used for traditional administrative fees as well as for new costs related to protecting assisted families and employees throughout this coronavirus pandemic. The funding, made available by the CARES Act legislation President Trump signed into law on March 27, 2020, will be awarded to PHAs across the Nation. ([HERE](#))
- The **U.S. Department of Labor** today announced that Dislocated Worker Grant (DWG) funding made available to states and territories to employ workers temporarily to respond to the coronavirus public health emergency can be used for contact tracing. Contact tracing is part of the process of supporting patients and warning contacts of exposure to stop chains of transmission. ([HERE](#))
- The **U.S. Department of Labor** today responded to specific state requests seeking assistance to administer changes to unemployment insurance (UI) programs made by the Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security (CARES) Act and the Emergency Unemployment Insurance Stabilization and Access Act in the Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA). ([HERE](#))
- The **U.S. Census Bureau**, in coordination with federal, state and local health officials, will begin a phased restart of some 2020 Census field operations in select geographic areas this week. ([HERE](#))
- Today, **U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Sonny Perdue** announced a major expansion of Meals to You, USDA's [innovative partnership](#) with the Baylor University Collaborative on Hunger and Poverty, McLane Global, and PepsiCo, to feed low-income kids in rural areas. The initiative will now serve nearly 5 million meals per week to rural children impacted by COVID-19-related school closures – five times its original goal. ([HERE](#))
- **U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Sonny Perdue** today announced during a virtual press conference that USDA is investing \$23 million for three recipients in New Mexico to



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provide broadband service in unserved and underserved rural areas. These investments are part of USDA's round one investments made through the [ReConnect Pilot Program](#). ([HERE](#))

- **U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Sonny Perdue** today announced Maine, North Dakota, West Virginia, and Vermont have been approved to operate Pandemic Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT), a new program authorized by the Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA), signed by President Trump, which provides assistance to families of children eligible for free or reduced-price meals dealing with school closures. ([HERE](#))
- The **U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA)** announced today that it enhanced its [National COVID-19 Report Summary](#) website that provides a real-time look at the status of COVID-19 patients who have been tested or treated at VA facilities. ([HERE](#))

### **Capitol Hill**

- **Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell** tells reporters he isn't ruling out another virus relief bill and will continue to talk with the Trump administration about it, but Republicans want to take a "pause" to evaluate the aid that has been signed into law already.
- **U.S. House lawmakers** will return to Washington when the next virus aid bill is ready for a floor vote, and that could be as soon as next week, Majority Leader [Steny Hoyer](#) says on call with reporters.
  - **Hoyer** says the goal is to have a bipartisan bill, and Speaker Nancy Pelosi will have discussions with the Trump administration
  - Focus of next bill will be on aid to states, he says
  - Hoyer says Republicans don't have the same level of urgency for next assistance bill
- **Speaker Nancy Pelosi** (D-Calif.) is pushing Democrats to get out of the gate quickly with another multibillion-dollar virus relief package to give the House more leverage in negotiations with Senate Republicans, who are trying to put the brakes on any new round of aid. Pelosi's strategy of ensuring that the next economic measure originates in the House, unlike the earlier \$2.2 trillion version, was underscored in a memo to fellow House Democrats yesterday from House Appropriations Chairwoman [Nita Lowey](#) (D-N.Y.).
  - "In the coming days, House Democrats will release our full proposal for the next phase of relief," Lowey wrote.
  - **Trump** is pushing his own set of counter demands, including changes to tax law, that would complicate negotiations on an eventual bill. "Well run States should



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not be bailing out poorly run States, using CoronaVirus as the excuse!” Trump tweeted today. “The elimination of Sanctuary Cities, Payroll Taxes, and perhaps Capital Gains Taxes, must be put on the table. Also lawsuit indemnification & business deductions for restaurants.

- **A bipartisan group of senators** asks U.S. Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin and Small Business Administrator Jovita Carranza to raise the Paycheck Protection Program’s non-payroll forgiveness cap from 25% to 50%.
  - “The 25 percent threshold is problematic for several business sectors, especially those whose mortgage, rent, or utility payments constitute a large portion of fixed monthly expenses,” Sens. [Robert Menendez](#), [John Cornyn](#), others write in [letter](#) to Mnuchin and Carranza
- **Bipartisan group of senators** introduce measure to clarify SBA’s Paycheck Protection Program so small businesses can deduct expenses paid with a forgiven PPP loan from their taxes.
  - Measure offered by Senate Finance Cmte Chairman [Chuck Grassley](#), Small Business Cmte Chairman [Marco Rubio](#) and fellow Republican [John Cornyn](#), along with Democrats [Ron Wyden](#) and [Tom Carper](#)
- A bipartisan group of **House lawmakers** from states with a large auto industry presence is mounting a push to aid the sector that has idled factories and seen car sales plummet due to the coronavirus.
  - Nine lawmakers from both parties so far have signed onto a draft letter urging House Speaker [Nancy Pelosi](#) and Minority Leader Kevin McCarthy to consider fresh proposals to support auto industry employment in future coronavirus legislation.
  - The effort, led by Michigan Representatives [Debbie Dingell](#), a Democrat, and [Fred Upton](#), a Republican, and other lawmakers from Ohio, Tennessee, Texas and Alabama, doesn’t propose specific forms of aid for carmakers, parts suppliers or dealers. However, the lawmakers wrote “it will be necessary to support demand for some time to ensure a meaningful recovery,” according to the draft, which was provided by Upton’s office and reported earlier by the Washington Post.
- **National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases Director Anthony Fauci** will testify at a **Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee** hearing on May 12, according to Evan Dixon, press secretary for Chairman [Lamar Alexander](#) (R-Tenn.). Fauci will be joined by Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Director Robert Redfield,



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FDA Administrator Stephen Hahn, and Health and Human Services Assistant Secretary Brett Giroir

- **Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.)** said no policy can keep the economy glued together if “blunt shutdowns” go on indefinitely, and lawmakers must focus on solutions that will help pivot to a phased reopening and recovery of the country. McConnell, speaking in opening floor comments, said the U.S. will need “smart, targeted” policies to jump start the economy. He reiterated his call for business liability protections ahead of stimulus talks,
- **Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer (D-N.Y.)** urged the Trump administration to develop a comprehensive, nationwide plan by May 24 to make sure states have sufficient testing to begin safely reopen. It is the Trump administration’s responsibility to establish a strategy as fast as possible and address other problems, including managing the supply chain and analyzing national data, Schumer and 40 other Senate Democrats wrote in a letter to Trump today
- **Senate Democrats** challenged a vow of “fairness and impartiality” by Brian Miller, President Trump’s nominee to oversee trillions of dollars being spent in the effort to rescue the economy from the coronavirus pandemic. Democrats have questioned Miller’s ability to serve as Special Inspector General for Pandemic Recovery in light of his current post, as a White House lawyer who participated in Trump’s impeachment defense. Miller at the hearing said he would let Congress know if he was pressured in his new role
- **Sens. Marco Rubio (R-Fla.), Michael Bennet (D-Colo.)** and other lawmakers are weighing big changes to the federal rescue effort for small business to address growing complaints from employers that the rules for existing programs are incomplete and unworkable.
  - Among the proposals to revamp the multi-billion Paycheck Protection Program: Lengthen the period of time when small businesses can spend the money; allow businesses to spend less of the aid to retain employees and more to cover fixed costs like rent; and expand relief to larger companies.
- **Top lawmakers on the Senate Finance Committee and the House Ways and Means Committee** ask the **Treasury Department** and **Internal Revenue Service** to reverse a decision that prevented small businesses to claim deductions tied to their Paycheck Protection Program loans.
  - “We believe the position taken in the Notice ignores the overarching intent of the PPP, as well as the specific intent of Congress to allow deductions in the case



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of PPP loan recipients,” the bipartisan group of lawmakers said in a letter Tuesday

- **House appropriators** will hold a bipartisan, if lonely, [hearing](#) on the government’s response to the outbreak, Labor-HHS-Education Subcommittee Chairwoman [Rosa DeLauro](#) (D-Conn.) said.
  - “It will be bipartisan,” DeLauro said in an interview with The Hill on Monday, adding that ranking member [Tom Cole](#) (R-Okla.) and several other members will be there.
  - DeLauro’s assurance contrasts with the White House’s decision to keep Anthony Fauci, director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, from testifying in front of the Democratic-controlled House panel, while allowing him to testify to the Republican-controlled Senate. President Donald Trump told reporters he made the decision “because the House is a set-up. The House is a bunch of Trump haters.”
  - **DeLauro’s** focus at the hearing will be more on the present emergency than looking far into the future, she said.
  - **Cole** has advocated for boosts to funds for the National Institutes of Health and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, but said in April the coronavirus highlights the need to do more. NIH funding increased 30% from fiscal 2014 to 2019, and appropriators launched the Infectious Disease Rapid Response Reserve Fund in fiscal 2019.
- **Rep. Rosa DeLauro and House Appropriations Chairwoman [Nita Lowey](#) (D-N.Y.)** said in a joint statement on May 1 that in the short-term, Congress needs to know what officials are doing “on surveillance, testing, contact tracing, quarantining, social distancing, and the production and distribution of personal protective equipment. Over the medium-term, we need to understand the viability of therapeutics and vaccines in development, their dissemination, and how the influenza season could affect the ongoing pandemic in the Fall. And over the long-term, we need ensure lasting investments in our public health infrastructure are made instead of reacting to public health crises when they arise.”
- **Airlines and airports** must adopt even more measures against the spread of Covid-19, some of which would imply major new costs for an industry already suffering steep losses, a public health expert will tell lawmakers.
  - Passengers should be screened for elevated temperatures and all employees should be required to wear masks and gloves, according to prepared testimony by [Hilary Godwin](#), dean of the [University of Washington’s](#) School of Public



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- Health. In-flight seating, she said, must be arranged so that people aren't too close together, and airports have to be reshaped to promote social distancing.
- The air-travel industry and government agencies overseeing it must allow public health considerations to “play a far greater role than before this pandemic,” Godwin said in the remarks. She is among four witnesses scheduled to appear Wednesday before the **Senate Commerce Committee** in a hearing on the state of the airline industry during the coronavirus pandemic.
  - The trade association representing American Airlines, Delta, and Southwest will testify on **Capitol Hill** this afternoon, as the coronavirus pandemic batters the aviation industry.
    - Nicholas Calio, president of **Airlines for America**, will testify before the Senate Commerce, Science, and Transportation Committee for the first time since Congress threw passenger airlines a \$25 billion life preserver for payroll aid in the third coronavirus relief law ([Public Law 116-136](#)).
    - Lawmakers will ask Calio questions about the law, which required airlines taking federal assistance to not lay off workers or reduce compensation through Sept. 30.
    - There is no doubt “that the U.S. airline industry will emerge from this crisis a mere shadow of what it was just three short months ago,” Calio said in prepared testimony. “There is simply no way around the detrimental and lasting economic impact this pandemic will have on our industry.”
  - **Sens. Ed Markey** (D-Mass.) and [Richard Blumenthal](#) (D-Conn.) proposed creating a pandemic task force on air travel. The group would include officials from the Transportation Department, Department of Homeland Security, and Department of Health and Human Services, in addition to representatives from airlines, labor unions, and passenger rights groups, according to a statement. The senators have not yet introduced formal legislation.
  - The **Senate Homeland Security and Government Affairs Committee** will hold a [video conference roundtable](#) to discuss how new information on the coronavirus should drive policy.
  - **Rep. Anna Eshoo** (D-Calif.), chairwoman of the House Energy and Commerce Health Subcommittee, yesterday [announced](#) plans to hold a hearing on Bright’s whistleblower complaint next week
  - **Rep. Paul Mitchell** (R-Mich.) is asking a federal court to throw out all of Michigan Gov. Gretchen Whitmer’s (D) “orders, rules, and enforcement activity” related to the pandemic, alleging the first-term Democrat has stretched her authority beyond U.S. and state constitutional boundaries. “In short, Mitchell brings this lawsuit to define the limits



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of a State's police power," the lawmaker said in a complaint filed in the U.S. District Court for the Western District of Michigan

- **Rep. Collin Peterson** (D-Minn.), chairman of the House Agriculture Committee, introduced the [Universal Broadband Act](#) yesterday, along with Rep. [Frank Lucas](#) (R-Okla.), ranking member of the House Science, Space and Technology Committee. The bill aims to connect rural Americans with broadband internet by expanding the FCC's Universal Service Fund contribution base to include broadband services, rather than the current outdated model that draws support solely from telephone services.
- **Rep. David Cicilline (D-R.I.)**, chairman of the House Judiciary Committee's antitrust subcommittee, sent a [letter](#) to House leadership yesterday, along other Democratic House members, asking that the next coronavirus economic relief package include language prohibiting corporate mergers that don't involve buying a severely distressed company.
- **Sens. John Hoeven** (R-N.D.) and [Doug Jones](#) (D-Ala.) introduced legislation yesterday to authorize \$3 billion to fill the U.S. Strategic Petroleum Reserve with crude oil produced domestically, according to a press release. Last month, a handful of lawmakers called for the purchase to take advantage of historically low oil prices.
- **Sen. Jeff Merkley** (D-Ore.), **Rep. Nanette Barragan** (D-Calif.), and nearly 40 other lawmakers introduced legislation to block the Trump administration from giving certain loans to oil, gas and coal companies using coronavirus stimulus aid from the CARES Act passed in March, stop some bank takeovers of those companies, suspend lease sales, and prevent the administration from lowering or striking royalty rates on federal fossil fuels, among other provisions, [according to a press release](#)
- **Rep. David Cicilline** (D-R.I.) asked his home state's public utilities commission to extend its moratorium on utility terminations, which is scheduled to expire today. The extension would help low- and middle-income families access electricity, water and sewage services, and provides a public health benefit, [Cicilline wrote in a letter](#)
- **Two Senate Democrats** want to create a multi-agency task force to oversee air travel during and after the coronavirus pandemic. The Air Travel Task Force they propose in [new legislation introduced this week](#) would include representatives from seven agencies, along with a number of companies and other organizations. It would be tasked with creating emergency plans, guidelines and requirements for safe travel during the outbreak. "We must be smart and think big as we tackle these unprecedented challenges," said **Sen. Ed Markey** (D-Mass.), who introduced the bill with his frequent legislative partner [Richard Blumenthal](#) (D-Conn.).



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- There's momentum in Congress to expand the borrowing authority of **USDA's Commodity Credit Corporation**, the Depression-era agency that's funding part of the department's stimulus payments to farmers and ranchers (and that's facilitated the Trump administration's trade bailout program since 2018). It's one of the primary funding options on the table as **lawmakers** consider more agricultural aid in their next coronavirus response package.
- A House bill introduced on Tuesday, backed by **Reps. Austin Scott** (R-Ga.), a senior House Ag member, and **Sanford Bishop** (D-Ga.), who chairs the House Appropriations panel that oversees **USDA's** budget, would lift the CCC's annual borrowing cap from \$30 billion to \$68 billion — [effectively catching up to inflation since the limit was last adjusted in 1987](#).
  - Scott said his legislation would [help mitigate long-term damage to the food supply chain](#) and insulate annual farm bill programs that are also paid through the CCC.
  - Congress in March considered hiking the agency's borrowing limit to \$50 billion. But if such a boost is back on the table, Democrats could again [demand a 15 percent increase in Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program benefits](#) in exchange.
  - **John Hoeven** (R-N.D.), Bishop's counterpart in the Senate, who has played a key role in shaping the agricultural aid plans, told reporters last week that he's in favor of shooting for the \$50 billion mark (or higher) in the next stimulus package.
- **Sen. Joni Ernst** (R-Iowa) is pressing USDA to [include egg producers in its \\$19 billion aid package](#) and to consider directly buying and redistributing liquid egg products.
- **Sen. Gillibrand** on Tuesday introduced a bill that would dole out \$8 billion in block grants to the top specialty crop states so their food banks can connect with the excess supply of produce in their area.
  - The money would be used to cover the cost of food as a way to help farmers with lost markets, as well as to cover the cost of logistics, including distribution, processing, and additional staff needed at food banks, according to the New York Democrat's office. "I think this is something that USDA will support," she told reporters on Tuesday.
- The **United Fresh Produce Association** said this week it expects the next aid package will likely include a provision to allow states to boost cash vouchers for fruit and vegetable purchases in the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children through the end of September.



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- The move would bump the monthly voucher to \$35 per month. Currently, women receive \$11 per month and children receive \$9 per month in vouchers in the program. That could translate to an additional \$120 million a month in WIC produce purchases, the group said.
- Under a new bill introduced in Congress, health care workers on the front lines of the coronavirus pandemic would have some of their student loan debt forgiven.
  - The "Student Loan Forgiveness for Frontline Health Workers Act," was introduced by **New York Rep. Carolyn B. Maloney** on Tuesday.
  - It would create a program that forgives federal and private loans obtained "to receive medical and professional training held by health care workers who have made significant contributions to Covid-19 patient care, medical research, testing and enhancing the capacity of the health care system to respond to this urgent crisis," according to a [release](#) from her office.

### ***State/Local***

- The **New York** primary election is back on track after a federal judge ordered state Democratic officials to reinstate the vote on June 23 in response to Democratic presidential candidate Andrew Yang's challenge to its cancellation. Numerous states rescheduled their presidential primary elections due to Covid-19 but New York is violating voters' constitutional rights by having canceled the primary, U.S. District Judge Analisa Torres said in an order yesterday.
- **Virginians** won't need a witness when they sign absentee ballots for the state's June 23 primary. The requirement is being temporarily waived under the settlement of a lawsuit approved by a federal court yesterday
- **Texas Gov. Greg Abbott** will allow certain business sectors to begin reopening in the coming weeks, with stipulations for each.
  - Cosmetology salons, barber shops, hair salons, nail salons, and tanning salons are allowed to open beginning May 8.
  - Gyms and exercise facilities, nonessential manufacturing plants and businesses operating inside office buildings are allowed to reopen beginning May 18, with certain guidelines.
  - Funerals, memorials, burials and weddings are allowed to commence. Weddings held indoors other than at a church, congregation, or house of worship must limit occupancy to 25%, according to Abbott.
  - Wedding reception services may also resume, but facilities must limit their occupancy to 25% of the total listed occupancy, according to Abbott, but these



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occupancy limits do not apply to the outdoor areas of a wedding reception or to outdoor wedding receptions.

- Shopping malls in **Hawaii** will be allowed to reopen on Thursday, Gov. David Ige announced today.
  - The governor said it will be "the first step in reopening businesses and getting people back to work."
  - The first phase of Ige's "safer-at-home" plan includes removing restrictions on car washes, pet grooming, elective surgery, non-profit organizations, and in-person retail businesses as long as social distancing is maintained.
  - Ige said the state has enough testing materials to keep track of any future outbreaks.
  - "Everyone in Hawaii has the ability to get tested for Covid if they have a reason to," the governor said.
  - He said the state is continuing to discourage visitors to the islands for now, as anyone arriving from out of state must immediately quarantine for 14 days.
- Small, recreational businesses in **Tennessee** will be allowed to open on May 8, Gov. Bill Lee said at a news conference.
  - The state will be releasing guidance on Wednesday for bowling alleys, miniature golf and other recreational businesses that fall under that category.
  - The state's economic recovery group is also working to help secure thermometers for businesses. Residents will be able to receive a free mask at any local health department, he said.
- As **Illinois** reports its highest single-day death toll, Gov. J.B. Pritzker announced a five-phase regional plan to reopen the state.
  - "Moving forward with 'Restore Illinois,' we are looking at the state as four regions, each of which can move through phases at different times. Northeast Illinois, North Central Illinois, Central Illinois, and Southern Illinois," Pritzker said in a news conference today.
  - Illinois Department of Public Health will be tracking each region's metrics, and the state will make the data available online for the public, the governor said.
  - He also said the earliest a region can move to phase three is May 29. He added schools could only open in phase four.
- Many businesses in **North Carolina** will be allowed to open Friday as the state moves into phase one, Gov. Roy Cooper announced today.
  - "Phase one is a limited easing of restrictions," he said.



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- Under this first phase, retail stores will be able to operate at 50% capacity with cleaning and social distancing, parks and trails can reopen and restaurants can continue takeout and delivery with no in-room dining.
- Gyms, bars, salons, theaters, playgrounds and pools will remain closed.
- The state is asking people to remember to wear a face covering, practice social distancing and frequent hand washing.
- The stay-at-home order remains in effect for the state with modifications.
- Phase one is set to expire on May 22, but can be extended depending on the state's progress with mitigation efforts.
- **Huntington Beach, California, will** allow active recreation at its beaches.
  - This announcement follows a rowdy protest on Friday at the Huntington Beach Pier that drew between 2,500 to 3,000 people, according to police.
- Some schools in **Connecticut** are hoping to open by July for summer school, Gov. Ned Lamont and the state's top education officials announced at a news conference Tuesday.
  - Cardona said class sizes will likely be smaller, with 10 students to a group.
  - Asked if the state is considering moving to two sessions a day to break up the number of students in the building at one time, Cardona said, “those are things that are being considered. We have a lot of different options to consider, what works for students what works for school communities.”
  - Beth Bye, the state's Early Childhood Education commissioner, announced that the state's summer camps can open on June 29.
- **Texas Gov. Greg Abbott** said he consulted with many doctors – including Dr. Anthony Fauci and Dr. Deborah Birx – before reopening some businesses Tuesday.
  - Following a question from a reporter on how the governor assessed whether it was safe to reopen, and whether any experts that had been consulted, Abbott said:
  - “I personally talked to Dr Birx. I personally talked to Dr. Fauci. I personally talked to Dr. Mark McClellan, the former head of the FDA, former head of US Medicaid and Medicare. He is part of the four doctor team we have on our staff. I personally talked to Dr. Parker Hudson. Dr. Parker Hudson is an infectious disease specialist in charge of tracing and tracking COVID-19 in Texas. He’s with the University of Texas Health System. And I talk to Dr. Hellerstedt, and talk to Dr. John Zerwas. And so I will put their advice up with anybody else,” he said.



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- **Montana Gov. Steve Bullock** announced today that the state will soon accept applications for emergency grants for people affected by the coronavirus economic shutdown.
  - That includes businesses, people out of work and those with health needs.
  - The application will open on May 7 and the money will come from funding provided by the federal CARES Act.
  - Montana is getting the minimum amount for a state – \$1.25 billion – although its small population means that it is receiving more federal funding per capita than many states.
- **Ocean City, Maryland, Mayor Rick Meehan** announced yesterday the city's beach and boardwalk will be allowed to reopen on May 9.
  - According to the city, this measure is a way to give people more opportunities to “get outside, exercise and enjoy fresh air, while still adhering to physical distancing guidelines and gathering limits.”
  - The mayor’s action will not supersede any executive order made by Gov. Larry Hogan, including the closure of nonessential businesses, the city said.
  - Maryland’s stay-at-home order still remains in effect, with no end date issued.
- **Minnesota Gov. Tim Walz** signed an executive order that permits food trucks to operate at up to six highway rest stops in the state.
- **Denver** will allow some businesses to reopen on Saturday given the guidelines laid out by the state of Colorado, according to Denver Mayor Michael Hancock.
  - “These businesses can start to reopen offices with only 50% of their employees on site, and 6 feet of physical distancing between them, retail businesses with only 50% of their employees on site and six feet of physical distancing available between customers,” Hancock said at an afternoon news conference.
  - Hancock says restaurants and bars in the city will remain closed. Personal care businesses like hair salons will be allowed to open on a by appointment only basis with no walk-ins.
- The **New York fire department** announced today that it is adding 100 ambulances to its fleets due “to the dramatic increase in call volume during the Covid-19 pandemic.”
  - “The ambulances have arrived in New York City, and will be deployed into service as EMTs and paramedics continue to respond to New Yorkers in need. The COVID-19 pandemic has been the busiest period in the history of EMS, with call volume increasing by 50% daily at the height of the pandemic.”
  - The additional ambulances have been leased from companies in South Carolina and Florida, the department said.



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- **Minnesota Gov. Tim Walz** signed an executive order today providing a roadmap for the state to safely resume elective surgeries starting on Monday.
  - Beginning next week, doctors, dentists and veterinarians who create a plan to keep patients and health care professionals safe may begin offering procedures to treat chronic conditions, prevent and cure disease and relieve chronic pain, a statement from the governor's office read.
  - The executive order allows hospitals, ambulatory surgical centers, and clinics — including veterinary, medical, or dental — to resume many currently delayed procedures.
- **New Jersey Gov. Phil Murphy** said he does not know when non-essential businesses will be able to reopen again.
  - Murphy told reporters Tuesday that he could not give a date yet, but stressed that it was something his administration was looking at “very carefully.”
- **Ohio Gov. Mike DeWine** announced the state will need to make \$775 million in budget cuts over the next two months.
  - DeWine announced that the state's fiscal revenues to date are below budgeted estimates by \$776.9 million and the state is projecting that revenues will continue to be below budget moving forward through the Covid-19 pandemic.
  - The governor said the pandemic doesn't exempt the state from balancing its budget.
- **New Jersey Gov. Phil Murphy** is signing an executive order to extend the state's public health emergency for another 30 days.
- Businesses and facilities like skate parks, tennis courts, ball fields, trail networks, and golf courses are allowed to reopen, said **Vermont Agency of Natural Resources Secretary Julie Moore**.
  - Residents are no longer being asked to stay within 10 miles of their homes, she said. However, Gov. Phil Scott said anyone who crosses the border is still required to quarantine for 14 days
- More than \$5 billion has been paid out from the Paycheck Protection Program in **South Carolina**, according to Gov. Henry McMaster.
  - Speaking to members of the accelerateSC committee on Tuesday afternoon, McMaster said that more than 400,000 residents in the state are unemployed. He said state leaders need to get people back to work and keep people safe and healthy.
- **Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis** signaled Wednesday that the three south Florida counties who were [exempt from phase one of his reopening plan](#) could reopen soon.



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- “We'll hopefully be able to go forward soon in southern Florida,” DeSantis said during a press conference in Miami Gardens.
- DeSantis said he has been looking at the trends and even though the Miami-Dade, Broward and Palm Beach counties are not quite ready yet, he is optimistic that the region will be ready soon.
- Miami-Dade Mayor Carlos Gimenez echoed the governor’s tone, saying the county wants to open up as fast as possible while being as safe as possible.

### *International*

- Contact restrictions in **Germany** will continue through early June but the country's football league is set to resume play towards the end of May, Chancellor Angela Merkel announced today.
  - Speaking at a press conference following her meeting with state prime ministers, Merkel said the first phase of the pandemic is behind Germany, but "it will be with us for a long time."
  - For another month, contact restrictions and social distancing will remain in place in Germany, as well as face coverings in public. Families can now meet with those in one other household. The measures are set to end June 5.
  - Merkel said shops can reopen but with hygienic measures.
- **Belgian** households will be able to expand their social circle to include four people from outside their home from May 10. These people must be the same four people and must socialize within the confines of the home. Citizens have been advised to socialize outdoors if they have a garden or terrace, Belgian Prime Minister Sophie Wilmès said in a press conference in Brussels.
  - Wilmès also said that retailers in Belgium can reopen their doors from May 11. One customer for every 10 square meters will be allowed to shop in a store for a maximum of 30 minutes.
- **Heathrow Airport CEO** John Holland-Kaye said the UK government must work with the international community to establish a common standard for how to avoid measures, such as quarantine, that will “completely kill the travel sector”.
  - He noted that there is no commonly, internationally established health screening other than temperature checks.
  - What the airport is doing now: Heathrow Airport is testing technologies around a large-scale screening system to reduce the risk of Covid-19 transmission while traveling.



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- Trials will assess for medical effectiveness, passenger response as well as suitability to the airport environment. Technologies under review will include UV sanitation, facial recognition thermal screening technology and contactless security procedures.
  - Heathrow Airport will share data from trials with government and industry to jumpstart the creation of a Common International Standard for health screening.
- The Baltic countries of **Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania** have agreed to reopen common borders on May 15.
  - The borders between Estonia and Latvia, and Latvia and Lithuania will open "to the people of Baltic states," the Estonian Prime Minister, Juri Ratas, tweeted.
- **Moscow** will ease restrictions for industrial enterprises, allowing factories and construction companies to reopen starting May 12.
  - But self-isolation limits will remain in place, the city's mayor Sergey Sobyenin said in a videoconference chaired by President Vladimir Putin.
- Starting this Friday, **Lebanon** will allow prayers, and Sunday masses will again be held in mosques and churches as the country begins to ease the lockdown measures.
  - The number of worshipers should not exceed 30% of the capacity of each mosque or church, Lebanese Minister of Interior Mohammed Fahmi said, according to Lebanon's National News Agency NNA. They must also adhere to public safety procedures.
  - Lebanon has adopted a five-phase plan to gradually reopen the country and to ease the "general mobilization" measures that were imposed on March 15 to curb the spread of Covid-19.
- The **Japanese** government is facing a public backlash after it promoted "new social behavior" guidelines on Monday, as a state of emergency implemented to curb the spread of coronavirus was extended until May 31.
  - Speaking at a news conference, an expert panel said the rate of new cases was on the decline in Japan -- but emergency measures would remain in place and the new guidelines should become the norm, as an uptick in infections would overwhelm hospitals.
  - New normal: The panel stressed the need to permanently adopt measures such as wearing face masks outside, keeping 2 meters (6.5 ft) between people, teleworking as much as possible, avoiding crowded spaces and washing hands regularly with soap in the long-term fight against the virus.
- **European Union Trade Commissioner Phil Hogan** said countries around the world should scrap pandemic-induced commercial curbs as the global economy recovers.



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- “We have to remove all of those restrictions and return to an open, rules-based, approach,” Hogan said in a Bloomberg TV interview in Brussels. He cited the need for World Trade Organization member nations to work together toward “a more speedy recovery.”
- **U.K. Chief Scientific Adviser Patrick Vallance** told a parliamentary committee hearing that Britain should be able to avoid a second wave of infections “if we do test, track and tracing well” and keep social-distancing measures at the right level. “But I want to add one caveat, which is winter is going to be extremely difficult when you also have flu circulating and all the other respiratory infections.”
  - When asked what could have been done differently, Vallance said “if we’d managed to ramp testing capacity quicker, it would’ve been beneficial.”
  - According to documents released earlier, scientists advised the government to try a [gradual easing](#) of restrictions when its lockdown is lifted, saying a stop-start approach could lead to a loss of trust in the strategy. An April 1 paper on how to relax measures imposed on March 23 shows government scientists examined tactics to ease restrictions and then tighten them again.

### *Other*

- **Pfizer Inc.** has [administered](#) the first U.S. patients with its experimental vaccines to fight the disease caused by the novel coronavirus, part of a bid to shave years off of the typical time it takes to develop a new inoculation. The trials are being conducted at the NYU Grossman School of Medicine and the University of Maryland School of Medicine.
  - “The short, less than four-month time-frame in which we’ve been able to move from preclinical studies to human testing is extraordinary,” Chief Executive Officer Albert Bourla said. Drugmakers have been working with regulators to compress development times.
- The head of **Airlines for America** today will suggest that minimum service requirements for carriers getting CARES Act aid should be eased, saying the current demands are “unsustainable.” In [testimony for a Senate Commerce hearing](#), A4A President and CEO Nick Calio will argue that “the cost associated with operating nearly empty flights to communities with little to no demand significantly exacerbates air carrier liquidity,” and that “as the duration of this pandemic lingers, the reasonability and practicality of this requirement significantly diminishes.”
- **The National Waste & Recycling Association** [sent a letter](#) to Congress on Tuesday asking lawmakers to prioritize critical infrastructure industries, which includes waste and recycling, in the next relief package. In the letter NWRA President and CEO Darrell



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Smith calls on lawmakers to grant the industry access to personal protective equipment by providing 250,000 units of PPE in Phase IV specifically for the waste and recycling collection industry. NWRA also calls on FEMA to clarify that the industry is deemed essential critical infrastructure workers and "have some level of priority on these future allocations."

- Private companies from **Amazon** to **Pfizer** are working with Department of Homeland Security's Homeland Security Investigations to counter fraud and other illegal activity related to the coronavirus, according to a [press release](#).
  - Federal and local law enforcement agencies have seen a surge in criminal activity related to counterfeit pharmaceuticals and medical equipment, among other items, according to HSI. Amazon, for instance, has removed more than 10,000 accounts that were engaged in price gouging and has prevented the sale of 6.5 million products with inaccurate claims related to the virus. HSI special agents have opened as of May 4 over 315 investigations nationwide and seized over \$3.2 million dollars in illicit proceeds related to the virus, according to the agency, Shaun Courtney reports.
- **Regeneron Pharmaceuticals Inc.** said an experimental antibody treatment for Covid-19 could be available as soon as this fall, an expedited timeline for a drug that's scheduled to be studied in humans for the first time in June.
- **Wendy's** expects the beef shortage that's affecting about 1,000 of its US restaurants to continue for the foreseeable future.
  - CEO Todd Penegor said on an earnings call today that Wendy's will probably experience a "couple of weeks of challenging tightness that we'll have to work through" before getting back to normal.
- Yesterday, **15 consumer, privacy and civil rights groups** [wrote](#) to Vice President Mike Pence asking for the Trump administration to set guidelines to protect consumers' privacy, ensure the equal treatment of communities and communicate clearly their response to the coronavirus pandemic. The groups included the Center for Democracy and Technology, the Center for Digital Democracy, Public Knowledge and the Consumer Federation of America, among others.
- **Hy-Vee** is the latest grocery store to announce a limit on meat purchases at all of its locations.
  - Effective today, shoppers who visit the Midwestern grocery chain will be limited to four packages or a combination of fresh beef, ground beef, pork and chicken.
  - "We have product available at our stores but due to worker shortages at plants as well as an increase in meat sales, customers may not find the specific items



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- they are looking for. Because of this, we are going to put a limit on customer purchases in the meat department," the grocery store said in a statement.
- Hy-Vee, Inc. is an employee-owned corporation operating more than 265 retail stores across eight Midwestern states.
  - The **US District Court in the Western District of Missouri** dismissed the Rural Community Workers Alliance case against **Smithfield Foods** and their pork plant in Milan, Missouri.
    - District Judge Gregory Kays said that the RCWA and worker "Jane Doe" did not present enough evidence to make their case of an unsafe working environment.
  - **Disney's** profit dropped 91% during the first three months of 2020, showcasing the widespread decimation the coronavirus pandemic has brought on its media empire.
    - Although sales for the quarter were up 21% to \$18 billion, Disney's profit took an enormous hit from the closure of its parks as well as large costs associated with getting the Disney+ streaming service off the ground.
    - The company's parks and experiences unit was hit particularly hard by the outbreak. That segment saw a 58% drop in operating compared to last year, a result of Disney shuttering its theme parks and resorts around the world.
  - **Airbnb** is laying off about 25% of its workforce as the coronavirus pandemic upends the travel industry and threatens the company's core business.
    - The short-term rental startup on Tuesday said nearly 1,900 employees will be let go worldwide, out of 7,500.
  - Due to economic uncertainty from Covid-19, ridesharing giant **Uber** says it will reduce its staff by 3,700 employees, [according to an SEC filing](#).
    - That amounts to roughly 14% of Uber's workforce and is limited to the company's customer support and recruiting teams.
    - The company also estimates that it will incur approximately \$20 million related to severance and other termination benefits.
  - **Gilead Sciences**, the maker of remdesivir, may allow other companies to produce the investigational drug for Europe, Asia and elsewhere – at least for the next two years.

In a statement released Tuesday, the California-based company said it was in discussions with chemical and pharmaceutical companies "about their ability, under voluntary licenses, to produce remdesivir for Europe, Asia and the developing world through at least 2022."