

Trump signs historic \$2 trillion stimulus after Congress passes it Friday

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Washington (CNN) President Donald Trump signed into law Friday afternoon a historic \$2 trillion stimulus package as the American public and the US economy fight the devastating spread of Covid-19.

The far-reaching legislation stands as the largest emergency aid package in US history. It represents a massive financial injection into a struggling economy with provisions aimed at helping American workers, small businesses and industries grappling with the economic disruption.

The House of Representatives earlier in the day approved the bill that passed the Senate earlier this week, overcoming last-minute drama by using an unusual procedural move to thwart a demand by a conservative Republican to force members to vote in person.

The Republican, Rep. Thomas Massie of Kentucky, infuriated members in both parties by bringing them back to Washington amid uncertainty over whether he would request a full roll call vote. That uncertainty forced many to travel during the public health emergency simply to deny his demand in order to ensure swift passage of the measure on Friday.

Ultimately, however House leadership was able to deny Massie a sufficient second in support of a roll call vote when he made a request for it, shutting down the demand and allowing **the House to approve the package by voice vote** instead. But members still had to return to Washington in order to establish a quorum and deny the attempt.

Key elements of the package include sending checks directly to individuals and families, a major expansion of unemployment benefits, money for hard-hit hospitals and health care providers, financial assistance for small businesses and \$500 billion in loans for distressed companies.

Massie's threat

House leaders faced pressure to pass the legislation as quickly as possible and minimize the risks to their members in the process -- and the bill had been expected to be taken up by voice vote, a move that would allow for quick passage and was designed to permit House members not to return to Washington for a full roll call vote.

But Massie announced Friday that he would request a full roll-call vote.

"I came here to make sure our Republic doesn't deny by unanimous consent in an empty chamber and I request a recorded vote," Massie said on the House floor in an attempt to force the full vote.

A quorum of the House — 216 members — was needed to block Massie's attempt. Massie made a point of order that a quorum was not present, but it was determined that a quorum was in fact present and the motion was adopted.

Members who made it to DC for the debate attempted to maintain social distancing, with some staying on the House floor while others sat in the upstairs gallery above the chamber, where the public usually sits.

Trump sharply criticized the congressman on Friday, saying in a pair of tweets that he "just wants the publicity" and should be thrown out of the Republican party.

"Looks like a third rate Grandstander named @RepThomasMassie, a Congressman from, unfortunately, a truly GREAT State, Kentucky, wants to vote against the new Save Our Workers Bill in Congress. He just wants the publicity. He can't stop it, only delay, which is both dangerous & costly," Trump tweeted.

"Workers & small businesses need money now in order to survive. Virus wasn't their fault. It is "HELL" dealing with the Dems, had to give up some stupid things in order to get the "big picture" done. 90% GREAT! WIN BACK HOUSE, but throw Massie out of Republican Party!," the President said.

The congressman told a local radio station Thursday that he's "having a really hard time" with the bill, and didn't seem too concerned about lawmakers' difficulties in getting back to Washington.

"If congressmen are complaining that it's hard to travel, well, what about the truckers that I saw on the road when I drove to DC? Hitch a ride with the trucker. ... If you're a congressman making \$87 an hour and find it hard to get to DC, well, hitch a ride with the trucker," Massie said on 55KRC talk radio.

Lawmakers return to DC

Many members were [scrambling to book flights and return to Washington](#) on Thursday night amid concerns that they could be asked to vote in person on the stimulus, according to multiple sources familiar with the matter.

Two House members [have already](#) tested positive for Covid-19, while [more than three dozen others](#) have self-quarantined after experiencing flu-like symptoms, interactions with infected individuals or potential exposure.

Rep. Pete King, a New York Republican, [tweeted](#) on Friday morning: "Heading to Washington to vote on pandemic legislation. Because of one Member of Congress refusing to allow emergency action entire Congress must be called back to vote in House. Risk of infection and risk of legislation being delayed. Disgraceful. Irresponsible."

Rep. Dusty Johnson, a South Dakota Republican, [tweeted a picture](#) on a plane with Reps. Pete Stauber, a Minnesota Republican, and Minnesota Democratic Reps. Angie Craig and Betty McCollum. "A bipartisan (and socially distanced) flight to DC this morning to vote on Coronavirus economic relief," Johnson wrote.

Democratic Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez of New York told CNN on Wednesday that [she might force a recorded vote](#), but the congresswoman ultimately did not, despite her criticism of the bill.

"But I think this bill has a lot of problems with it. And I'm extraordinary concerned about what Mitch McConnell has done," she said ahead of the vote. "I've had more constituents call concerned about this bill than in support of it. It's a very hard day. It's a very, very hard day for this body."

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi and Minority Leader Kevin McCarthy both made clear on Thursday that they want the \$2 trillion stimulus bill [to be approved by their chamber Friday](#) by voice vote.

On a conference call with Democratic members on Thursday, Pelosi said that if they are unable to pass the bill by voice vote, they will have a roll call vote Friday, according to three sources on the call.

Pelosi on Thursday predicted that the House will approve the stimulus package with a "strong bipartisan vote," adding that "if somebody has a different point of view, they can put it in the record."

McCarthy said at a news conference on Thursday that the House would operate differently than it usually does in order to promote social distancing.

He said the members won't sit next each other, they'll alter where the members stand, and staff will be cleaning as members come and go. He also said that members will have to enter one designated door and leave out the other.

"We have members on both sides of the aisle who have the virus. We have members who are quarantined. We have members who have challenges with airlines, getting their flights canceled. We will have enough to get this through, but the floor will look different," McCarthy said, explaining the modifications that will be made.

House officials detailed steps to limit member interactions in a notice to all House offices Thursday.

In the notice, obtained by CNN, the House Sergeant-at-Arms and the Capitol physician's office outlined new procedures ahead of the vote, explaining that access around the House chamber and

on the floor will be limited. To that end, the House is closing the Speaker's Lobby, an area right off the House floor where reporters stake out and interview lawmakers and members frequently congregate.

Hard-fought negotiations led to a massive aid package

The stimulus package came together after intense and drawn-out negotiations between congressional Republicans and Democrats and the Trump administration that spanned multiple days and involved ongoing talks that stretched late into the night.

Democrats initially took issue with the package, which was crafted by Senate Republicans at the outset, arguing that it [put corporations ahead of workers](#). Partisan tension over the legislation came to a head when Senate Democrats [blocked two procedural votes](#) to move ahead with the package, on Sunday and again on Monday, a setback to the bipartisan efforts to find a consensus deal.

A deal was ultimately announced mid-week, however, paving the way for the Senate to take up and pass the measure.

Key provisions in the stimulus

A centerpiece of the stimulus package is that it will provide [direct financial assistance](#) to Americans in the form of checks with [the amount received](#) based on income.

Individuals who earn \$75,000 in adjusted gross income or less would get direct payments of \$1,200 each, with married couples earning up to \$150,000 receiving \$2,400 -- and an additional \$500 per each child.

The payment would scale down by income, phasing out entirely at \$99,000 for singles and \$198,000 for couples without children.

In addition, the bill would provide billions of dollars in aid to hard-hit hospitals struggling to deal with the outbreak as well for state and local governments that are cash-strapped due to their response to coronavirus.

One point of contention in negotiations centered around a fund for distressed industries, with Democrats worrying that there would not be adequate oversight. In a compromise move, the final deal provides for accountability through an independent Inspector General and congressional oversight panel.

This story has been updated with additional developments Friday.

CNN's Kristin Wilson contributed to this report.

<https://edition.cnn.com/2020/03/27/politics/coronavirus-stimulus-house-vote/index.html>