

Press Briefings

Remarks by President Trump in Press Briefing

Issued on: August 13, 2020

James S. Brady Press Briefing Room

5:56 P.M. EDT

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much. I appreciate you being here, and good evening. As we continue to confront the China virus, we're rebuilding America's economy like nobody thought possible, actually. We're doing incredibly well.

The stock market is up almost 300 points again today. While our economy is performing significantly better than Europe — which people have to understand very strongly; it's performing better than any market anywhere in the world actually. At the same time, Europe has experienced a 40 percent higher excess mortality than the United States. And I will say that that's a significant number. We're working with Europe on their difficulties, and we are going to help them all the way.

We're doing very well, as you know, on the vaccines and the therapeutics. But think of that: We have the strongest economy — performing economy in the world. We're up — I think it's \$9 trillion since March — \$9 trillion in value. That's a — that's a number that nobody has ever heard of before. We're also getting close to about a 50 percent number since March, which is incredible. So, it's \$9 trillion. It's almost 50 percent. In fact, I think it went above 50 percent today with the 300 point increase. And it's — so we're doing much better than Europe, significantly. And at the same time, Europe has experienced a 40 percent higher excess mortality than the United States.

I just want to mention because another number of judges were approved recently. We'll be, probably, over 300 judges — federal judges, including court of appeals judges — approved by the end of my first term. And other than they — when they added new judges into somebody's term, which happens seldom, but we have more than any — this is a record. Nobody has ever seen anything like this in one term. So we're going to have over 300 federal judges, and that's court of appeals judges, and that's just in the first term. It's — probably we'll finish out over 300, which is pretty amazing.

The stock market's rebound signals a "V"-shaped recovery, stronger than our competitors anywhere in the world — stronger. If you look, you'll see exactly what we have. We — we lead the world. Japan is second. But in terms of dollar value, it's not even close. So there it is. A lot

of great competitors: Europe, United Kingdom, Japan, China, Hong Kong. The United States is leading the world, very substantially.

On the second slide, you'll see the virus-induced economic contraction in the United States has been far less severe than it was with our peers and peer nations. And you see that, right there; there's the United States. And that's despite the fact that we've done more testing than any other nation in the world, that we've done more, by far, ventilators. We're building thousands and thousands of ventilators a month, and we're distributing them all over the world. We're helping other countries.

But despite all of these factors, the shallowest contraction, which is a big deal. I'm sure you'd love to put them in your various media outlets. I know you want to get that out. If you want to leave the room early and do that, that would be fine. The rapid recovery — but it would be nice to report it.

The rapid recovery of homebuilders' sentiment points to massive new construction. And we are doing massive amounts of construction of new homes, and that's because people have tremendous confidence. This is where we went, and the housing market has quickly rebounded. We were at a record, and now we're going to be at a record again very shortly. Those numbers are incredible. That's where we are. And we had to turn off the economy, and now we're turning it back on, and that's beyond a "V" shape. This is going to be very strong; it's called a "strong 'V.'"

Automobile demand has increased 65 percent over the last three months. Sixty-five percent automobile demand. And we're anticipating that that's going to go up even further, but that's more than any — anybody else. The manufacturing sector — remember "manufacturing is dead," according to the past administration of Obama and Biden? "Manufacturing is dead. You'd need a magic wand." Well, you don't need a magic wand. You need competence and capability. The manufacturing sector is booming, and the Production Index is at the highest reading since October of '18, which is — was a — an extraordinary period of time. And there we are. That's pretty good.

These are numbers that nobody has seen until just recently, and now they're just coming out. These are numbers that are leading — I guess, the stock market people, they're very smart people. I know many of them, and they're seeing things that they don't even believe. So, the manufacturing sector is booming, and the Production Index is at its highest reading in a long, long time.

The economy generated over 9 million jobs in the last three years — a record, by far — and 12 million more jobs than experts predicted. So, there you are. You look at that, and that's a record, and it's a record for the quarter. We had over 9 million — substantially more than 9 million jobs.

So those are incredible numbers about our economy and how it's coming back. It's coming back very strongly, and it's coming back at a level that's far greater than anybody anticipated. And we're very proud of that. And I give a lot of credit to all of our people — Steve and Larry.

And we'll be talking about it. If you have any questions on it — shouldn't have any questions. I didn't — I didn't print those charts. Who did? The economy (inaudible), let's see. I don't

know. We'll find that out for you, but it wasn't us. We took those — we took those numbers from somebody. Where did you get those numbers, Larry? They're from where?

MR. KUDLOW: It's from the BLS jobs report (inaudible).

THE PRESIDENT: BLS jobs report.

MR. KUDLOW: The monthly jobs report, through July.

THE PRESIDENT: Okay. Everybody has that — everybody who needs?

The Democrats have abandoned the American people over the simple subject of politics. Chuck Schumer and Nancy Pelosi are holding the American people hostage over money for their radical leftwing agenda that the country doesn't want and won't accept.

For example, they've asked for a ridiculous \$3.5 billion — that's billion — \$3.5 billion for universal mail-in voting, a system riddled by fraud and corruption. You just look at what happened with the Carolyn Maloney race. They should do that race over, by the way. I think her opponent is right when he is having fits about that race. When you look at the ballot, the ballots that are missing, and the ballot frauds — nobody knows what's going on with that race, and yet they declared her a winner. So, her opponent — I don't know what's happened over the last 24 hours, but her opponent is rightfully going a little bit crazy.

And then you look at what happened in Virginia, where they have 500,000 applications sent out at random to people that have no idea what happened. And they admitted they made a mistake. And many were sent to dead people and many were sent to — a number was sent — I guess, two — that at least two, three, four were sent to dogs. One was sent to a cat. They're sent all over the place. That was in Virginia.

In Paterson, New Jersey, they had a massive amount of voter fraud. And it's been a disaster. Paterson, New Jersey has been total disaster — that's universal mail-in voting.

So, they want \$3.5 billion for universal mail-in voting for the country, where you have hundreds of millions of voters. They can't do a little race with 20,000 people; now they want to take it countrywide. Mail-in voting — it's going to be the greatest fraud in the history of elections. When you always talk about "Russia, Russia, Russia," China, Iran on voting — your biggest problem is going to be with the Democrats, not with China, Russia, and Iran. Your biggest problem is going to be with the Democrats.

But now the Democrats — they want \$3.5 billion, think of it. But now that they're unwilling to approve a bill that gives all of that money — of course, we would never approve an amount like that. And they also want \$25 billion additional for the Post Office, Steve. Twenty-five billion for the Post Office, so the Post Office can handle this vast amount of ballots that are being sent, at random, all over the place. They have no idea where they're going.

So, they want \$25 billion, and they want — think of this: They want \$3.5 billion. Would you say that's enough to cover it? I think we could do it for less, right? I think we could do it for less. But they want \$25 billion for the Post Office because of this.

And remember, the new man — who is a great person, a great businessman — he just got there a little while ago. The Post Office has been run poorly for many, many decades. Great people in the Post Office, incredible people, but they've had very bad leadership for many years. So, we'll get it straightened out.

But they turned down this bill because they want radical-left agenda items that nobody in their right mind would approve. So, they want \$25 billion for the Post Office. They want \$2.5- or \$3.5 billion for universal mail-in — \$3.5 billion. And the bill is not going to happen because they don't even want to talk about it because we can't give them the kind of ridiculous things that they want that have nothing to do with the China virus. It has nothing at all to do with China virus, much of what they're asking for. So, therefore, they don't have the money to do the universal mail-in voting. So, therefore, they can't do it, I guess. Right?

Are they going to do it even though they don't have the money? They're asking for the \$3.5 billion. They're asking for \$25 billion for the Post Office so they can do this, I guess, and other things. At \$25 [billion], I would hope it would be a lot of other things, too.

But, therefore, they don't have it. They don't have the money to do the universal mail-in votes. It'll be the greatest rigged election in history. It'll be the greatest fraud ever perpetrated, other than perhaps what they did to my campaign, where they spied on my campaign — President Obama, Biden, and everybody else. And they got caught. Let's see what happens. This will be one of the greatest frauds in history.

So they're admitting that they want \$3.5 billion, and they're not going to do a deal that's good for the American people. Therefore, they're not going to get the \$3.5 billion. Therefore, they can't do the universal mail-in vote. It's very simple. How are they going to do it if they don't have the money to do it?

The Democrats are also holding up money for schools, and hospitals, and small businesses, and state and local governments. They tried to stop Americans from getting unemployment insurance and protection from evictions, which is why I took this decisive action. And I did executive orders, which are now in full force in effect, and they're going forward.

I signed a directive to provide a total of \$400 of additional support for Americans who are unemployed due to the China virus. That's \$400 more than the Democrats have provided. Remember that: That's \$400 more than the Democrats have provided.

Nancy and Chuck haven't provided anything. And remember this: President Obama, when we had a problem — a pretty big problem; a very big problem — you know what he gave? Twenty-five dollars. He gave 25 bucks. So now they say, "Well, we want to give \$500 or we want to give \$600." They don't want to give. They don't even give anything. They're not doing anything.

But President Obama and Biden — Sleepy Joe — gave \$25. Twenty-five. And they'll complain, "Oh, we want to give more." Well, we're giving \$400, and that's now in the works, and that'll be getting out to the people soon, Steve. Okay? Remember that: \$25 is what they gave the last time. Twenty-five.

I want to make it unmistakably clear that I'm protecting people from evictions. They didn't want to do that. The Democrats didn't want to do a protection from evictions — people getting evicted because of the coronavirus or the "China virus," whatever you want to call it. We have 20 — now we're up to 21 different names. All we know is it came out of China, and it shouldn't have. They should have stopped it.

Under my executive order, HUD, HHS, and CDC have been directed to ensure renters and homeowners that they can stay safely in their homes. They're not going to be evicted. They are not going to be evicted. And those letters have already been sent out, Steve, so you'll make sure of that.

I'm providing a payroll tax holiday to all Americans earning less than \$100,000 per year, meaning bigger paychecks for working families through the end of 2020. That's a tremendous amount of money that's being supplied and given to families. Tremendous.

The Democrats didn't want to do a payroll tax. They thought it was "too much money," I guess, or it would make businesses too successful. They don't want to see success. They certainly don't want to see it before the election. They certainly don't want to see the kind of graphs and charts that you saw up there. They don't. Because they say they can't win with that kind of success. They can't win. They have to get used to it.

Remember: We've already gotten \$3 trillion in stimulus, so they should have probably negotiated a little bit differently. Maybe they should have asked for all of this before they got most of the money and we gave it out — a lot of it to the people.

When we win the election — when I win the election, I'm going to completely and totally forgive all deferred payroll taxes without in any way, shape, or form hurting Social Security. That money is going to come from the General Fund. We're not going to touch Social Security. I said from day one that we're going to protect Social Security, and we're going to protect our people. And Social Security is one of the things that will be protected. Pre-existing conditions will be protected. Medicare will be protected.

But Social Security will be totally protected under me. Under them, it will not be protected because we will have a stock market crash the likes of which you've never seen. Your taxes will be doubled and tripled. And your regulations will go through the roof, which is what was causing the problems with the country in the first place.

Student loans: I signed a directive providing relief to student borrowers. Not their fault that they can't go to college. I will be deferring payments on student loans at zero interest until further notice. So we're going to take care of our students. We have a lot of great students out there, and they — they got hit like everybody else. So I will be deferring payments on student loans at zero interest until further notice.

And the payroll tax — we'll be terminating the payroll tax after I, hopefully, get elected. We'll be terminating the payroll tax, so that will mean anywhere from \$5,000 to even more per family, and also great for businesses and great for jobs. A lot of people will be very happy to hear that. A lot of the great — certainly, conservative economists will be great to have — they think

that's the greatest thing we can do. That's better than the payments; that's better than anything else.

But it's a lot of money, and it's — it's going right directly to the people, and it goes there very easily. But it also creates stronger companies to employ the people. So we will be — on the assumption I win, we are going to be terminating the payroll tax after the beginning of the new year.

Today, I met with parents, students, teachers, and health experts to discuss the vital importance of safety and safely reopening America's schools. This evening, I'll outline the commonsense recommendations that should guide schools as they reopen with precautions. We want to be very, very safe and very careful — so, precautions in place.

Our strategy to safely reopen schools mirrors our approach nationwide as we race toward the competition — and the completion — we're competing with us, but I'm not completing — competing with anyone. We just want to have a vaccine. We have — we're dealing with other countries, and we want them to do well. We're giving them whatever information they need. We're all working towards something that will happen. It will happen before the end of the year — maybe substantially before, but before the end of the year. And therapeutics will happen, likewise, even sooner.

But we're looking for that responsible path forward to shelter those at highest risk, while allowing those at lower risk to resume work and school and play football. Go play football.

I spoke to some of the great football players — college players — Trevor and a lot of great players. Called Coach — a coach called "Coach O." A lot of fantastic people I got to speak to — athletes, leaders. They want to play football. Let them play. Let them play. And they'll — they feel safer in the field than they do walking around and doing nothing.

So, hopefully, that will happen. And hopefully, when they play football, they will proudly stand for the National Anthem and they will proudly stand and — and respect the American flag — or at least I'm not watching. I can't speak for others, but based on what I see now and based on what I'm looking at, with respect to the NBA at this point, a lot of people agree with me. So we want people — we would like to request people — you stand proudly for the flag and for the National Anthem.

In the months since the virus arrived, we've learned a great deal. While this is a dangerous and highly infectious disease, it primarily affects the oldest segment of our population or those with chronic health issues.

The United States has the largest nursing home and assisted-living home population in the Western world, by far. Nearly half of all of the deaths from the China virus in the United States have occurred in nursing homes and long-term care facilities.

The median age of those who succumb to the virus is 78 years old. These findings underscore that all Americans must continue to apply extreme vigilance in protecting our elderly population and those with chronic conditions. Outcomes are very different for younger Americans without serious health issues — tremendously different. They can often expect mild or moderate

symptoms or even no symptoms whatsoever. They have very strong immune systems, we've learned — even more so than we ever thought.

In a typical year, approximately five times as many Americans under the age of 65 die from heart disease as have so far been lost to the coronavirus from the same age group. That's an interesting statistic.

Bless- — blessedly, children appear to face the lowest risk of all. It's 99.995 percent of all fatalities [fatalities] are adults. Think of that: 99.95. That is extremely close to 100 percent of all fatalities [fatalities] are adults.

Children often have only mild symptoms, and medical complications are incredibly rare — very, very, very rare. Those that do face complications often have underlying medical conditions. In each of the last five years, the flu resulted in more deaths of those under 18 in the United States than have been lost thus far to coronavirus, by far. The flu — the flu does kill young people.

Given these considerations, we believe many school districts can now reopen safely, provided they implement mitigation measures and health protocols to protect families, protect teachers, and protect students. All families should be empowered to make the decision that is right for their own circumstances. This is especially important if a child has underlying health conditions or lives with a parent or grandparent who is at a high risk.

And one of the things we'd like to do is when we make payment to schools — because we spend a lot of money on schools — we'd like to make the payment directly to the student or to the child. And that would be to the parents, essentially, but to the child. We want to follow the child so that if a school is closed, the family can go to another school, maybe in another area, but they can do it. And we'd like to make that payment — rather than paying a school that's closed, we'd rather pay directly. We're following the child — where the child goes. And we want to pay the family, pay the child, and then the family can take care of the cost.

And we're trying to get that approved too, but the Democrats don't like doing anything, unless it means doing for the union, which controls Nancy and controls Chuck 100 percent. And I have nothing wrong with the union. I have great respect, more than — very few people do I respect more than a great teacher. That's a tremendous talent. They — they're really underappreciated. These are phenomenal people with tremendous talent — the great ones are among the most important people we have in this country.

But — and they'll be great at other — they'll be great at charter schools. And they'll be great at — well, we talk about school choice, which we'd like to see so that parents can take their children to the school of their choice. That's something we want. We think it's very important, especially in the minority communities. They want it so badly. African American, Hispanic American, Asian American — they want it so badly.

But the two people I mentioned, Nancy and Chuck, they're totally controlled by the heads of the union. I think the teachers like us a lot. We're taking care of our teachers. We want to take care of our teachers.

But we cannot indefinitely stop 50 million American children from going to school and harming their mental, physical, emotional, and academic development, and inflicting long-term, lasting damage.

I heard a gentleman today, a great person — some of you were at that meeting — from Harvard, say that every year is \$10,000. It's a — people — they lose a tremendous amount of money in the future. He mentioned \$10,000. And I think he was talking about on a yearly basis. They lose a lot by every year of education that they lost. Every year they gain, they gain \$10,000. And when you have students sitting at home, playing with a computer, it's not the same. That's one thing we've learned for sure: It's not the same. It can never be the same as being in a classroom. So we want to get our students in the classroom.

The American Academy of Pediatrics has released guidance recommendation that schools reopen. They said, "Reopen." It said, quote, "Lengthy time away from school and associated interruption of supportive services often results in social isolation, making it difficult for schools to identify and address important learning deficits." The doctors, also warned about the risk of increased abuse, substance use, depression, and suicide. Suicide.

The National Education Association recently stated, "Despite the momentous efforts of educators during the pandemic, online learning has never been an effective replacement for in-person learning and support." So when you sit at home in a basement, looking at a computer, your brain starts to wither away. We have a lot of good experience at that, just by taking a look at what's happening in politics.

Studies estimate that school closures last spring caused the average student to fall 50 percent behind in math and roughly 35 percent in reading compared to a typical year. Think of that: It caused the average student to fall 50 percent behind in math and 35 percent in reading, compared to being at the school, being with your teachers, being in a classroom. We've learned that. We've learned that learning from a laptop is not great.

And, frankly, we've also learned that telehealth — a little unrelated, but it's up 35,000 percent, and it's been incredible — 35,000 percent. We'll check that number later, but that's an incredible — but it is, people staying home. And the telehealth — that has been a tremendous success.

We've learned those two things during this period of time with the — with the plague — with the plague coming in. And those are two things we know.

School closures harm low-income students the most because they have less access to high-quality remote learning — they don't have computers — and less resources for academic support.

All schools should be making plans to resume in-person classes as soon as possible. To support the reopening of America's schools, we provided \$13 billion in elementary and secondary schools toward the CARES Act and CARES Act funding — we're giving CARES Act funding — the vast majority of which remain available for states to use. So, a tremendous amount of money: \$13 billion. That's the CARES Act funding and we're giving a large portion of that for states to use.

Today, I'm pleased to announce that we will provide up to \$125 million reusable masks to various school districts all around the country.

My administration also stands ready to deploy CDC teams to support schools that are opening and schools that need help in safety and in order to safely reopen.

Finally, today my administration is highlighting general recommendations for all schools and guidance to protect high-risk teachers and students. We're working very, very closely with many of the schools and school districts throughout the country.

They include the following:

- To ensure all students, teachers, and staff understand the symptoms of the China virus.
- Require all students, teachers, and staff to self-assess their health every morning before coming to school.
- Encourage frequent hand washing or hand sanitizing during the school day, beginning upon entrance to school, and ensuring that hand-washing facilities are widely available throughout the school. And, for the most part, schools have been very good at that.
- Minimize large indoor gatherings. Hold large gatherings outdoors whenever possible.
- Maintain high standards of hygiene and ventilation within the classrooms, including keeping windows and doors open whenever possible, and running fans and air conditioning units whenever possible.
- Require students, teachers, and staff to socially distance around high-risk individuals and socially distance whenever possible in any event.
- Encourage the use of masks when social distancing is not possible.
- Post instructions regarding hygiene and social distancing all over the school and all around the school.

We encourage schools to adopt these measures. We've been working with so many of them. And, to the best of my knowledge, virtually every one of them agrees to do that.

While we're also providing high-risk teachers and students options to engage in distance teaching or learning, we're working on that also. College-age students also continue to be one of the lowest-risk demographics. More than 99.8 percent of the deaths from this horrible disease — “the invisible enemy,” we call it — occur in people over 24 years of age. Think of that: 99.8 percent occur in people over 24 years of age.

For this reason, it could be safer for them to live at a school rather than live with their older parents or grandparents. They got to go to school. We got to open up. We got to open up our schools and open up our businesses. And a lot of it has been open, but we can do better.

As we move forward, the number of cases is not, by any means, the most important metric to focus on because the fact is we have more cases because we have far more testing than any country in the world. There's no country that's even close.

We've done more testing and better testing than any country. And many of these countries that the media was putting up as a shining example of success, they're, right now, in massive outbreaks. You see what's going on in many of the countries that you constantly mention.

Far more important is who the virus is infecting. That's why our strategy and attention are focused on preventing the cases that are most likely to require hospitalization or result in death — those that afflict the elderly and those with certain underlying health conditions — all the while acting to prevent hospital overcrowding.

If you look at some of the states that had a flare-up recently, they're all doing very well. Florida is going down rapidly. I want to give a lot of credit to the governors. Florida is going down, and Arizona is going down, way down. They've done a fantastic job. California, as you know, is going down. And many other locations — it's doing very well. And many locations are really in fantastic shape — some with very little, if any, problem — large portions of the United States.

Those advocating for a never-ending, blanket, nationwide lockdown have no answer for what it would do to the mental, physical, and social health of millions of American children and people. This includes parents, where they have to stay home with their children because — and they lose their work and they lose their job because their children isn't at school. They have to have somebody to take care of it, and they want to take care of their child. They don't trust people. A society must put the health and safety of our children first.

A man who has the respect of everybody — he's highly respected by me and anybody on this subject. He's just the expert. Dr. Scott Atlas is here from Stanford, and he's been working with us for a period of time. And I thought it would be great — he was saying things to me the other day. I said it would be great if you could tell that to the media.

So this is the first time I've shared the platform. And it's an honor to do so. Scott is truly — he's a brilliant man. He's a wonderful man. And he cares about the subject very much. And I'd like to ask Scott to come up please and say a few words.

Thank you, Scott.

DR. ATLAS: Thank you, Mr. President. It's obviously a great honor to be here and a great honor to serve this President, who's really focused on the very important parts of the pandemic.

And I'm new here. I'm just, sort of, getting involved, but I want to thank you and the Vice President and the entire team, the task force team, and all the people who are not very visible, really, for working so hard. These people are working 24/7, and it's — it's quite amazing.

And I think that we — today, we had a fantastic event, that I'll just mention, on opening the schools, because the President's priority is to open the schools and open them safely and have parents have the options to either use open schools or do whatever they can to eventually get back to open schools, including any kind of hybrid or other arrangement they may want to do.

It was a great event. We had a group of fantastic parents, teachers, medical experts, and it went very well. And so I won't spend a lot of time up here, but thank you very much and I hope I can help out in some way. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: Steve? Thank you.

Q You mentioned the executive orders that you signed. Are we now unlikely to see any more stimulus legislation before the election?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, we're giving \$400. And we are in constant touch with governors, also, who — they'll be making, perhaps, a contribution. They have options. They can do it, or they don't have to do it. I think most of them will do it.

We're also doing a payroll tax cut, which is a massive number. That's a very big number. And that's a number that's bigger than the — any of the numbers we talked about. And the beauty of that is that it really incentivizes companies, and — because it's both a company cut and a — a employee cut. So that much, really — very much incentivizes people to go back to work, and work hard, and the company to hire people back. And we've had some of the great economic minds saying that's the most important cut; that would be the best cut you could do.

We couldn't get the Democrats to even think about agreeing to it. It's not the Democrat way, I guess. Because it just seems that, whether it's Larry Kudlow, or any of your many friends, that's the one they wanted the most. Would you say, Larry?

MR. KUDLOW: Yes, sir.

THE PRESIDENT: And so we're doing that. And that was never even really discussed, because that was taken off the table by the Democrats immediately.

And this is every week. Every week, you get a check — or a month, or bi-weekly. This is a major amount of money that you're getting directly. So it's really — you know, it's a very big number. It's very substantial number. And this is — don't forget, this is in addition to the — to the \$400. And this is a big number.

And now, at the end of the year, on the assumption that I win, I'm going to terminate the payroll tax, which is another thing that some of the great economists would like to see done. We'll be paying into Social Security through the General Fund. And it works out very nicely.

If Biden would win, he wouldn't do that because he's going to double and triple everybody's taxes. He's going to have to explain that one. And as you know, he's also going to quadruple regulations. He wants to put regulations on.

One of the reasons that we had the kind of numbers and — and big bounces that you've seen — I mean we closed it up. We saved millions of lives, and now we open it, and we bounce right back where we were. It looks like we'll be bouncing right back where we were. But one of the reasons is because we cut so many horrible regulations.

And Biden, with his new partner, Kamala, will — if you think — he's going to put it all back, but many times more. I mean, they want to increase regulations, and that's just going to drive companies out, and it's going to drive people out. It's going to drive them to other countries, and it's going to make us not competitive with other countries.

Please, OAN.

Q Thank you, Mr. President. I would like to highlight a kind of odd situation. In the last hour or so, if you Googled “Antifa.com,” it would take you straight to Joe Biden’s website, his official campaign website. Odd situation. We don’t know who’s behind that.

But it raises an interesting leadership question: Should Joe Biden, the Democrat Party, Kamala Harris — should they publicly denounce the Antifa as a — as a domestic terrorist organization?

THE PRESIDENT: They should. I think they’re afraid to. It’s — in my book, it’s a virtually apart of their campaign: Antifa. The Democrats act like, “Gee, I don’t know exactly what that is.” Take a look at Portland. Take a look at any place you want to take a look at, and they’re all over the place. They were here. We put on a 10-year prison sentence if you knocked down any statues, two months ago. And since then, we haven’t seen much of them.

We had to send border security — and we sent actually Homeland and Border and different forms of Homeland to — to Portland, in order to — you know what we had to do. We had to save — they want to knock down a courthouse. A \$500 million courthouse. They wanted to burn it down, knock it down. And they were easily eas- — able to defend. But the mayor and the governor of the state, they didn’t want to do that.

And we actually sent our people there, and they did a great job. And they were — they did it easily. But in the meantime, they went to other parts of the city, and they’re doing damage. And we’re recommending to the governor that they call in national security, call in the National Guard. We’re willing to get — we would stop — we would stop that problem in one hour.

We sent just defensive measures to protect and save that courthouse from being burned down or knocked down. We also saved a couple of other buildings — federal buildings — because they were unable to do the job.

I have to say this: They have really good police. They have a great group of people that, if they would be allowed to do their job — same with Chicago and same with New York and a couple of other cities — if they allowed — you have, in Chicago, 25,000 police, and they’re really good, but they’re not allowed to do their job.

In New York, you have New York’s Finest, but they’ve totally taken away their incentive. They’ve — they’ve taken away their lives, in a sense, because they don’t allow them to do their job. They could do that job so easily; you wouldn’t have a problem in New York. And that includes with terrorism and everything else. They disbanded — they’ve cut by \$1 billion their budget in New York. One billion dollars. And crime is up by 200 percent, 250 percent — depends on what week you’re looking at. It’s crazy what’s going on in New York.

We could solve that problem easily, but we don’t have to, because they should be able to do it themselves. But they have to give the — they have to give the honor back. It’s the — it’s an honor. They have to give the honor back to their law enforcement groups. New York is great, so is Chicago.

And in Portland, they could do the job. If they don’t want to do that, we would send in — gladly, if they want — the National Guard will take care of it in one hour. It’ll go very quickly.

As we did — by the way, if you take a look in Minneapolis, when they were burning down Minneapolis — a wonderful place but nobody's ever seen anything like it. After days, the very liberal mayor — and these are all run by liberal Democrats. Every place I talk about is run — because we have great cities and they're run by Republicans. Okay? It's — you know, it's — there's no magic to it. It's obvious, what's going on.

And these cit- — the cities that I mentioned are all run by liberal — very liberal Democrats. And it's very sad when you see what's happening to New York. It's very sad when you see what's happening to other cities — not just those three, other cities. And when you look at what's happening, it's not even — it's not even believable.

I left New York almost four years ago. And you could see signs of problems, because de Blasio was there. He's a horrific mayor — just horrific. I mean, people don't want to go there anymore. He's — not only is it bad with crime, I mean, the way he talks about the city and what he does. He's horrific. And when I see that, it's a very sad thing. I left almost four years ago, right? And when I look and see what's happening to a city that I love — that still has great potential, but it's going to have to be brought back. Because what happened in New York is — is — it's not even believable.

What's happening in Chicago, where one weekend you have 78 people shot and 18 die — in a weekend. And then successive weekends, you have so much of that happening. And it's — it's not even — it's really not even believable.

And if you let Democrats run this country — and we've stopped it from going other places — if you let Democrats run this country, you'll have all of your cities be just like that.

Yeah, please.

Q Thank you, Mr. President. The heads of the Boston and Dallas Fed, today, said that the economy hasn't recovered strong enough because the country hasn't contained the virus. So what's your response to them? And wouldn't that argue for a stronger federal response?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, look, you just saw it. Other countries — we're doing much better than all other major countries, peer countries. This chart came out just a little while ago. I thought I'd say — see, it's that kind of a question — a wiseguy question — because I just went over the whole thing. We're doing better than almost everyone with the economy. And I think we're — we're — you know, we face a headwind because Democrats, perhaps for political reasons, don't want to open up their states. And that's having a huge toll — that's taking a huge toll on people within those states.

When you look at North Carolina, you have — a man doesn't want to open it up. You have — you look at Michigan, you look at some states — I mean, they just want to keep these people in their — in their houses — in their prisons. They call them "prisons." And I think a lot of it is for political reasons because they want to look as bad as possible on November 3rd. But I don't think it's going to matter because we're doing so well in so many ways.

As far as the — the plague is concerned, when you look at the numbers — take a look at what's going on now with other countries, they're having flare-ups that are very, very substantial, and

we've done very well. We're helping a lot of those countries. And those were model countries that you used to talk about and say how well they were doing, except they just exploded. They just had very big flare-ups. You understand that. No, we're doing very well. And I don't have to show you the charts again, but those charts are at a level that nobody even thought possible.

I think we're going to have a fantastic third quarter. I think next year will be one of the strongest years we've had. And this is with California being closed down. This is where North Carolina and Michigan and tremendous states — great states — are being closed by — for reasons, I think, that would — that Scott would tell you — you would disagree with, right? You disagree with. He — we spent a great amount of time talking about it.

We got to open up our country. We understand the disease. We understand who it hits. We have to protect our elderly people, especially our elderly people that are not well. We have to protect them. But we understand it, and we understand it well. We've learned a lot.

And we're going to have the vaccine soon and we're going to have the therapeutic soon. Going to come out very soon, and we're very proud of the people and the job they've done.

Yeah, please. Go ahead.

Q Thanks, Mr. President. Joe Biden and Kamala Harris just appeared together in their first campaign event, right before you've got up on this podium. Can you tell us if you watched the remarks and give us your reaction to them?

THE PRESIDENT: I didn't watch. I saw just a moment of him speaking, a moment of her speaking, and it was enough.

Look, he made a choice: He picked her. I watched her. I watched her poll numbers go boom, boom, boom — down to almost nothing. And she left angry. She left mad. There was nobody more insulting to Biden than she was. She said horrible things about him, including accusations made about him by a woman where she, I guess, believed the woman. And now all of a sudden, she's running to be Vice President, saying how wonderful he is.

I thought it was a very unusual pick because she said such bad things. And you know better than anybody what — you know, you won't write it because, you know, you don't want to do that — but you know better than anybody. She said horrible things about him. Horrible things. And she mocked him — openly mocked him. That's why I thought that was a very risky pick, because I'm sure that'll be played back — not necessarily by me, but others — it'll be played back.

The other thing, if you look, she wants a \$3 trillion tax hike. No fracking. How do you think “no fracking” in Pennsylvania is going to play? That's a big fracking state. If you didn't have energy produced that way, you would have taxes that would triple, and you'd have unemployment that you wouldn't believe.

And Pennsylvania, last year, had the best year they've ever had. Texas, last year, had the best year they've ever had. Oklahoma, best year. Almost every state in our nation, last year, had the

best year they've ever had. And they're going to have that again next year. And you can see that by what — but think of it: She wants no fossil fuels. No fossil fuels. Really? Tell that to Texas.

And then I hear, "Trump is only one point up in Texas." No, they said the same thing with Crooked Hillary Clinton. They said, "Texas is in play. Trump is down in Texas." And then I won Texas. Immediately, when they said the polls are closed, "Trump has won Texas." And I won by a lot.

And I won Georgia by a lot. It's the same thing over — it's almost like a duplication of what happened before, except we have much more energy now than we ever did in 2016, and we had a lot. We had record amounts in 2016.

But you — you take a look at the tax cuts. We gave the biggest tax cut in the history of our country and the biggest regulation cuts in the history of our country, by far. Right?

He wants to increase everybody's taxes. And she's one of the people that wants that.

I mean, you take a look at that. She wants to defund or at least substantially reduce money going to police departments. And you can't do that. You can't do that. It's actually got to be the opposite. I've been endorsed by so many police departments. I'm getting a really good one this week that you'll be seeing — really big, really good.

But who could ever — what — what police department, what law enforcement group could ever support Joe Biden, where he said things that are so bad and so foolish — frankly, so stupid — in terms of — in terms of crime and what would happen. So we're getting all of law enforcement.

We're getting the military. She wants to spend much less on our military. I've rebuilt the military. We have the strongest military now. Much of the equipment is coming in, all made in the United States; \$2.5 trillion, we spent.

When I took over we had a military that was totally — it was in terrible, terrible shape. It was depleted. It was a depleted military: old planes, old tanks, old everything. And we have a beautiful, brand-new military with the best people in the world. We never had anything like it. Some of the equipment is still coming in.

No, we have — we've done a real job. And I think we're going to be extremely successful. I was surprised that he picked her — very surprised — because of the horrible way she talked about him. And, frankly, because she dropped like a rock.

I didn't when I ran. I ran against 17 people, mostly governors and senators, some others. Ben Carson was very strong, very good. A couple of others, but mostly governors, mostly senators. And I ran, and I went up.

She ran, and she went down to rock bottom. I don't think she ever got to run her first — to take a vote in her first — in the first state. And so, generally speaking, you don't want to pick somebody that went down, and she went down. But she went down in a very terrible way, and she said horrible things about Biden.

She said far worse about Biden than I ever did. And now she's running as Vice President. So how does that work?

Please, in the back.

Q Mr. President, thank you for taking my question. I'm wondering tonight if you might have any words of encouragement for middle schoolers or high schoolers starting the school year strictly online who might be frustrated, wondering how they're going to get through the next quarter, missing their friends and teachers? Just wondering if you might have any words of encouragement for them.

THE PRESIDENT: It's such a fair question. Such a good question. Yeah, I mean, you hear what I was saying and what — Scott will be involved and he'll be talking to you over the next couple of days — what he's saying from great experience.

No, I feel very badly for them. And I have a feeling that on November 4th, somebody is going to announce, "Schools are open. The country is open. Everything is open." I really believe a lot of it is done for political reasons, if you want to know the truth. I think so.

But you're right; online is not the same as being in the classroom. And that's been proven. It's been proven loud and clear.

Yeah. Any other questions?

Q Mr. President?

Q On the economy, Mr. President —

THE PRESIDENT: Go ahead. Go ahead, please. Please.

Q Thank you, Mr. President. You have sworn several times that if Joe Biden is elected President that there will be an invasion in suburban neighborhoods. It's a sentiment that you expressed in a —

THE PRESIDENT: Yeah.

Q — tweet again this morning. What exactly do you mean by "invasion"?

THE PRESIDENT: What I mean is people are going to be come — they are going to be opening up areas of your neighborhood — which they're doing, and now they're going to do — they wanted to expand it. And they will expand it. If, for any reason — they're going to, in my opinion, destroy suburbia.

And just so you understand, 30 percent-plus of the people living in suburbia are minorities. African American, Asian American, Hispanic American — they're minorities. Thirty percent. The number is even higher, it's — they say 35, but I like to cut it a little bit lower. You know why? That way I can never get myself in too much trouble with the fake news. But 30 percent-plus are minorities living in suburbia.

And when they go in and they want to change zoning so that you have lots of problems, where they want to build low-income housing — you want something where people can aspire to be there, not something where it gets hurt badly. And that's what happens.

So, with suburban women, suburban men, I think they feel very strongly about what I'm doing. It's a very — I mean, it's a very fair question. It's a very important question. But they fought all their lives to be there, and then all of a sudden, they have — something happened that changes their life and changes what they fought for, for so many years.

John, please.

Q Quick — two quick ones, if I could, Mr. President. I know you were briefed on it; have you decided where are you're going to give your acceptance speech yet?

THE PRESIDENT: So we're looking at Gettysburg.

Q I know that.

THE PRESIDENT: A magnificent site. I've been there a number of times. Just a magnificent site. And we're looking at the White House. And I would say it's really down to those two.

The White House would be a much easier, from the standpoint of Secret Service and, you know, the movement of hundreds of people, as you know.

Q Which way are you leaning?

THE PRESIDENT: I would say we love them both. I love Gettysburg, but it's — this is simpler. It would be magnificent. The White House is a — the White House is the White House. Gettysburg is one of the great and historic sites of our country — frankly, as far as I'm concerned, of the world. So one of those two. I'll probably be announcing it over the next week or so, maybe less.

Q And then I had a question about payroll taxes. If you permanently rescind the payroll tax, how do you pay for Social Security?

THE PRESIDENT: We're taking it out of the General Fund. And what we'll do —

Q But that would incur huge deficits.

THE PRESIDENT: Yeah, what we'll be doing is, if we do that, we'll get it approved, in that case, by Congress. And we'll take the money from other places, other than — we will not take it from Social Security in —

Q Right, but —

THE PRESIDENT: — any way shape or form.

Q How do you fund it from the General Fund, when the General Fund just incurred a debt of \$2.8 trillion?

THE PRESIDENT: You're right, but we're going to have tremendous growth. We have tremendous growth. You take a look at what's happening here.

Next year — unless somebody comes in who doesn't know what they're doing and they start raising taxes and forcing everybody to leave the country or leave their jobs and companies to close — we will have tremendous growth. You will see growth like you haven't seen in a long time.

Okay. Yeah, please.

Q Mr. President, since you didn't see Kamala Harris's remarks today, I wonder if we could just get you to respond to one thing that she said?

THE PRESIDENT: Sure.

Q She said that your "refusal to get testing up and running"; your — I'm paraphrasing — your "flip-flopping on social distancing and [wearing] masks"; and your "delusional belief that you know better than the experts — all of that," in her words, are "reason" that one American dies of COVID-19 every minute. What do you think of that?

THE PRESIDENT: I think that's probably one of the reasons she was a terrible candidate and was forced to leave the race — because she got her facts wrong. You know she's very bad on facts. She is very weak on facts.

And, just so you understand: We've done more testing than any country in the world, by far. That includes India, which has 1.5 billion people. That includes China. That includes every country in the world. We've done more testing. We have better testing than any country in the world. They call; they want to know, "Where do we get it? How do we get it?" We have better testing than any country in the world.

When you do as much testing as us, however, as you understand, you develop more cases. If you tested instead of 65 million people, which is what we've done — when you test that many people, you're going to find cases that normally you wouldn't see.

If you go to Mexico and you go to other countries, you'll see they do almost no testing. They test if somebody is not feeling well. They test if somebody is symptomatic. They test very little. They test very little.

We've done more testing than anybody in the world. We've done the best job of any country in the world, and that includes from making ventilators that nobody else could have done. We are the ventilator king of the world. We're supplying the whole world now, in a few short months, with ventilators that are very hard to produce, very expensive, very complex, very delicate, very, very important. We've done a great job.

And then, on top of that, when you look at the numbers — how we were impacted less than these other countries. And now, you look at the explosion of countries that you would have said “did such a good job,” and some of them had advantages over us for obvious reasons, having to do with the pandemic. But when you look at the job that we’ve done compared to others, we’ve done a great job.

And she — I read today that she’s very short on facts. She — I think she’s going to be a big failure. And I think — I look forward to the debate between her and Mike Pence, because I think he’ll do even better against her than he did about — against Senator Kaine, which was a total wipeout. So we’ll see how it all works out.

All right, one more. Yeah, please, in the back.

Q Mr. President, thank you very much.

THE PRESIDENT: Go ahead.

Q Me?

THE PRESIDENT: You in the back, please.

Q Thank you. I just ask what — what do you say to those critics who argue you’re trying to sow distrust in democracy and deliberately trying to sabotage the Post Office — to undermining mail-in voting, which a lot of people need?

THE PRESIDENT: Yeah. I say the Democrats are sabotaging the Post Office because they’re not approving \$25 billion that was requested. So they’re sabotaging the Post Office, and they’re not allowing the Post Office to function properly, and they’re certainly not allowing universal mail-in votes if — when they do that.

But equally importantly, they’re not allowing \$3.5 billion in funds to do voting that they’d like to do. Therefore all of this — and all of the tremendous mistakes that were made with regard to mail-in voting — all of these tremendous mistakes, you can’t even — you can’t even do it.

I would imagine the courts — you know, this is in many courts right now. They’re showing all of the disasters that have taken place just in the last short period of time — in the last two months — with respect to universal mail-in voting. It’s just like a total catastrophe what’s happening. And we can’t let that happen.

Go ahead, real fast. Go ahead.

Q Thank you very much. Two questions. One is about — you had graphs about the economics of COVID —

THE PRESIDENT: Right.

Q — but deaths in America are still going up. Whereas in Europe, right now: zero deaths in UK, zero deaths in France.

THE PRESIDENT: Yeah. Well, it's going up by cases. If you look at cases. And the cases are going up because we do so much testing and we find it. And I call it "fake-media gold" because we do so much more testing than any other country. And when you do all that testing, you find cases.

Go ahead, Steve. Real fast. Go ahead.

Q A quick one on trade: You've got these trade talks with China going on. Is it possible you would pull out of the trade deal with China if they're not meeting their commitment?

THE PRESIDENT: We've taken a lot of money from China on the last year and a half that no other President has taken in. We've done things to China that nobody else has done to China, or even thought of doing — with 25 percent tariffs and taking in billions and billions of dollars — tens of billions of dollars. And giving them — giving the farmers, as an example, \$12 billion one year, \$16 billion another year — and made the farmers extremely happy. You don't hear them complaining. They were targeted by China.

But I'm very angry at China because they let this horrible disease — they let this horrible plague come into our country and come into the world. And they should have been able to stop it. They stopped it from going into China. They should have been able to stop it. So I'm very angry at China.

Thank you very much. Thank you.

END 7:00 P.M. EDT