



Members of Congress circle the flag-draped casket of the late Rep John Lewis, D-Ga, as he lies in state at the Capitol in Washington on July 27. (AP)

## Politics

## 'Teetering in Congress'

## White House &amp; Democrats at odds on virus aid but talking

WASHINGTON, July 28, (AP): Unemployment assistance, eviction protections and other relief for millions of Americans are at stake as White House officials launched negotiations late Monday with House Speaker Nancy Pelosi and Democratic Senate leader Chuck Schumer on a new coronavirus aid package that's teetering in Congress ahead of looming deadlines.

While Senate Republicans struggled to roll out their own \$1 trillion proposal, Pelosi implored the White House and GOP lawmakers to stop the infighting and come to the negotiating table with Democrats.



Schumer

Aid runs out Friday for a \$600/weekly jobless benefit that Democrats call a lifeline for out-of-work Americans. Republicans want to slash it to \$200 a week, saying that the federal bump is too generous on top of state benefits and is discouraging employees from returning to work.

"This is wrong. We have to do what's right for the American people," Pelosi said at the Capitol afterward.

With the virus death toll climbing and 4.2 million infections nationwide, both parties are eager for a deal. There is widespread agreement that more money is needed for virus testing, to help schools prepare to open in the fall and to shore up small businesses. Voters are assessing their handling of the virus crisis before the November election, and President Donald Trump's standing is at one of the lowest points of his term, according to a new AP-NORC poll.

Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin and White House chief of staff Mark Meadows met with Pelosi and Schumer for nearly two hours at the speaker's office. The two top negotiators would be back at it Tuesday.

"Good meeting," Meadows said.

## Negotiating

The Republicans come to the negotiating table hobbled by infighting and delays. Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., said he wanted to hit "pause" on new spending after Congress approved a sweeping \$2.2 trillion relief package in March. But Pelosi, D-Calif., took the opposite approach, swiftly passing a \$3 trillion effort with robust Democratic support. In the intervening months, the crisis deepened.

McConnell, flanked by top GOP chairs Monday at the Capitol, unveiled his long-awaited proposal. It provides some \$105 billion to schools and colleges, the K-12 funds tilted toward campuses that reopen with in-person learning. There's more money for virus testing, \$15 billion for child care centers and benefits for businesses, including a fresh round of loans under the Paycheck Protection

Program, tax breaks and a sweeping liability shield from COVID-19-related lawsuits.

Republicans left out new money for cash-strapped states and cities, a priority for Democrats, but included another round of \$1,200 direct payments to households that Democrats also support. Based on an earlier formula, people making \$75,000 or less would receive the full amount, with the benefit phased out for those earning above \$99,000, or double for married couples filing joint taxes.

The GOP bill also provides \$1.7 billion for a new FBI headquarters in Washington, a non-pandemic-related expense that's a top priority for the president but not for lawmakers or McConnell. Trump's hotel is across the street from it on Pennsylvania Avenue.

## Offered

"Senate Republicans have offered another bold framework to help our nation," McConnell said. He called it a starting point in talks.

But Democrats said it was insufficient, and conservative Republicans quickly broke ranks on McConnell's plan, arguing the spending was too much and priorities misplaced. Half the Republican senators could vote against the bill, some warned, and their opposition leaves McConnell heading into negotiations with Pelosi without the full force of the Senate majority behind him.

"The focus of this legislation is wrong," Sen. Ted Cruz, R-Texas, one of the bill's most vocal opponents, told reporters at the Capitol. "Our priority, our objective, should be restarting the economy."

As bipartisan talks unfold, the White House is now suggesting a narrower relief package may be all that's possible with Friday's approaching deadlines.

But Pelosi has resisted tackling a relief package in piecemeal fashion, arguing that broader aid is needed for Americans. "Forget it," she said. Democrats also panned the Trump administration's desire to reduce the \$600 weekly unemployment aid.

"They managed to have enough money for \$2 billion for the FBI headquarters that benefits Trump hotel and they say they have no money for food assistance?" said Schumer. "What the heck is going on?"

The \$600 weekly jobless benefits boost, approved as part of the March aid package, officially expires July 31, but because of the way states process unemployment payments, the cutoff was effectively Saturday.

Under the GOP proposal, the jobless boost would be reduced to \$200 a week for two months through September and phased out to a new system that ensures no more than 70% of an employee's previous pay. They argue reductions are needed because some people earn more on unemployment than at work. States could request an additional two months, if needed, to make the transition.

## America

**US won't expel children:** The Trump administration has agreed not to expel a group of immigrant children it detained in a Texas hotel under an emergency declaration citing the coronavirus and will instead allow them to seek to remain in the US, the administration said Monday.

The move comes days after The Associated Press first reported on the US government's secretive practice of detaining unaccompanied children in hotels before rapidly deporting them during the virus pandemic. Government data obtained by AP showed the US had detained children nearly 200 times over two months in three Hampton Inn & Suites hotels in Arizona and two Texas border cities.

But the Trump administration has not said it will stop using hotels to detain children. The legal groups that sued Friday night said they still plan to fight the larger practice in court.

Their agreement only covers 17 people known to have been detained as of Thursday at the Hampton Inn in McAllen. After the hotel's owner said Friday it would end reservations of rooms used for child detention, US Immigration and Customs Enforcement removed the children from the hotel but refused to say where it had taken them. (AP)



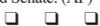
**Feds will stay in Portland:** US militarized officers will remain in Portland until attacks on a federal courthouse cease, a top official said Monday after another night of violence. And more officers may soon be on the way.

"It is not a solution to tell federal officers to leave when there continues to be attacks on federal property and personnel," US Attorney Billy Williams said. "We are not leaving the building unprotected to be destroyed by people intent on doing so."

Local and state officials said the federal officers are unwelcome.

Meanwhile, the mayors of Portland and five other major US cities appealed Monday to Congress to make it illegal for the federal government to deploy militarized agents to cities that don't want them.

"This administration's egregious use of federal force on cities over the objections of local authorities should never happen," the mayors of Portland, Seattle, Chicago, Kansas City, Albuquerque, New Mexico, and Washington wrote to leaders of the US House and Senate. (AP)



**Trump to discuss energy:** President Donald Trump will shift his focus to American energy dominance during a stop in Texas later this week that will include his first visit to an oil rig.

During the stop Wednesday at Double Eagle Energy in the west Texas city of Midland, Trump will discuss how the US is achieving energy dominance by cutting regulations, simplifying permitting and encouraging private investment in energy infrastructure, the White House said.

Trump will also tour an oil rig in Midland, the city where former president George W. Bush was raised and where he met his wife, Laura, who was born there.

While in Texas, Trump will raise money for the Republican Party and his reelection campaign at a fundraising luncheon with supporters in nearby Odessa.

It will be Trump's 16th visit as president to Texas, the White House said. He won the state in 2016 by 9 percentage points over Democrat Hillary Clinton, and Democrats are hoping for a more competitive race this year against Biden - if not an outright Biden win.

Double Eagle Energy says it is one of the largest operators in the Permian Basin, covering parts of western Texas and southeastern New Mexico. (AP)



Trump

## Civil rights icon Lewis lies in state at Capitol

In a solemn display of bipartisan unity, congressional leaders praised Democratic Rep. John Lewis as a moral force for the nation in a Capitol Rotunda memorial service rich with symbolism and punctuated by the booming, recorded voice of the late civil rights icon.

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi called Lewis the "conscience of the Congress" who was "revered and beloved on both sides of the aisle, on both sides of the Capitol." Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell praised the longtime Georgia congressman as a model of courage and a "peacemaker."

"The arc of the moral universe is

long, but it bends toward justice," McConnell, a Republican, said Monday, quoting the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. "But that is never automatic. History only bent toward what's right because people like John paid the price."

Lewis died July 17 at the age of 80. Born to sharecroppers during Jim Crow segregation, he was beaten by Alabama state troopers during the civil rights movement, spoke ahead of King's "I Have a Dream" speech at the 1963 March on Washington and was awarded the Medal of Freedom by the nation's first Black president in 2011.

Dozens of lawmakers looked on

Monday as Lewis' flag-draped casket sat atop the catafalque built for President Abraham Lincoln. Several wiped away tears as the late congressman's voice echoed off the marble and gilded walls. Lewis was the first Black lawmaker to lie in state in the Rotunda.

"You must find a way to get in the way. You must find a way to get in trouble, good trouble, necessary trouble," Lewis intoned in a recorded commencement address he'd delivered in his hometown of Atlanta. "Use what you have ... to help make our country and make our world a better place, where no one will be left out or left behind. ... It is your time." (AP)

## The Application Increased Financial Transactions By 400%



BOOKEEY

## Daher: Bookeeey Provided safe and User-Friendly Solutions During COVID-19 Crisis



Bitia Daher

- Bookeeey contributes to timely banking settlements with various companies on daily basis

- Financial digital applications proved to be efficient and important for cash flow and payment management

As mentioned by Bitia Daher, Bookeeey Director of Operations, COVID-19 repercussions affected the economy and had deep impact on businesses and our daily life. Bitia confirmed that amid COVID-19 crisis, Bookeeey provided various online payment solutions for SMEs to ensure sustainability of the businesses while offering secured & easy payment options to the end-users.

In her press release, Daher said that the application enables easy and timely company registration, account activation, integration with online stores, and sending payment links to clients through SMSs. She also added that Bookeeey provided practical and comprehensive e-payment solutions and fulfilled both the business & client needs during the crisis.

Daher referred to the massive increase in the number of subscriptions by both clients and companies, which in turn reflected in at least 400% growth in the number of transactions, indicating the companies' awareness of the online payment solutions as a significant and efficient cash flow and payment management solution rather than being merely a complementary option. She asserted the importance of companies and businesses having online stores to facilitate safe purchases and payment. That's where Bookeeey's role arises as an online payment service provider.

## Digital Applications

Bitia mentioned that financial digital applications is an efficient mean utilized by businesses globally to boost their revenues and enhance their capabilities in serving clients at the highest reliability and safety standards. She referred that the application contributed to accurate & timely completion of banking settlements on daily basis without

any impact from the curfew hours and lockdown imposed on banks and financial institutions. Consequently, companies have not suffered interruptions to their cash flows.

Bitia mentioned that the governance and development of digital operations are considered main pillars upon which countries rely to maintain sufficiency required in all sectors. Since its establishment, Bookeeey adopted the methodology of fulfilling the ever-growing needs for online payments for all clients among all business sectors.

## Partial Restrictions

Despite closure of many stores, companies, and institutions as a result of full or partial curfew imposed by health authorities, Bitia said that in addition to online payment services provided by Bookeeey, through professional web development companies we offered services such as online store and online shopping App development as a quick and easy online sale channel for our merchants & SMEs to assist them amid the confusion that stroked the market. The missions encompassed: 1- health protection for both clients and employees; 2- business continuity; 3- finding quick and easy methods to perform vital product and service sale. She mentioned that clients were trained on the use of the application on a short period of time to ensure quick response to the novel business requirements.

Bitia said that Bookeeey attempted fulfilling the market needs while observing general precautions such as social distancing and limiting exchange of cash or even cards during the payment process. She referred that as part of Bookeeey's social responsibility, the main objective during the crisis was the health & safety of people and maximum benefit to the businesses and customers alike which translated into secure & easy payment methods with low commission fees.