

**Floor Remarks**  
**Targeted Covid Relief Package**  
**U.S. Senator Lisa Murkowski**  
**September 10, 2020**

Mr. President, I have listened to the Minority Whip here and I would say that I agree with him. This bill that we will have an opportunity to vote on later this afternoon does not have everything in it. I think that almost every one of us would agree it doesn't have everything that we would like. It certainly doesn't have everything I would like. In fact, it does a few things that I would have just as soon jettison. But we will have an opportunity to vote on today is a targeted relief measure. It is targeted toward our small businessmen and women that have been feeling a kick to the gut on a daily basis in my state, and certainly in a state like Florida that relies on tourism. It is targeted relief that is designed to help our kids get back into school and the teachers be able to be in a safe environment. It is targeted relief that is designed to help provide additional childcare resources. It is targeted relief to help us advance to a vaccine that is accessible and affordable to all Americans. It is targeted relief that will help us with additional testing. I think that we recognize that more testing is going to be better than less testing.

There is assistance for the United States Postal Service. It's not enough in my view, I would like to see it increased significantly, but that is not in there. But there is some targeted relief for the Postal Service, as well. The Minority Whip mentions the liability protection that is included within this measure. It's been no secret that that has been a priority not only of the Majority Leader, but a majority of so many of us who have looked at and heard from those in our communities, our school districts, that are concerned about their liability. Our small businesses that are concerned about reopening with no liability. This is not a "get out of jail free" card, this is designed that if you have followed the protocols, if you have follow the requirements that have been set out there, that you are not going to lose that business. Your school district is not going to be, really in terms of their funding, eroded because of litigation. So again, it does not absolve if you have been negligent in any way.

So again, what I want to reinforce is, we will have an opportunity here to vote on a measure today that is not everything to everybody. We couldn't get there. Negotiations, I think it's fair to say we all wish that there had been greater success with broader bipartisan negotiation. We haven't gotten to that place. And so we are at a place where we do have an opportunity to put a measure out there that is more directed and it is targeted relief that does leave out certain areas. That in my view does include some things that should not be in there. But it is where we are today. And so we either have an opportunity to do some incremental steps to build on what we put in place with the CARES Act several months ago, or to do nothing for an indeterminate period of time. Well I can tell you in my state I have small businesses for whom the PPP [Paycheck Protection Program] was a lifesaver. But I come from a state where we are pretty seasonally focus with our economy and the relief that they were able to get for those few months in the summer time, that allowed them to kind of stay open. But when you don't have your tourists come to town, when you really don't have your economy for those few months in the summertime that allowed to them to kind of stay open. But when you don't have your tourists

come to town, when you really don't have your economy kick into gear during the summer, believe it or not folks it doesn't happen during the wintertime in Alaska. We don't have those people coming to visit us. We don't have the cruise ships, we don't have the airplanes that are filled with people who are willing to come and spend their money, and so we have got to wait until at least next May. And Alaskans right now are hoping and praying that they can hold on until May.

So there's some things in this targeted relief package that directly help them—an opportunity for a second round, and opportunity that is focused on our small businesses, and opportunity for an extension of time within which do pay down those CARES Act monies. That is something that I have heard more often than anything else is give us more time to spend this, because we don't want to spend it on things we don't need right now because we know the winter is going to long and dark and tough. Give us that ability. We didn't get the flexibility that we had asked for, that would have been important, but the time extension will be important. The loan forgiveness piece for the smaller loans will be important.

The extension of the additional UI [unemployment insurance], no it's not the full \$600, but it does allow for additional support for those who are suffering most. Again what we are trying to do is we're trying to target the relief, not put it all out there in areas where some didn't need it, some did, hope we get it right. Again, this is a measure that many will say is half a measure. But I'm talking to folks back home who say give us something, we need something now, because otherwise we don't know how long we can hold on. So this is something that I am going to be supporting later this afternoon despite what I point to as the flaws in.

I am not going to spend my time here today to talk about why I disagree with some of the school choice provisions, I think my position on that is relatively well known. But I am going to vote for this regardless of the fact that those provisions are in their because they are provisions that are going to help our fisherman, that are going to help our small businesses, that are going to help our schools, and are going to help us, and help those who need this additional unemployment insurance.