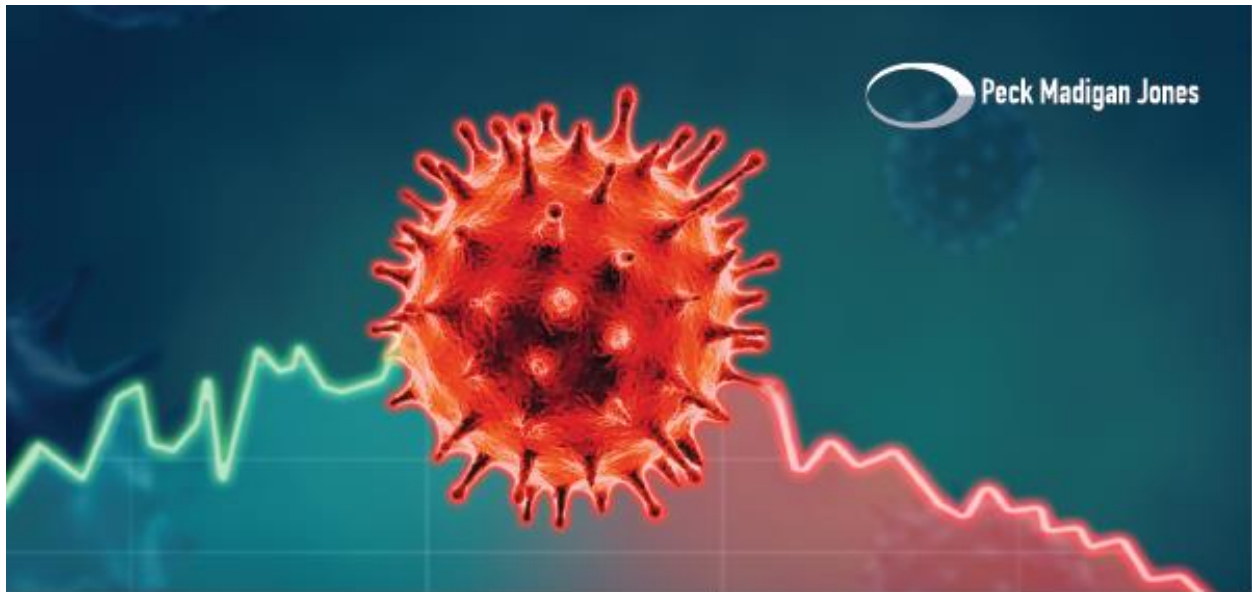




DAILY COVID-19 UPDATE

February 25, 2021

WHAT HAPPENED TODAY

Today, the Senate parliamentarian is expected to issue her decision on what provisions are allowed in the \$1.9 trillion pandemic relief package under the Byrd rule and which provisions would be in violation of the budget reconciliation process.

In addition to uncertainty regarding the ability to include a minimum wage increase in a budget resolution, Democratic Senators are also unsure whether a provision to direct the Department of Treasury to make advance monthly payments of the child tax credit (CTC) will survive the Byrd rule test. When asked today if the parliamentarian will rule that CTC payments are ineligible for the budget resolution, Senator Sherrod Brown (D-OH) responded "we hope not, but we won't give up if she does."

Regardless of how the parliamentarian rules, House Budget Committee Chairman John Yarmuth (D-KY) stated the chamber will pass the bill with a \$15 minimum wage increase and "let the Senate work its will." The House is still expected to vote on the package tomorrow.

LATEST STATISTICS

88,669,035 COVID-19 vaccines have been distributed in the U.S and **45,237,143** Americans have received the first dose.

There are a total of **112,856,868** confirmed cases worldwide, 2,503,735 deaths and 63,668,713 people have recovered.

There are **28,396,896** confirmed cases of the coronavirus in the U.S. and 507,465 deaths.

LATEST PMJ RESOURCES

[Drug Shortage and Medical Supply Chain Tracker](#)

[Coronavirus State Reopening Tracker](#)

Notably, Pfizer and BioNTech have begun a trial to determine the safety and efficacy of their [third-dose booster shot](#). Pfizer CEO Albert Bourla has expressed hope that a third dose could increase the immune response "10-to-20-fold" and offer enhanced protection against variants.

Meanwhile, Moderna [announced](#) it is starting an NIH Phase 1 clinical trial for its modified vaccine targeting the South African COVID-19 variant.

[President Biden EO Tracker](#)

[Lame Duck Preview Memo](#)

ECONOMIC UPDATE

Congressional

HOUSE

- Rep. Cindy Axne (D-IA) [wrote a letter](#) to House leaders urging them to include legislation that would provide tax relief for up to \$10,200 in unemployment payments in the COVID-19 relief package.
- House Small Business Committee Republicans issued a press released titled, ["Small business organizations speak out against Democrats partisan minimum wage overhaul."](#)

SENATE

- Senate Banking Committee Chairman Sherrod Brown's (D-OH) [opening statement](#) and Ranking Member Pat Toomey's (R-PA) [opening statement](#) at the committee's hearing on the coronavirus crisis.

Administration

TREASURY

- The Department of the Treasury's Community Development Financial Institutions Rapid Response Program (CDFI Program) [will provide](#) \$1.25 billion to Community Development Financial Institutions (CDFIs) to help communities respond to the economic hardships created by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Articles of Interest

- 2/25 The Wall Street Journal published an article titled, ["Senate waits for minimum-wage ruling from parliamentarian."](#)
- 2/25 The Wall Street Journal published an article titled, ["U.S. unemployment claims fell sharply last week."](#)

PUBLIC HEALTH UPDATE

Congressional

HOUSE

- Reps. Kevin Brady (R-TX), Devin Nunes (R-CA), and Tom Reed (R-NY) sent a [letter](#) to Acting HHS Secretary Norris Cochran, calling for a briefing from HHS regarding its role in collecting state government data related to New York nursing home deaths.
- Reps. Tom Malinowski (D-NJ) and Mario Diaz-Balart (R-FL) introduced bipartisan [legislation](#) to create an independent, non-partisan commission, closely modeled after the 9/11 Commission that investigated the September 11, 2001 terror attacks, to assess the nation's preparedness and response to COVID-19 and provide recommendations to improve our country's readiness for future epidemics and pandemics.
- Reps. Mark Takano (D-CA) and Mike Bost (R-IL) introduced the *Department of Veterans Affairs Veterans' and Caregivers' COVID-19 Immunizations Now Expanded Act of 2021*. Under this bipartisan [legislation](#), the VA can provide vaccines to all veterans, including those not currently enrolled in the VA healthcare system, as well as caregivers who provide essential support to veterans.

Administration

THE WHITE HOUSE

- Yesterday, President Joe Biden issued an [Executive Order](#) on America's Supply Chains.
- Yesterday, President Joe Biden delivered [remarks](#) at the signing of the Executive Order on America's Supply Chains.

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

- HHS Office of the Inspector General (OIG) issued a [data brief](#) titled, "Trend Towards More Expensive Inpatient Hospital Stays in Medicare Emerged Before COVID-19 and Warrants Further Scrutiny."

NATIONAL INSTITUTES OF HEALTH

- According to a newly published [study](#) from the National Cancer Institute (NCI), People who have had evidence of a prior infection with COVID-19, appear to be well protected against being reinfected with the virus, at least for a few months.
- NIH Director Dr. Francis Collins penned a [blog post](#) titled, "Using R2D2 to Understand RNA Folding."

Articles of Interest

- 2/23 AP News published an article titled, ["States rush to catch up on delayed vaccines, expand access."](#)
- 2/24 The New York Times published an article titled, ["New Findings on 2 Ways Children Become Seriously Ill From the Coronavirus."](#)
- 2/25 KHN published an article titled, ["Have a Case of a COVID Variant? No One Is Going to Tell You."](#)
- 2/25 The Wall Street Journal published an article titled, ["Ad Campaigns Aim to Counter Covid-19 Vaccine Hesitancy."](#)
- 2/25 CNBC published an article titled, ["Pfizer-BioNTech are testing a booster shot of their COVID vaccine in a new trial."](#)

LABOR UPDATE

Administration

DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

- DOL released the [Unemployment Insurance Weekly Claims Report](#) for the week ending February 20.