WHAT HAPPENED TODAY

Today, in opening floor remarks, Majority Leader Chuck Schumer (D-NY) indicated the Senate could begin working on the American Rescue Plan "as early as tomorrow." He added he expects a "hardy debate and some late nights," but hopes to bring the bill to the floor for a vote this week.

Some moderate Senate Democrats have raised issues regarding the bill's $400 boosted unemployment benefits and stimulus checks. Sen. Joe Manchin (D-WV) argued previous coronavirus relief legislation included an extra $300 in unemployment insurance so "it's kind of hard to explain" an increase when most businesses should be able to reopen by summer. Senate Majority Whip Dick Durbin (D-IL) added that while he does not agree with moderate Democrats on decreasing enhanced unemployment benefits, he noted that more narrow targeting of the bill's stimulus checks "is being discussed."

Yesterday, Sen. Bernie Sanders (I-VT) urged his Democratic colleagues to "ignore" the parliamentarian's ruling that inclusion of a provision to

LATEST STATISTICS

102,353,940 COVID-19 vaccines have been distributed in the U.S and 51,755,447 Americans have received the first dose.

There are a total of 114,697,519 confirmed cases worldwide, 2,544,655 deaths and 64,775,128 people have recovered.

There are 28,704,758 confirmed cases of the coronavirus in the U.S. and 515,985 deaths.

LATEST PMJ RESOURCES

Drug Shortage and Medical Supply Chain Tracker

Coronavirus State Reopening Tracker
gradually raise the minimum wage to $15/hour by 2025 violates budget reconciliation rules. He joined 23 House progressives in calling on President Biden and Vice President Kamala Harris to force a vote to overrule the parliamentarian or end the filibuster. However, there does not appear to be enough support among Democrats for that change as of now. Additionally, Senate Majority Whip Durbin and the White House have pushed back against the idea of a vote to overrule the parliamentarian.

Notably, Merck announced that it will assist competitor Johnson & Johnson in the production of its COVID-19 vaccine. This partnership will help address production issues faced by Johnson & Johnson and expand the supply of the single-dose vaccine.

Additionally, as more states are easing COVID-19 restrictions, CDC Director Dr. Rochelle Walensky warned that "now is not the time" to be "rolling back public health measures." She indicated that variants are spreading, and cases and deaths are holding steady at 70,000 and 2,000 per day, respectively.

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**ECONOMIC UPDATE**

**Congressional**

**HOUSE**
- House Financial Services Committee Chairwoman Maxine Waters (D-CA) lauded Treasury’s effort to help vulnerable countries fight the COVID-19 pandemic through a new allocation of Special Drawing Rights (SDRs) by the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

**SENATE**
- Senate Finance Committee Chair Ron Wyden (D-OR), Senate Budget Committee Chair Bernie Sanders (I-VT), Senate Banking Committee Chair Sherrod Brown (D-OH), along with other Democratic Senators, sent a letter to President Biden urging him to include recurring direct payments and automatic unemployment insurance extensions to economic conditions in the Build Back Better economic plan.
- Senators Elizabeth Warren (D-MA) and Sherrod Brown (D-OH) sent a letter to the Federal Reserve, Federal Deposit Insurance Corp. (FDIC), and Office of the Comptroller of the Currency (OCC) urging leadership to reject an extension of lessened capital requirements.
**Administration**

**INTERNAL REVENUE SERVICE (IRS)**
- The Internal Revenue Service (IRS) issued guidance for employers claiming the employee retention credit under the CARES Act.

**CONSUMER FINANCIAL PROTECTION BUREAU (CFPB)**
- Rohit Chopra, President Biden’s pick to head the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB), said he would seek to protect Americans struggling with debt amid the COVID-19 pandemic from potential abuses by lenders.

**Articles of Interest**
- 3/2 Politico published an article titled, “Tracking the money: Bid to make business rescue more inclusive undercut by lack of data.”
- 3/2 Politico published an article titled, “Senate Dems wrestle with unemployment benefits in Biden's Covid aid plan.”
- 3/1 The Washington Post published an article titled, “Biden works to unify Senate Democrats on $1.9 trillion relief bill.”

**PUBLIC HEALTH UPDATE**

**Congressional**

**HOUSE**
- Reps. Patrick McHenry (R-NC) and Bill Pascrell (D-NJ) introduced the American PPE Supply Chain Integrity Act to help end U.S. reliance on Chinese-made personal protective equipment (PPE) and ensure that hospitals and frontline healthcare workers have access to a plentiful supply of high-quality American made PPE.

**SENATE**
- Sens. Chris Van Hollen (D-MD) and Martin Heinrich (D-NM) sent a letter to White House Coronavirus Task Force Response Coordinator Jeff Zients regarding the Administration's vaccine strategy that prioritizes first doses.
- Sen. Elizabeth Warren (D-MA) and Reps. Ayanna Pressley (D-MA), Barbara Lee (D-CA), Robin Kelly (D-IL), and Karen Bass (D-CA) reintroduced the Equitable Data Collection and Disclosure on COVID-19 Act. The legislation would require HHS to collect and report racial and other demographic data on COVID-19 testing, treatment, vaccination, and fatality rates and use all available surveillance systems to post daily updates on the CDC website showing data disaggregated by race, ethnicity, sex, age, socioeconomic status, disability status, county, and other demographic information.
- Sen. Chris Murphy (D-CT) led seven of his Democratic colleagues in a letter to Leaders Chuck Schumer (D-NY) and Mitch McConnell (R-KY) to include targeted funding for the behavioral health needs of our nation’s children.
through the expansion of the Pediatric Mental Health Care Access (PMHCA) program in the next COVID-19 relief package.

**Administration**

**NATIONAL INSTITUTES OF HEALTH**

- NIH has launched a new research effort called the Collaboration to Assess Risk and Identify Long-term Outcomes for Children with COVID (CARING for Children with COVID). This research program seeks to understand how COVID-19 affects children, who account for about 13% of the total U.S. cases. This research program is developing and funding studies to investigate why some children are at greater risk for COVID-19 infection than others, why symptoms vary among children who are infected, and how to identify children at risk for severe illness from COVID-19 infection.
- NIH Director Dr. Francis Collins penned a blog post titled, “Antibody Response Affects COVID-19 Outcomes in Kids and Adults.”

**Articles of Interest**

- 3/1 ABC News published an article titled, “‘Please hear me clearly': CDC director urges states not to reopen too soon as cases plateau.”
- 3/2 The Hill published an article titled, “Merck to help make Johnson & Johnson vaccine.”