



FROM:	Bose Public Affairs Group
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RE:	Weekly COVID-19 Update

BIG PICTURE

The number of confirmed coronavirus infections doubled since last week worldwide, with 550,000 confirmed cases of the virus. The highest death toll remains in Italy at more than 8,200 people. The case number in the United States has quintupled over the past week from 14,000 confirmed cases last Friday to 86,000 cases today, overtaking China as the most confirmed cases of the virus in the world. There are 1300 deaths in the United States due to COVID-19. In order to limit the spread, state and city leaders around the country have enacted sweeping “stay at home” measures impacting at least 212 million people in 22 states.

[List of federal agency guidance and resources in response to COVID-19](#)

[Institutional and Agency Guidance Specific to Federal Award Impact on COVID-19](#)

[COVID-19 School Closure Map](#)

ADMINISTRATION

White House Planning Guidance to Classify Locality Risk as Consideration for Easing Social Distancing Measures

On Thursday, President Donald Trump touted a new initiative the administration is planning around guidance for categorizing counties by risk to encourage state and local officials to begin considering measures for limiting or strengthening social distancing measures. In a letter to governors, the President stated, “This new information will drive the next phase in our war against this invisible enemy. As we enhance protections against the virus, Americans across the country are hoping the day will soon arrive when they can resume their normal economic, social and religious lives.”



Administration Faces Criticism for Withholding Use of Defense Production Act

With medical supply shortages becoming increasingly apparent as hospitals and localities attempt to treat a surging amount of coronavirus patients, the White House faces renewed criticism for not implementing the Defense Production Act to mobilize the federal government's resources to support emergency manufacturing and transfer of critical medical supplies such as personal protection equipment, ventilators, and facilities equipped to treat patients of COVID-19. Citing a grave threat to national security, more than 100 former national security officials [called on the](#) President to invoke the Defense Production Act to ensure critical medical supplies are available as cases surge in the United States.

Education Secretary Betsy DeVos Announces Directive to Halt Wage Garnishment and Collective Action for Student Borrowers

On Wednesday, March 25, Education Secretary Betsy DeVos announced that the Department will halt collection actions and wage garnishments for borrowers of federal student loans. "These are difficult times for many Americans, and we don't want to do anything that will make it harder for them to make ends meet or create additional stress," said Secretary DeVos. "Americans counting on their tax refund or Social Security check to make ends meet during this national emergency should receive those funds, and our actions today will make sure they do," DeVos said [in a statement](#). The Secretary also directed the Department to refund approximately \$1.8 billion to borrowers in treasury offsets, a move that is expected to benefit more than 830,000 borrowers in default who would have had their tax returns, social security benefits, or other federal benefits withheld by the Treasury Department as a penalty for defaulting on their loans.

Federal Bureau of Investigation Publishes Recommendations to Combat Child Abuse During COVID-19

On Monday, the Federal Bureau of Investigation [warned](#) of increase risk for child abuse and exploitation as a result of school closures from COVID-19. "During these uncertain conditions, where time with other adults and caregivers has increased immensely, parents/guardians should communicate with their children about appropriate contact with adults and watch for any changes in behavior, including an increase in nightmares, withdrawn behavior, angry outbursts, anxiety, depression, not wanting to be left alone with an individual, and sexual knowledge." The Bureau also includes recommendations for parents and guardians on how to inform children of these risks and signs to look out for if an act of exploitation or abuse has occurred.



Federal Communications Commission Issues Guidance Clarifying Community Use of E-Rate Supported WiFi Networks is Permitted

On Monday, the Federal Communications Commission [issued guidance](#) reminding schools and libraries that are closed due to the coronavirus COVID-19 outbreak that they are permitted to allow the general public to use E-Rate-supported Wi-Fi networks while on the school's campus or library property.

President Donald J. Trump Outlines Federal Support for Governors' Use of the National Guard to Respond to COVID-19

Sunday, March 22, President Donald J. Trump announced federal actions to ensure that the National Guard can effectively respond to the COVID-19 crisis. President Trump issued a memorandum providing for 100 percent federal funding through FEMA for the cost of Governors deploying National Guard units in their States to carry out approved missions. Governors remain fully in command of their National Guard units. The Presidential Memorandum can be found [here](#).

CONGRESS

Phase 3 Relief Package

Congress this week considered and passed the *Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act*, a \$2 trillion rescue package aimed at providing relief to individuals and distressed sectors of the economy as COVID-19 inflicts significant damage to the global economy. The package passed the Senate after intense negotiations late Wednesday night and passed the House this afternoon. President Trump signed the law quickly after House passage.

Overview of the package:

- Direct financial assistance to Americans through checks and direct deposit to households.. This will amount to \$1,200 to American adults making up to \$75,000 and provides \$500 for each child. Individuals making over \$99,000 will not be eligible for the benefit.
- Extended unemployment insurance program for laid-off workers that will allow for four months of "full pay." It will also raise the maximum unemployment insurance benefit by \$600 per week. It will apply to traditional workers for small and large businesses as well as those who are self-employed and workers in the gig economy.
- More than \$30 billion in emergency education funding for colleges and universities, states and school districts.
- More than \$150 billion for the health care system, including funding for hospitals, research, treatment and the Strategic National Stockpile to raise supplies of ventilators, masks and other equipment. Of that, \$100 billion will go to hospitals and the health system and \$1 billion to the Indian Health Service.



- \$150 billion for state and local governments to address spending shortages related to the coronavirus pandemic.
- Small business loans (\$350 billion) for small businesses impacted by the pandemic; some of those loans can be forgiven.

Phase 4 Package

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-CA) has already expressed the need for a fourth package to provide worker protections, additional paid leave, food stamps, relief for postal workers, additional relief for schools, additional state grants, and funding for more medical equipment needed to combat the virus. On the flip side, Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-KY) suggested that the Senate will “stay nimble” on if/when additional legislative action is needed. Following passage of the phase three package,

Both chambers of Congress have now recessed until April 20th.

BUSINESS AND INDUSTRY

The stock market experienced an up and down week as investors monitored developments in Washington. After the stock market's worst week since 2008, the markets then experienced its best week with the Dow Jones gaining nearly 3,000 points, the S&P 500 nearly 275 points, and NASDAQ gaining more than 700 points.

On Thursday, a meeting of the Financial Oversight Council was held to discuss responses to coronavirus. Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin indicated that financial markets will remain open despite the COVID-19 impacts though there could be measures to limit trading hours should the markets slide significantly enough to need it.

On Thursday, the Federal Reserve announced a joint statement from five federal financial regulatory agencies encouraging banks, savings associations and credit unions to offer responsible small-dollar loans to consumers and small businesses in response to COVID-19.

HEALTH CARE

Eli Lilly is among several notable drug makers announcing they will hold off on most new trials for clinical drugs that study treatments not coronavirus related. Industry leaders have also noted that patients have stopped participating in trials, scientists can't support trial efforts due to travel restrictions, and hospitals are shifting their focus to managing coronavirus patients, further hindering the clinical trial process.



CONCLUSION

The Bose Public Affairs Group team will continue to monitor all relevant developments over the weekend and will be providing ongoing updates as they develop.

