

COVID-19

# NEWS UPDATES 05/15/20

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## House to vote on massive new coronavirus relief bill

Source: CBS News | Publication: 5/15/20, 1:44 PM

The House is expected to vote on a massive coronavirus relief bill on Friday, although the \$3 trillion legislation is unlikely to gain any traction in the Republican-controlled Senate. "We are presenting a plan to do what is necessary to address the corona crisis," House Speaker Nancy Pelosi said at the Capitol when she announced [the legislation](#) on Wednesday. She said the bill's priorities were "opening our economy safely and soon, honoring our heroes, and then putting much needed money in the pockets of Americans." The House vote comes as the unemployment rate is rising to levels unseen since the Great Depression, with [millions of Americans](#) out of work or furloughed. *Continue reading [here](#).*

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## Trump announces public-private partnership to develop coronavirus vaccine 'by the end of the year if we can'

Source: Fox News | Publication: 5/15/20, 2:15 PM

[President Trump](#) on Friday announced a new public-private partnership to develop a vaccine for the [novel coronavirus](#) as part of what's being called "Operation Warp Speed," saying he hopes it will be produced "quickly" and will possibly be ready by the end of the year. "This is an endeavor unlike anything our country has seen since the Manhattan Project... No one has seen anything like we're doing now within our country since the second world war. Incredible," Trump said in introducing "Operation Warp Speed." The event took place at the White House in the Rose Garden. The president was joined by his chief of staff Mark Meadows, senior advisor Jared Kushner, coronavirus task force coordinator Dr. Deborah Birx and Dr. Anthony Fauci--both of whom wore face masks during the event. "That means big and it means fast," Trump said of the efforts. "It's objective is to finish developing and then to manufacture and distribute a proven coronavirus vaccine... prior to the end of the year. I think we're going to have some very good results coming out very quickly." *Continue reading [here](#).*

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## Bipartisan bill aims to help smallest businesses weather the coronavirus crisis

Source: The Hill | Publication: 5/15/20, 12:06 PM

As the nation's smallest businesses struggle to survive the coronavirus crisis, a bipartisan group of lawmakers wants to throw them a special lifeline. The lawmakers, led by Rep. Dan Kildee (D-Mich.), will introduce legislation Friday providing \$50 billion to the smallest small businesses nationwide, which have strained to compete with larger firms for emergency aid through existing federal programs. While Congress has already allocated more than \$650 billion for the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP), which is designed to provide easy-access loans to the hardest hit businesses, the smallest shops in the country have had trouble participating amid the mad rush to access the benefits. The new legislation aims to plug those gaps, adopting a new distribution chain and tighter eligibility guidelines targeting only the smallest businesses — places like coffee houses, bars and barber shops that "are kind of like the fabric of a community," Kildee said, "but don't ever get to the front of the line no matter how quickly that line is moving."

"It's businesses that are outside the traditional banking sector and don't have traditional banking relationships," Kildee said Thursday by phone. "What we're seeing is that the PPP program just doesn't necessarily get to that cohort of the very small businesses." The bill has attracted support from across the aisle: Republican Reps. Fred Upton (Mich.) and Brian Fitzpatrick (Pa.) are both on board, as is Rep. Dwight Evans (D-Pa.). A Senate companion bill, sponsored by Sens. Steve Daines (R-Mont.) and Cory Booker (D-N.J.), is also on deck. *Continue reading [here](#).*

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## **FDA cautions about accuracy of widely used Abbott coronavirus test**

Source: NPR | Publication: 5/14/20, 11:16 PM

The Food and Drug Administration is cautioning the public about the reliability of a widely used rapid test for the coronavirus. The test, made by Abbott Laboratories, has been linked with inaccurate results that could falsely reassure patients that they are not infected with the virus. The Trump administration has promoted the test as a key factor in controlling the epidemic in the U.S., and it's used for daily testing at the White House. As [first reported on NPR](#), as many as 15 to 20 out of every 100 tests may produce falsely negative results. A study released this week indicated that the test could be missing as many as 48% of infections. The FDA issued the alert on the Abbott test "in the spirit of transparency." In a press release, the agency said it's investigating whether the false-negative results could be connected to the type of swab used in the test or the material the samples are stored in for transport. It also cautions that "any negative test results that are not consistent with a patient's clinical signs and symptoms or necessary for patient management should be confirmed with another test." *Continue reading [here](#).*

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## **Trump pushes schools to reopen. DeVos says some classes may remain online.**

Source: Politico | Publication: 5/15/20, 12:20 PM

President Donald Trump expects a full reopening of schools come fall. Education Secretary Betsy DeVos isn't so sure. "I don't consider our country coming back if the schools are closed," Trump said this week. And "there's no question" American education should be "fully operational" by the fall, a DeVos spokesperson said. But DeVos adds a caveat Trump doesn't much like — a lot of school systems will have to stick with virtual schooling if they aren't ready for a full reopening. "Students may very well be returning to a learning environment that's a mix of in-person, online and experiential," DeVos spokesperson Angela Morabito added.

Trump's path to reelection is closely tied to an economic recovery, which is inextricably linked to reopening schools so working parents can send their kids off after months of wrestling with at-home classes using packets of papers or limited virtual lessons and patchy technology. School leaders and parent groups say they don't have clear guidance, money or means to throw open schoolhouse doors — while ensuring the safety of children crowded together on buses and in lunchrooms and the adults who supervise them. They want politicians to listen to medical experts. The slight differences between Trump and his education chief reflect a much more vociferous fight at the local level, as governors and county school boards across the country debate with education activists and parents over how schools will be able to pack children back into a classroom setting. Even on their best days, classrooms filled with children are a germaphobe's worst nightmare. Now, the kids could become potential vectors for a deadly virus. *Continue reading [here](#).*

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## **Federal Press Releases**

**Department of Health and Human Services (5/14, 5/15):** Trump administration announces framework and leadership for 'Operation Warp Speed' [here](#). Secretary Azar statement on National Hospital Week [here](#). FDA informs public about possible accuracy concerns with Abbott ID NOW point-of-care test [here](#).

**Department of Agriculture (5/15):** USDA extends flexibilities, paves the way for meals for kids to continue through summer [here](#).

**Department of Justice (5/14, 5/15):** Department of Justice supports National Pork Producers Council's ability to combat meat shortages [here](#).

**Department of Veterans Affairs (5/15):** VA, multiple agencies launch Joint Mortgage and Housing Assistance website for Americans impacted by COVID-19 [here](#). VA launches clinical trial for Veterans with COVID-19 based on prostate cancer drug [here](#).

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## **General Resources**

[Bose McKinney & Evans: COVID-19 Legal and Legislative Resources](#)