

Dear Friends,

I spoke with a reporter today who wanted to know how rural schools were coping and the special challenges they face during this crisis. I told him that all of the challenges being experienced by our schools have been exacerbated by the crisis, such as the lack of fund balance with which to address unusual costs, the comparative lack of health care within our communities, the lack of broadband access that limits educational options, the geographic isolation of our students (that makes feeding our impoverished students all the more difficult) and others. Then I told him that despite all of these issues, I expected our rural schools to do what they do: lead within their communities. **I said that while times are tough, we are tougher and that this may well be our finest hour.** I know that you will do all you can to help your students, staff and community through this. May God bless you in your work.



Here, the legislature is attempting to adjust; voting in groups of 30, holding committee work in huge hearing rooms and only gathering to consider groups of agreed upon legislation. We continue to advocate during this time, although the Capitol is closed to us.

The crisis is beginning to make its extent known...Kansas has closed school for the remainder of the year. California has called off all extracurricular activities for the year as well and is on the verge of calling off classes. The governor has said that our in-patient peak for care will be in 45 days. It's hard to imagine holding school until that peak has passed, though as you know events are constantly developing and predictions are more harmful than helpful.

Below, I am providing a description of what is happening at the national level, where the economic consequences are only now being fully realized. Here at home, the state comptroller has estimated the loss of revenue at between \$4-7 billion. Some businesses have already folded up shop. In rural New York we know all too well what that looks like, as hourly workers are displaced and businesses attempt to hold on until customers return.

When you get the chance to come up for air, could you please send me some of your worst challenges and some of your best efforts to meet them? I need to know how you're doing in order to help. Secondly, **know that RSA is fully staffed, set up to work from home and ready to help you if you need us.** We aren't the biggest shop around, but we'll do everything within our power to get you what you need from us.

As I become aware of the kinds of things you're doing for kids I want you to know, both professionally and personally, I'm damn proud of you, proud to represent you and to help you in those heroic efforts.



Here is the latest update from Washington:

- **OVERVIEW** The number of confirmed coronavirus infections crossed 200,000, more than doubling in two weeks. Deaths globally also more than doubled over the past two weeks to over 8,000. The U.S. has 6,496 confirmed cases and 114 deaths.
- **ADMINISTRATION** The Trump administration is seeking \$1 trillion in new economic relief as lawmakers work on the “Phase 3” of coronavirus relief efforts, which includes payments to small businesses, loan guarantees for industries like airlines and hotels, and a stimulus package for workers. Senate Majority Whip John Thune (R-SD) said Tuesday there is a “high level of interest” among Republicans for a Trump administration proposal to send as many as two \$1,000 checks directly to individual Americans to help respond to the economic slowdown.
- **Overnight**, the White House sent lawmakers a \$46 billion emergency funding request to expand medical care for military service members and veterans, fund vaccine and drug development, build 13 quarantine centers at the southern border for migrants, make federal buildings safer, and reimburse Amtrak for \$500 million in losses. The request also reverses budget cuts to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and National Institutes of Health (NIH) that was proposed for FY2021 and would create a \$3 billion fund for unanticipated needs.
- **The Department of Defense (DoD)** said it will provide 5 million N95 respirator masks and other personal protective equipment from its strategic reserves to the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). Defense Secretary Mark Esper also said the Pentagon would open up as many as 16 labs to test civilians for the virus and potentially call up more members of the National Guard and Reserve. The announcement came after President Donald Trump told reporters that the administration was considering invoking **the Defense Production Act to increase the supply of protective equipment.**
- **CONGRESS** The Senate will consider H.R. 6201, the House-passed coronavirus emergency package negotiated between Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin and House Speaker Nancy Pelosi. Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-KY) said the Senate will work at “warp speed” to craft “Phase 3” of the economic stimulus package, reassuring that senators “will not leave” Washington until it's done.

Stay strong, my friends!

Dave