

U.S. House of Representatives approves \$483 billion in additional relief funding



Washington, April 24 (RHC)-- On Capitol Hill, House lawmakers voted overwhelmingly Thursday to approve another \$483 billion in emergency relief. Most of the money will replenish the Paycheck Protection Program, set up to provide forgivable loans to small businesses.

New York Congressmember Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez blasted Republicans for refusing to take up new assistance to hard-hit U.S. residents — like cash payments and food aid — in the latest relief bill. And she pointed to big businesses like corporate chain restaurants that got tens of millions of dollars in loans meant for small businesses.

Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez said: “The only folks that they have urgency around are folks like Ruth’s Chris Steak House and Shake Shack. Those are the people getting assistance in this bill. You are not trying to fix this bill for mom-and-pops. And we have to fight to fund hospitals, fighting to fund testing. That is what we’re fighting for in this bill. It is unconscionable. If you had urgency, you would legislate like rent was due on May 1st and make sure that we include rent and mortgage relief for our constituents.”

Most lawmakers, including House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, wore masks throughout Thursday's historic proceedings, except when delivering speeches from the House floor.

Pointedly, a group of at least a dozen House Republicans refused to cover their faces, over the objections of their colleagues and the medical advice of the House physician.

At least 34 members of Congress have tested positive for COVID-19, which has touched the families and friends of people across Capitol Hill. California Democratic Congressman Maxine Waters said: "I'm going to take a moment to dedicate this legislation to my dear sister, who is dying in a hospital in St. Louis, Missouri, right now, infected by the coronavirus."

Massachusetts senator and former presidential candidate Elizabeth Warren said Thursday her oldest brother died in an Oklahoma hospital this week, three weeks after he tested positive for the coronavirus. Donald Reed Herring was 86 years old. Senator Warren tweeted: "It's hard to know that there was no family to hold his hand or to say 'I love you' one more time — and no funeral for those of us who loved him to hold each other close."

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