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The economic solutions for this coronavirus crisis are available

By: Tim Delaney

Extreme politics is literally killing Americans and our economy. More than 187,000 people are dead, over 31 million workers are unemployed, almost 30 million citizens do not have enough to eat last week, and 27 percent of adults missed their rent or mortgage payment this summer. Yet posturing by both parties has gone from shouting to not even negotiating while our families and friends struggle. The [charitable nonprofits](#) in the country are doing all we can to serve our communities, but we simply cannot sustain with mounting needs while we also fight to survive in this crisis.

Our more than 12 million workers at nonprofits, the third largest sector in the country, are highly engaged in finding solutions for our communities. We pay attention to what happens to the people and places we serve. We have watched many elected officials use the partisan prism designed for posturing and pointing fingers. They are hurting our country. Lawmakers must set aside partisan politics and instead use common sense.

Solutions are obvious if we focus on how much to spend, how to support our communities, how to bolster local governments, and how to address issues around liability protections. House Democrats offered the opening bid of the negotiations in

the spring with the Heroes Act and \$3 trillion in funds. Senate Republicans countered for the summer with the Heals Act and \$1 trillion in funds. We are almost to the fall without a deal.

Our country cannot escape this crisis with chants of less money or more money. Congress has to enact funds in the amount needed to control the deadly disease and provide economic relief. The numbers give a sense of the scope needed by some. States have to receive around \$500 billion to pay for immediate costs and avoid drastic spending cuts and difficult tax hikes. Counties estimate budget gaps of more than \$200 billion as cities project revenue losses of over \$250 billion through next year.

Sufficient funds for local governments is critical because they often hire nonprofits to deliver services to citizens. Nonprofits suffered over recent recessions as governments tried to balance their budgets by not paying nonprofits for work performed. Some governments even tried to impose taxes on nonprofits. When states and cities lay off their own workers, the demands for services from nonprofits increase. So if Washington will not assist local governments to stay solvent for dire times, financial burdens shift to nonprofits, forcing sacrifices on the people they serve.

With even more Americans relying on services, nonprofits urgently need support. The forgivable relief loans helped us stay open, but those funds are now exhausted. The Cares Act denied federal relief to nonprofits with over 500 workers. Nonprofits that insure themselves over unemployment need further relief to avoid laying off more workers to pay unemployment bills. Fewer people are also donating in the downturn. Several lawmakers agree that solutions exist, but Congress has to take action now.

There are partisan divisions about coronavirus litigation. Republicans want to prevent lawsuits against firms by individuals who claim they contracted the disease at a specific business. Democrats want to have intact the legal rights for people to sue those who might have hurt them. Of course, those are overstatements, but rarely is a nuance heard for the debate.

If the two sides could lower their voices and listen to each other, or better yet listen to their constituents, they would hear that they both are correct. Nonprofits, companies, and governments must have protection from any frivolous lawsuits.

Clients, workers, and customers must have recourse if entities ignore the standards to protect against the coronavirus.

These are not competing positions. The solutions involve articulating the consistent standards for the behaviors we want from each other to battle this dreadful disease. Our federal officials must take swift action for lives are literally at stake. Solutions that both sides can live with are not out of reach. Every day they fail to take action worsens the destruction.

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