

U.S. SENATOR BEN CARDIN



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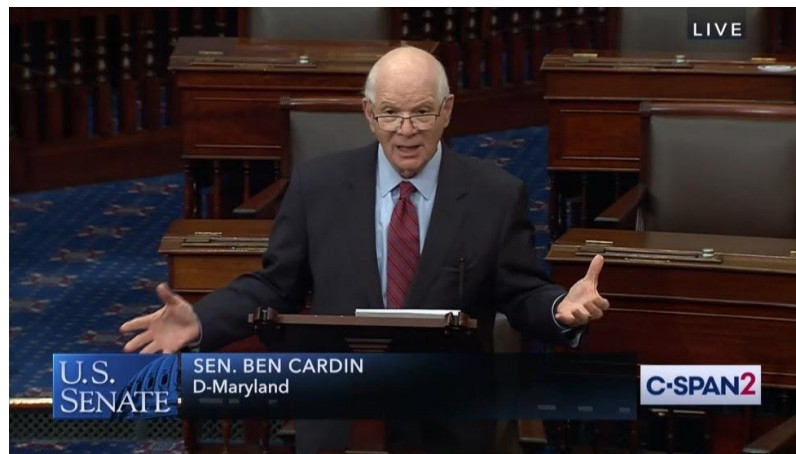
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Dear Fellow Marylander,

This was one of the most frustrating weeks I have experienced since you elected me to represent you in the U.S. Senate. Instead of doing what's best for the American people, the Republican Leader staged a series of show votes to give cover for not acting on another comprehensive COVID-19 relief bill. Worse, Senator McConnell reportedly has urged the White House not to strike a deal on a stimulus package with House leadership.



Click [here](#) to watch my speech on the Senate floor.
(10/20/2020)

We are now in the seventh month of the pandemic. New infections are going up. Not down. According to the CDC, when the CARES Act was signed into law on March 27, the 7-day moving average of new cases was

under 18,000. On October 19, the weekly average was more than 60,000. The American people need more help, not less.

When we found ourselves in this position in March, the Senate came together on behalf of the American people instead of retreating to our respective corners. The Republican and Democratic leaders in the Senate created bipartisan task forces to negotiate the CARES Act. I was proud to sit on the small business task force with Senators Jeanne Shaheen, Marco Rubio, and Susan Collins. Together, we created the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP), the Economic Injury Disaster Loan Advance Grants Program (EIDL), and the Small Business Administration (SBA) Debt Relief Program. Most importantly, the bill was comprehensive and addressed the many ways the pandemic disrupted our way of life.

If Congress is serious about helping small businesses again, we must support them by supporting entire communities again.

Congress must support state and local governments. Why? Because the stability of the services provided by state and local government is critically important for the business ecosystems in which small businesses operate. They need those services operating to get back to any degree of normalcy.

Congress must support our schools as they attempt to reopen safely, whether it's virtual, in-class, or hybrid. Our economy will not get back on track unless parents are confident about the educational opportunities of their children and can fully participate in the economy, knowing their children are safe.

Congress also must support the more than 12 million Americans who remain unemployed. The \$600 in supplemental weekly Unemployment Insurance went directly to the customers who shop at small businesses.

Most importantly, Congress must help states get COVID-19 under control. Small businesses will continue to struggle until the American people are confident it is safe to go out, shop, and use services. Until Americans are confident they can do that safely, our economy will not rebound the way we need it to.

The House first passed the comprehensive HEROES Act in May, then it passed an updated version of the bill, HEROES 2.0, on October 1. When my colleagues and I tried to bring up for a vote the HEROES 2.0 this week, we were blocked.

The HEROES 2.0 package meets the scale of the need in our country. The bill includes critical relief for the unemployed; for addressing the pandemic and investing in a national testing, tracing, and treatment strategy; for education and child care; for our state and local governments; for airlines;

and for other important investments necessary to get the pandemic under control.

In addition to investing in our communities, the bill makes important investments in small businesses, many of which exhausted their eight weeks of PPP funding months ago. The HEROES 2.0 legislation directly addresses the specific issues faced by our most vulnerable industries, including restaurants, concert venues, theaters and local newspapers, and provides a second round of PPP for our most valuable small businesses. Additionally, the bill reflects that many small businesses are uncertain of their future — therefore reluctant to take out new debt, even in the form of a forgivable loan like PPP — so the bill provides support in the form of grants that do not have to be repaid, and they are targeted to the most vulnerable small businesses.

Please click [here](#) to read more about the bill.

For the sake of our families, communities, and small businesses, I am once again calling on my Republican colleagues to put the interests of the American people first and negotiate a comprehensive COVID-19 relief bill that will keep our communities safe, get Americans back to work, and save small businesses.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Ben".

Ben Cardin

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