

Floor Speech – National Emergency Declaration Termination

Mr. President – I rise today in support of S.J. Res. 63, a Resolution to terminate the COVID-19 national emergency declaration. It has now been more than two and a half long years since The first issued Proclamation declaring the “National Emergency Concerning the Novel Coronavirus Disease Outbreak” and it has been extended twice already by President Biden since the initial declaration, most recently in February of this year.

It is with this national emergency declaration, in tandem with other additional emergency powers currently invoked by the President, which this administration is manipulating to supersize government powers. And now it’s obvious they need these powers to continue their spending spree, to enact their radical partisan agenda, and grow government dependency through further expansion of the welfare state.

Today marks the third time many of us have come to the Floor to terminate this emergency declaration. In March, We brought an identical Resolution to the Floor under the expedited procedures contained in the National Emergency Act that passed this body by a vote of 48-47. That’s right, this body passed this same resolution 8 months ago. Since then, even more evidence shows the emergency phase of this pandemic has come and gone.

The number of new patients admitted to hospitals with confirmed cases of COVID-19 remains near lows since the start of the pandemic, and the same is true of emergency department visits. Let me point out the percent of individuals diagnosed with COVID-19 visiting emergency rooms represents less than 2 percent of visits nationwide.

And just last week the World Health Organization announced COVID related deaths have dropped 90 percent globally compared to February of this year, shortly before our March vote this Senate took to terminate this

national emergency declaration. Again, this body passed this same resolution 8 months ago, and the clinical situation has only improved!

Listen, the decrease in cases, hospitalizations, and deaths can be contributed to the fact that an estimated 95 percent of Americans ages 16 and older have developed identifiable COVID antibodies, and that's according to the CDC. This includes individuals who have gained immunity through natural infection as well as those who have received the vaccine. More than 646 million doses have been administered and 227 million Americans are fully vaccinated, nearly 70% of the population.

Vaccines are so widely available for those that wish to receive inoculation that millions of doses are going unused. Between December 2020 and mid-May 2022, the U.S. wasted 82 million doses. Additionally, we have a growing roster of antiviral drugs, monoclonal antibodies and treatment protocols that are helping vulnerable populations avoid life threatening complications.

Don't take it from me. Take it from President Biden. Just 2 months ago, the President stated the coronavirus pandemic was "over" in a 60 Minutes interview. That's right. 2 months ago, the same person who wants to continue to use the emergency said it was over. And no, I can't make sense of it.

Yet despite all the advances we've made in our fight against the virus and the victorious declaration by our Chief Executive, this administration insists the national emergency declaration remain in place.

And to add insult to our intellect, just last week the White House failed to alert states of any intent to lift the public health emergency, another emergency power being used to greatly expand government power over Americans lives and validate their continued expansion of government spending and programs.

Everyone should remember, it was this government imposed state of emergency that justified their continued lockdowns of small businesses and schools.

It was this government imposed state of emergency that justified their mask and vaccine mandates, including a military vaccine mandate that has resulted in the removal of more than 8,000 active-duty troops since Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin issued the requirement in August 2021.

And today, our businesses and children suffer the consequences. Too many businesses are now shuttered, and our youth struggle with low academic performance and stunning record numbers of mental health issues.

And lest we forget, it was this government imposed state of emergency that justified President Biden and Congressional Democrats spending binge, increasing the total amount of government spending by more than \$9 trillion since February 2021 and lighting the fire for record inflation.

And most recently, it was the national emergency declaration that the President has used as justification to extend the payment pause and cancel up to \$10,000 in outstanding federally held student loan balances, and even a more generous \$20,000 for Pell Grant recipients.

Thankfully a federal judge in Texas ruled last week that the loan forgiveness plan was unlawful and must be vacated, stating that the program was “one of the largest exercises of legislative power without congressional authority in the history of the United States.”

Let me say those words again. This was not me, not a politician, not a conservative blog, this came from a federal judge. Listen again to what he

said. This is “one of the largest exercises of legislative power without congressional authority in the history of the United States.”

So while the law being cited by the President does not authorize him to grant the unfair relief that would have cost the federal government and taxpayers more than \$400 billion, his actions show this White House is willing and able to use the emergency declaration to advance as many of their inflationary give always as possible.

Folks, where and when does this power grab stop?

Congress must take the responsible action of reigning in this massive expansion of government and restore Americans fundamental rights by terminating the COVID-19 national emergency declaration. As for the elements of the pandemic response that are working and needed, let’s codify them into law; let’s work with the White House and exercise our Article 1 powers and do so through the legislative process.

I encourage all my colleagues to join me one again in supporting our Resolution to terminate the COVID-19 national emergency declaration.

Thank you Mr. President. I yield back.

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