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economic stimulus package — the largest ever — designed to pump money directly into Americans' pockets while also shoring up hospitals, businesses and state and local ...

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In an overwhelming bipartisan vote, the Senate on Wednesday passed a \$2-trillion economic stimulus package — the largest ever — designed to pump money directly

into Americans' pockets while also shoring up hospitals, businesses and state and

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A vote was initially delayed in part by concerns from Sen. Lindsey Graham (R-S.C.) and a handful of Republican senators that laid-off low-wage-earners in some states might be able to temporarily collect more from the expanded unemployment insurance in the bill than from their original salaries, creating a disincentive to work.

But Treasury Secretary Steven T. Mnuchin said most Americans would opt to keep their jobs, adding that the provision was needed to streamline the process of getting aid to workers nationwide.

"Our expectation is this bill passes tonight," said Mnuchin, who took part in five days of tense, marathon negotiations between congressional Democrats and Senate Republicans.

The sweeping package will [impact a broad swath of American society](#), with some elements potentially lasting longer than the health crisis.

Along with providing a one-time direct payout of up to \$1,200 for most American adults, the bill includes \$500 billion in loans to struggling businesses, \$377 billion in loans and grants for small businesses, \$150 billion for local, state and tribal governments struggling with a drop in revenue and \$130 billion for hospitals.

The package also blocks foreclosures and evictions during the crisis on properties where the federal government backs the mortgage; pauses federal student loan payments for six months and waives the interest; gives states millions of dollars to begin offering mail or early voting; and provides more than \$25 billion in new money for food assistance programs like SNAP.

The real test will be whether the House accepts the bill as it is, and can pass it with "unanimous consent," a procedure usually reserved for small, noncontroversial bills. If a single member comes to the House floor and objects, House Speaker Nancy Pelosi

(D-San Francisco) may have to recall House members to Washington for a vote that

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House Minority Leader Kevin McCarthy (R-Bakersfield) said Wednesday that he supports holding a voice vote, which would ensure House members don't have to return if they don't want to for health or safety reasons. But if some wanted to object in person, they could.

"I do not believe we should pass a \$2-trillion bill by unanimous consent," McCarthy said.

A voice vote is generally determined by which side is the loudest, as decided by the member presiding over the House at the time. The losing side often asks for a recorded vote, which would require Pelosi to recall House members from across the country.

Pelosi voiced willingness Wednesday to have a voice vote.

Several House Democrats were also unhappy with the bill, saying it helps business at the expense of people. Michigan Rep. Rashida Tlaib [tweeted that](#) she is angry the Senate bill doesn't help people whose water was shut off for lack of payment during the outbreak.

The one-time payments to Americans will be based on adjusted gross income reported in 2019 taxes — if they have been filed — or 2018 taxes, if they have not. The amount will decline gradually beginning with individuals who made \$75,000 or married couples filing jointly who made \$150,000. Individuals making \$99,000 or above or married couples making \$198,000 or more would receive no check. People would receive an additional \$500 per child.

Mnuchin said payments could arrive in three weeks for those who have direct deposit set up with the Internal Revenue Service, but could take several additional

weeks for printed checks. The IRS may also release the payments in the form of debit

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accused Democrats of dragging their feet and trying to squeeze more priorities into the bill while the crisis mounted.

“We should have passed this last Sunday. Time was wasted,” Sen. John Barrasso (R-Wyo.) said.

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.) said Wednesday he would leave it to others to determine whether Democrats' changes were worth the delay.

“The Senate is going to stand together, act together, and pass this historic relief package today,” McConnell said. “The Senate will act to help the people of this country weather this storm. This is not even a stimulus package. It is emergency relief.”

Democrats say they won many important changes that made the bill more beneficial to people hit hardest by the coronavirus crisis. “To improve this legislation was worth taking an extra day or two,” Senate Minority Leader Charles E. Schumer (D-N.Y.) said.

Included in the changes are:

- An expansion of who qualifies for unemployment insurance to include people who were furloughed, gig workers and freelancers. It included an increase in the unemployment payments by \$600 per week for four months on top of what states provide as a base unemployment compensation, and extended the benefit to 13 weeks for people already collecting unemployment insurance.
- An additional \$150 billion for hospitals, including \$100 billion in grants that can be used by nursing homes, hospitals, clinics and other healthcare providers scrambling for medical supplies such as face masks, gloves and ventilators.
- An inspector general to oversee \$500 billion in loans the Treasury Department will distribute to industries affected by the pandemic and a new five-person

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- for states to move to make votes by mail and early voting to become required states to participate and is more than double the \$140 million in the original bill.
- \$25 million for the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington, D.C., which is much closer to the \$35 million Democrats asked for than the \$1 million in the original Republican proposal.

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