Message

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Subject: National Coronavirus Recovery Commission Launches to 'Save Lives and Livelihoods'

PRESS RELEASE:

National Coronavirus Recovery Commission Launches to 'Save Lives and Livelihoods'

April 6, 2020

WASHINGTON—The Heritage Foundation announced today the formation of the National Coronavirus Recovery Commission, which will examine the extraordinary public health crisis facing America and the steps needed to move prudently toward recovery.

The commission will be led by Heritage Foundation President Kay C. James and includes top experts and thinkers from government, public health, disaster response and relief, academia and education, business, and the faith community. The list of commissioners is below and available at CoronavirusCommission.com.

The experts on the commission will bring their specialized experience and expertise to chart out the path to best navigate our nation through this crisis to determine when and how to begin to get Americans' lives "back to normal" again. The commission's work will consider two primary categories—crisis mitigation as well as recovery and restoration—and answer important questions that will serve as a roadmap to America's post-pandemic future.

"Good public health policy is good economic policy," said Heritage President Kay C. James. "Saving lives and saving livelihoods are part of the same road to recovery that we need to pursue today. A physically healthy America is an economically strong America, so we need to think of them in concert rather than as competing priorities."

Throughout her career, James has served on numerous boards and commissions. She also brings experience leading crisis management teams through trying times while serving as Virginia's secretary of Health and Human Resources and as the director of the U.S. Office of Personnel Management.

The National Coronavirus Recovery Commission will carefully examine decisions that policymakers are will make that significantly impact the scope of this crisis and the duration of social restrictions, economic hardship, recovery, and the potential permanent effects.

Two leading scholars and policy experts, Paul Winfree and Charmaine Yoest, will serve as the commission's executive directors.

Winfree directs Heritage's Roe Institute for Economic Policy Studies. He previously worked in the White House and Congress. His research focuses on public finance, health economics, economic history, and microeconomic modeling. Winfree is also chairman of the J. William Fulbright Foreign Scholarship Board. He has a master of science in economics and economic history from the London School of Economics and Political Science and a bachelor of science in economics from George Mason University.

Yoest is vice president of Heritage's Institute for Family, Community and Opportunity. Prior to joining Heritage, she directed intergovernmental, public affairs, and public liaison programs at Office of National Drug Control Policy, and also served as assistant secretary for public affairs at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. After receiving her bachelor's degree from Wheaton College, Yoest earned a masters and Ph.D. from the University of Virginia.

The commission's initial meeting is scheduled for April 9 with additional videoconferences through the month of April. At the conclusion of the commission's meetings, the reports from each discussion will be compiled into a final report for the American people and their policymakers.

"Americans are confronting one of the greatest challenges of their lifetime and they are seeking answers for how we navigate through this crisis and toward recovery," said Rob Bluey, spokesman for the commission. "This commission will gather ideas from experts and the general public for consideration. We welcome contributions from the American people to make sure all ideas are considered and the best recommendations are ultimately made to our leaders."

The commission will provide continual updates on the crisis response and recovery and publish its recommendations on its website. For more information, follow twitter.com/covid19recovery and facebook.com/coronavirus-commission.

For media inquiries, contact Gloria Taylor at press@coronaviruscommission.com.

Commissioners

Kay C. James, Chairman
President, The Heritage Foundation

George Allen
Former U.S. Senator and Governor, Commonwealth of Virginia

John A. Allison IV
Director, Moelis & Co.; Former CEO, BB Former President, Cato Institute

Lawrence J. Blanford
Former President & CEO, Green Mountain Roasters

Kevin P. Chavous
President of Academics, Policy, and Schools, K12 Inc.; Former D.C. Councilman

Edwin J. Feulner
Founder, The Heritage Foundation

Timothy E. Flanigan
Chief Legal Officer, Cancer Treatment Centers of America

Dr. Bill Frist
Former U.S. Senate Majority Leader; Founder, Hope Through Healing Hands

Noe Landini
Managing Director, Junction Bakery & Bistro

Rev. Samuel Rodriguez
President, National Hispanic Christian Leadership Conference

Nelson J. Sabatini
Chairman, Health Services Cost Review Commission, State of Maryland

Joni Eareckson Tada
Founder and CEO, Joni and Friends

Frances M. Townsend
Executive Vice President, MacAndrews and Forbes Holdings, LLC; Former White House Homeland Security Adviser

Dr. Richard J. Tubb
Retired Brigadier General; White House Physician Emeritus

J.C. Watts
Former Member of U.S. House of Representatives; Founder & Chairman, J.C. Watts Companies

Gail Wilensky
Economist and Senior Fellow, Project HOPE

Robert L. Woodson Jr.
Founder and President, The Woodson Center

For more on the Coronavirus by The Heritage Foundation:

Congress Should Focus on Pandemic Control and Fix the CARES Act for an Economic Rebound
Report by Romina Boccia, Lindsey Burke, Ph.D., David Burton, Rachel Greszler, Adam Michel, Norbert Michel, Jude Schwalbach, Parker Sheppard and Paul Winfree

A stimulus package designed to increase spending will have limited effect in the face of sweeping mitigation measures that have shut down most economic activity deemed nonessential. Nor will stimulus spending on unrelated projects reduce the spread of the novel coronavirus, which is the primary cause of economic contraction. Lawmakers must stay focused on containing the pandemic through targeted, timely, and temporary measures that keep workers attached to their employers and avert widespread business failures. These policies will enable the economy to rebound once the pandemic response allows for it. Congress should fix problems introduced in the hastily drafted CARES Act, not introduce poorly targeted stimulus measures that will confuse public communication, undermine pandemic mitigation, and distort an eventual economic rebound.

Why Economic Freedom Is Critical to Beating the Coronavirus Pandemic
Commentary by Kay Coles James, President of The Heritage Foundation

The debate in the United States over whether to move away from free markets and toward socialism may change dramatically as the latest coronavirus spreads throughout the world. That's because in the fight against the global pandemic, we'll likely witness one of the most compelling arguments in our lifetimes emerge in favor of free-market systems—and lives will be saved in the process.

Energy Bailouts and Handouts Don't Belong in Coronavirus Packages
Commentary by Nick Loris, Deputy Director, Thomas A. Roe Institute

Social distancing policies at the state and level have forced businesses to close temporarily, which has led millions of Americans to worry about their financial situation. Policymakers must offer focused, temporary solutions that specifically help people who are unable to work or whose businesses have been adversely affected by the closures. In true Washington fashion, though, Congress is pushing for policies unrelated to the economic and health concerns caused by the epidemic. The latest is that House leaders want to include climate regulations on the airline industry and expand subsidies for the wind and solar industries

Coronavirus Is No Reason for the Feds to Take Over the Election Process
Commentary by Hans von Spakovsky, Senior Legal Fellow, Edwin Meese Institute for Legal and Judicial Studies

The "Natural Disaster and Emergency Ballot Act of 2020" is aptly named because it could bring an electoral disaster in November. Since Democrats took over the House in 2018, they have been pushing bills to increase federal control of our elections. Now, amid the coronavirus crisis, they seem to think the time is ripe to take another stab at it.

A Public Health Crisis Is No Time for Private Pension Bailouts
Commentary by Rachel Greszler, Research Fellow in Economics, Grover M. Hermann Center

Now is the time to address the COVID-19 crisis, not throw money at decades-long problems. House Democrats' inclusion of a massive taxpayer bailout for a select group of multiemployer, or union pension plans in their most recent 1400-page pork-filled COVID-19 legislative package flies in the face of 60% of U.S. households that have suffered significant retirement account losses of their own with the stock market's roughly 25% COVID-19 tumble. A private pension bailout as a "solution" for the current situation is both ironic and disturbing.

If you have any questions or would like to schedule a meeting with one of our experts, please contact Scott Zipperle