
Weekly COVID-19 Oversight & Enforcement Report

August 20, 2020

A. Congress

1. House Select Subcommittee on the Coronavirus Crisis Chairman Jim Clyburn (D-SC) sent [letters](#) to HHS Secretary Alex Azar, Operation Warp Speed Chief Advisor Dr. Moncef Slaoui, and David S. Harris, President and CEO of Advanced Decision Vectors, seeking documents and information on potential conflicts of interest in the program, as well as the Administration's process to select vaccine candidates for investment.
2. House Select Subcommittee on the Coronavirus Crisis Chairman Jim Clyburn (D-SC) and House Administration Committee Chairwoman Zoe Lofgren (D-CA) sent [letters](#) to election officials in four states—[Florida](#), [Georgia](#), [Texas](#), and [Wisconsin](#)—requesting information on the states' plans to eliminate barriers faced by voters during this year's primaries and ensure free, fair, and safe federal elections this November. The letters seek details on how the states will follow guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommending "[l]ower risk election polling settings" so that every voter is able to safely cast their ballot.
3. The House Energy and Commerce Committee [sent](#) letters to nine of the nation's largest health and dental insurance companies seeking information on their COVID-19 policies amid the pandemic. In the letter, the committee cited "concerning" reports that certain health plans may be violating consumer protections in two coronavirus stimulus measures and that consumers are facing barriers to free virus testing, including billing complaints and lack of financial assistance to providers, despite record industry profits.
4. House Oversight and Reform Subcommittee on Economic and Consumer Policy Chairman Raja Krishnamoorthi (D-IL) sent [letters](#) Thursday to White House Advisor Peter Navarro and Philips North America CEO Vitor Rocha inviting them to testify at a hearing on ventilator contracts scheduled for September 16.
5. House Ways and Means Committee Chairman Richard E. Neal (D-MA), Senate Finance Committee Chairman Chuck Grassley (R-IA), and Ways and Means Committee Ranking Member Kevin Brady (R-TX) [sent](#) a letter to U.S. International Trade Commission Chairman Jason E. Keams requesting that the Commission conduct a follow-on investigation to provide more detailed information on industry sectors producing COVID-related goods and key products.
6. Fifteen members of the House Energy and Commerce Committee [sent](#) a letter FCC Chairman Ajit Pai urging him to provide unlimited voice minutes and mobile data to Lifeline recipients, with a corresponding increase in the support amount to cover incremental costs, for the duration of the COVID-19 pandemic.

7. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-CA) is [calling](#) the House back from August recess on Saturday to consider legislation related to the U.S. Postal Service.
8. A bipartisan group of lawmakers wants to create a \$25 billion fund to [help](#) states collectively buy COVID-19 tests, an effort Democratic supporters say is the best option amid a weak federal government response to the outbreak. Senators Bill Cassidy (R-LA) and Tina Smith (D-MN) are leading the push in the Senate for the next relief measure to encourage states to create interstate compacts for buying test supplies. The fund they proposed could be used by state leaders to obtain tests or set up regional virus tracking systems.
9. The Senate [departed](#) Washington for its August break last week, but members will have 24 hours' notice to return if a deal is reached on a stimulus package. Otherwise, the next scheduled return for legislative work is September 8.
10. Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee Ranking Member Gary Peters (D-MI) and Senator Joe Manchin (D-WV) [introduced](#) the *Protect Our Services Today (POST) Act* to prevent the U.S. Postal Service from closing any post office facilities during the COVID-19 pandemic.

B. Executive Agencies

1. Workers [making](#) whistleblower complaints to OSHA are likely to find cases are taking longer to resolve because of the high number of virus-related claims and a limited number of investigators, the DOL Office of Inspector General said in a report. The inspector general's report released Tuesday recommends that the Occupational Safety and Health Administration try handling the rush of complaints more efficiently by spreading the caseload evenly across the agency's 10 regions, speeding up the initial review of cases, and by filling five vacant investigator positions.
2. Oregon's [proposed](#) Covid-19 worker protection rule would require many employers to appoint a worker to monitor compliance, would mandate compliance with CDC guidance, and aim to extend health measures to employer-provided transportation. The Oregon Occupational Safety and Health Administration released the draft rule Monday and intends to enact the temporary regulation by Sept. 14, which could be permanent by March 1, 2021. Oregon follows Virginia as the second state to propose a workplace virus regulation enforced by its worker safety agency. Other states, such as Massachusetts, Michigan, Nevada, and Washington, are enforcing executive orders issued by governors. The federal OSHA hasn't pursued a temporary Covid-19 rule, with agency leadership saying existing regulations and laws are adequate.

C. State Attorneys General

No updates this week

D. Special Inspector General for Pandemic Recovery (SIGPR)

No updates this week

E. Pandemic Recovery Accountability Committee (PRAC)

No updates this week