

## COVID-19 Conference Call with Senator Mark Warner

### Call Notes:

- Dean Lynch provides welcome and introduction
- Senator Mark Warner
  - The next 10 days are going to be some of the most challenging we'll face in our professional and personal lives
    - Three things have converged
      - Enormous stress on constituents
        - Unemployment is skyrocketing
      - Federal initiative – actually a \$6.2 trillion plan
        - \$425 billion can actually leverage the federal reserve (10-1)
        - Largest stimulus that has ever taken place
        - What money is out there? Am I going to get it? How?
      - Over the next ten days, particularly here in Virginia, our numbers are going to go up dramatically (infected and mortality rates)
  - Stimulus Package
    - Checks going out – assume they'll be going out in the next three weeks
    - Small Business Initiative
      - Basically, it would provide up to 8 weeks of payroll and some level of overhead for businesses under 500 people
      - If that small business can remain viable and open again once this is over, this loan will convert to a grant
      - Trying to cut down on bureaucracy
    - State Stabilization Fund
      - \$3.3 billion going to Virginia
        - Governor will have a lot of flexibility
        - Fairfax County is the only locality to receive direct aid as they are the only locality with 500,000
    - There is the ability for the Treasury to go out and buy debt
      - This program will mostly go through the state
    - Unemployment Procedures
      - Going to cover all Virginians
        - Traditionally unemployment only covers approximately 30% of workforce – but this is going to cover everyone
      - Bumping up unemployment
        - Folks are going to receive \$600 on top of Virginia unemployment until July
        - Still working through how this will function
  - Q&A
    - People are flocking to rural Virginia, but rural localities are not prepared for this sudden influx of people – supply chain isn't there, medical facilities aren't ready for this many people. What do we do?

- Great question. Need to continue to ramp up our medical facilities and ensure that equipment/supplies are being sent to all localities and hospitals. We cannot leave localities to simply fend for themselves. We cannot leave rural localities to bid against massive urban localities.
  - There is not a state or federal mandate that can preclude people from traveling. So instead we can encourage people to stay home, and I'm going to do all I can to ensure we continue to ramp up production and distribution of critical supplies.
- Lack of coordination and information sharing between localities and military. Harming Hampton Roads area.
  - Excellent point. We will look into ways we can perhaps loosen our normal guidelines. Now is not a time for secrecy. Senator's office will dig into this.
- Families First Act requires 80 hours of sick leave if they meet the criteria . . . but local governments seems like they can't avail themselves of these tax breaks. Can we get some guidance on this?
  - Great point. Will fight to include this in future packages. Need to make sure everyone is covered, not just private businesses.
- Additional funds for local governments who don't have 500,000 people?
  - Worked really hard to include this, but didn't get it in the final version of the package. However, there is a host of other programs that local governments can go after. There are various stipulations that you'll have to meet, but there is money there that local governments could and should go after.
- With folks losing jobs and healthcare, what will be the alternative for health insurance? Does this act provide for insurance coverage? What about the Affordable Care Act?
  - No. Tremendously disappointed that the Administration would not reopen ACA for enrollment during this period. They say they're going to make Medicaid more flexible, but remains to be seen. Senator Warner does think the Administration will – or at least will find that they have to – revisit
  - Tax Retention Credit – if someone is laid off, it will give an incentive for the business to at least keep the person on benefits. Senator Warner fought to include this.
- Bond Market stabilization – any idea as to timing? When will this occur?
  - Treasury is working ferociously to get this stood up. This is far and away the biggest part of this package (and curiously it's not getting a lot of press). Realistically, this will not be ready to go until likely middle of next week.
  - Senator Warner needs to circle back with Aubrey Layne and Governor Northam to talk about this and ensure they really understand this provision as well as know what they need to do to get this process set up in the state.

- Support for Lost Local Revenue?
  - Nothing about this in the CARES act. Initially there wasn't even anything for local governments, so we worked really hard to include that.
  - Maybe in the next bill. Once we have greater clarity about local government revenue fall off, we'll have to address this.
- Local Governments are receiving lots of questions about deferment of various taxes, and they're going to be really pinched for funding in the future. Is there nothing in the CARES Act for Local Governments? Will they really have to fend for themselves?
  - When it comes to direct payments to local governments, no. Senator Warner and Democrats pushed hard for greater assistance – and direct assistance – for local governments but it died on party line.
  - However, there are other buckets of funds that local governments can go after
- Local school support?
  - \$10 billion for local school, but there are still questions about exactly how this money will be distributed.
- One of largest concerns is simply feeding people? Is there anything to assist local governments to help ensure people have enough to eat?
  - There are some pots for this, but they're lower than they should be.
  - Child Nutrition Program, SNAP, Shelter funds
  - Wanted to put more in but was rejected.
- Any new information on testing kits?
  - First, Senator Warner made it clear that he thinks there needs to be a serious investigation why the country was so incredibly unprepared for this. It's pitiful. A national embarrassment.
  - Senator Warner is working to get testing facilities rolled out in areas of high federal workforces (NOVA and HR)
  - Labs are putting out new tests, and they're going to be sent to hotspots for outbreaks
  - Hospitals are getting priority for testing
- Another question about concern that Department of Defense/military is not cooperating with sharing data and information. Same concern about info/data sharing from VA hospitals.
  - Senator Warner says that is going to be his first call right after this.
- HIPAA concerns. Health departments will not share where cases are in the county – local governments don't want to know who these people are, but they need to know where this is happening so first responders and medical folks are prepared.
  - This is an excellent point. Senator Warner will follow up on this and provide an update on his website and to VACo.
  - Stafford County has been having the same issue – luckily, now they finally have one point of contact who is being told name and location of infected individuals to ensure they can adequately plan and respond.

- Senator Warner will rattle the cages on this issue. It's absurd that local governments are not being made aware of these things.
- Final Thoughts and Comments
  - Senator Warner will continue to work to ensure that the federal government continues to loosen bureaucracy and red tape for these programs so that localities, businesses, etc. will be able to access them as efficiently and effectively as possible
    - Understands there are still lots of questions and lots of confusion – will continue to seek clarity and provide as many answers and as much information as possible
  - Once this is all behind us, Senator Warner will be fighting to investigate why we were so underprepared for this and will be working to ensure that this does not happen again
    - Will be eager to work with local government officials to craft a better preparation and response plan.
    - Asks VACo to serve as the point of contact and coordinator for this going forward a
  - Senator Warner encourages everyone to continue to forward questions, concerns, and ideas to VACo who will in turn maintain direct line with the Senators office.
  - Will continue to update his website with more information and answers to the questions asked on today's call.