

**U.S. Senator Maria Cantwell**  
**Committee Chairs Press Conference**  
**February 9, 2021**

Thank you, Tom [Carper]. Thank you Majority Leader Schumer for allowing us to be here to speak about these important priorities since last February when the first case of COVID-19 hit the state of Washington actually in Everett, Washington and then was followed by a nursing home outbreak.

We have had to focus on the needs of delivering people the type of support they need and to also think about the impacts on our economy. That really hasn't stopped since last February and this week is no different. We've had to focus last week on getting this budget resolution passed in obviously in an all-night session, only to get about four hours of sleep and start negotiating with our house colleagues.

It's imperative that we continue to focus on the resources to help our economy during this pandemic. We cannot just ignore the issues that average Americans are facing as they struggle to keep their kids educated and to keep their livelihood.

That is why the next focus of attention will be getting more money in the E-Rate program, because we have 12 million kids who still can't get access to broadband to have the education advantages that they deserve.

We have to continue to focus on our airline sector, which is basically about 5% of our GDP. We need to focus on aviation manufacturing, where we've lost already 100,000 workers, and the potential to lose another 200,000 workers. We can't afford that.

And we have to remain focused on Amtrak and Amtrak services, because there are communities already that are suffering economically because they no longer have service. Literally, we have to keep America moving. So, the Commerce Committee is going to continue to negotiate on these issues with all of our colleagues to move our economy forward.

We're going to continue to invest time and energy in the next package, as my colleague from EPW [Tom Carper] mentioned, there is so much to do on the next proposal as it relates to infrastructure and investments. But this last year has been nonstop. And there have been many things that have faced us as we have negotiated—sometimes losing track of day and time. But we continue to negotiate. And this week will be no different. Now I'd like to turn it over to my colleague, Senator Menendez.