

THE ECONOMIC CLUB

O F W A S H I N G T O N, D. C.

**Interview with Senator Mark Warner, José Andrés,
and Schroeder Stribling**

**The Honorable Mark R. Warner
Senator of the Commonwealth of Virginia**

**José Andrés
Founder, World Central Kitchen; Chef/Owner, ThinkFoodGroup**

**Schroeder Stribling
Chief Executive Officer, N Street Village**

**Moderator:
David M. Rubenstein
President, The Economic Club of Washington, D.C.**

**The Economic Club of Washington, D.C.
Friday, May 8, 2020**

ANNOUNCER: Please welcome David Rubenstein, president of The Economic Club of Washington, D.C.

DAVID M. RUBENSTEIN: Welcome, everyone, to our 10th virtual event since the corona crisis began. I am very pleased today to have three distinguished guests with us. First I'll be talking to Senator Mark Warner of the Commonwealth of Virginia. Then I'll be talking to José Andrés, who's the World Central Kitchen founder, and also chef and owner of ThinkFoodGroup. And then to Schroeder Stribling, who is the chief executive officer of N Street Village.

I'd like to recognize our sponsors. They're on the screen, as you probably can see, Bank of America, Larry Di Rita, is our title sponsor. Thank you Bank of America. And I'd like to thank as well our emerging leader sponsors, PwC Terri McClements, and Siemens USA Barbara Humpton. And next you'll see our corporate partners on the list on the screen.

On upcoming events, we have Mark Penn – Mark Penn, who is the managing partner of The Stagwell Group and chairman of The Harris Poll will do an executive conversation moderated by Brian Kelly on May the 13th at 10:00 a.m. And Brian Kelly, of course, is editorial director and executive vice president of U.S. News and World Report. Also a member of the board of The Economic Club of Washington. On Friday, May the 15th, next Friday at 10:00, we'll have three other guests. Two of them we can identify right now. One is Dr. Wayne Frederick, who is the president of Howard University, and the other will be Richard Ashworth, who is the president of Walgreens and chairman of the National Association of Chain Drug Stores. And we'll have a third guest that we'll identify in a couple days, and you'll get the notice on it. On May the 19th at 5:30 we're going to have a video that honors that 53 winners of The Economic Club Scholarship Program this year. And I hope you'll have a chance to watch that.

I just would like to thank again all the frontline health care professionals, first responders, and service men and women who are working so hard under difficult conditions to help us with the – get through the COVID-19 pandemic. Let me remind everybody that the EconomicClub.org is our website. And EconomicClub.org will be the place where you can watch the videos that we're going to do today if you want to watch them later on or let other people know about them. EconomicClub.org. Also, I'd like to welcome the members of The Economic Club of Chicago and The Economic Club of New York, who are joining us as well, and also members of the diplomatic community.

So let me go to our first guest, which is Mark Warner. Mark, thank you very much for joining us. Mark is in his kitchen in Alexandria. Mark – just for those who might not know Mark as well as I do, Mark is a native of Connecticut. He went to George Washington University, where he got a perfect average, 4.0, and valedictorian of his class. Later went to Harvard Law School. Came down and got back into Washington. Got involved in his cellular telephone business formed by Columbia Capital, made some money doing that, and then ultimately got involved in government and politics, and became the chairman of the Democratic Party in Virginia, and also later became governor of Virginia, and then elected senator from Virginia, initially in 2018, reelected in 2014, and he's up for election again in 2020.

Mark, thanks very much for joining us.

SENATOR MARK WARNER (D-VA): Thank you, David.

MR. RUBENSTEIN: Now, recently you got an enormous amount of publicity for your tuna melt. I assume that the microwave behind you, or the kitchen behind you is where you cooked that. Why was there so much attention to a tuna melt?

SEN. WARNER: Well, first of all, David, thank you for having me. And I hope that you and your family, and all of the folks that are watching this are doing OK, and that their families are safe.

The kind of tuna melt came about because I got – I was getting a little quarantine-crazy. This is our guest house, and my wife sends me over here this morning to kind of while away on Zoom calls. And I saw other politicians doing – you know, singing heartfelt songs, or playing the piano, or, you know, making their mother's favorite brownie recipe. And my youngest daughter, who had done some video work on political campaigns, said, you know, let's do something a little more fun. And I tried to create the single grossest sandwich ever, which truth be told I had actually eaten before, white bread, tuna, tons of mayonnaise, two slices of cheese, and stick it in the microwave. And for the first day or so not much happened, and then somehow it lit up the microwave. And fortunately, or unfortunately, for a week I got more attention on tuna melt than virtually anything I've been doing on COVID-19.

MR. RUBENSTEIN: And you didn't get the recipe from Chef José Andrés, I assume?

SEN. WARNER: José did not. Although he will probably mention the fact that he kind of – he did a follow-on video. José is a great friend, and obviously does amazing, amazing work. But he created his much-nicer version of a tuna melt as a back-at-me effort a week later.

MR. RUBENSTEIN: OK. So, Mark, as a member of the Senate, are you pleased with the legislation that Congress has passed to date to deal with the crisis? And do you think it's sufficient? Or do we need additional legislation?

SEN. WARNER: Well, let's look at, first of all, the size of what has been passed. The original bill was \$2.2 trillion. There was another \$500 billion added on top of that. And while most of the press has reported this as a \$2.7 trillion package, in reality, as you know, David, about \$400 million of that first package is actually the base that leverages a 13(3) Federal Reserve Bank lending facility for another \$4 trillion. So you're talking about \$6.7 trillion in assistance. That's eight times the size of TARP. Most of that was put together in three or four days.

So in terms of scope of response, it's far and away the biggest response ever. In terms of the fact that it was bipartisan, both bills virtually passed unanimously, was, again, I think a recognition that Congress knew we had to do something significant. All that capital being pushed out, though, and as we saw with the unemployment numbers today, and the close to 15 percent unemployment, 33 million Americans filing for unemployment, that this clearly has not

been a stimulus. What we're trying to do is, you know, basically keep the economy on life support. There's three basic directions we've done. There's direct payments, that have worked out pretty well. There's greatly expanded unemployment benefits.

One of the things that I supported in a major way was, you know, our traditional unemployment system only covers about 30 percent of the workforce. Gig workers, independent contractors, freelancers were not covered. They were now covered. There was also a \$600 a week bump-up that puts the unusual position that some people may be making in the short term more on unemployment than they made in work. And there's some moral hazard issues there.

And then this small business program, which has gotten the most attention, over \$600 billion that goes out to payroll and overhead. Well-intentioned program. The challenge with that is both a design flaw – there was not a requirement of revenue loss, there was consequentially some embarrassment about public companies taking the money – and the fact that it had an eight-week length of time. You've got the absurdity in certain restaurants, and José will probably speak to this, where people may be furloughed, but if you bring them back, put them on your PPE program, you may have to re-furlough them if your business can't reopen. So we're looking about extensions there.

There's also things around health care, state support, a host of other initiatives. I think it was generally the right direction. I would, I think, maybe before we simply re-up these programs we ought to take a step back though and say: Is there a better way?

MR. RUBENSTEIN: But you have proposed additional legislation with some other Senate co-sponsors that would in effect give people more or less their salary. Is that right?

SEN. WARNER: Yes. What happened was, you know, as we look at our response – and unfortunately the, you know, massive amounts of unemployment. And unemployment, while very generous, does – not only disconnects you from your job, but also disconnects you in many cases in our country, as you know, from health insurance. If we look at what our European friends have done, they decided rather than this kind of massive series of new programs, they provided direct wage support, government straight to paying workers' salaries. The Danes have done that, the Germans have done it – Germans have probably done it the best – the Austrians, the Brits. And they've seen unemployment numbers only go up to about 4 to 5 percent.

So I have proposed what I call the Paycheck Security Act, saying: Let's go ahead, one, make sure a business is showing 20 percent revenue loss, make sure they don't have a lot of capital on their balance sheet. And if they are really hurting, let's go ahead and pay up to 100 percent of \$90,000 of anybody's salary. Now, I'm not sure we'd get that full 100 percent if we got it through, but it would be a direct payment program to workers. It would only be for workers who are furloughed. And the – Mark Zandi, the folks who make some estimates – assume that while it's costly, it's about \$400 billion over a quarter, that really is not much more, could be actually less than what we've totally spent on unemployment, Medicaid expansion, and PPP.¹

¹ Paycheck Protection Program established by the CARES Act passed in response to the economic fallout of the COVID-19 pandemic.

MR. RUBENSTEIN: But do you think it will pass?

SEN. WARNER: You know, David, it's an interesting – it's a good question. There is a – Pramila Jayapal, leader of the Progressive Caucus, has a proposal in the House. I've partnered with somebody I don't normally agree with, Bernie Sanders, and Doug Jones, a very conservative senator in the Democratic side. Josh Hawley, a very conservative Republican senator from Missouri has got a slightly different version of the program. And both The Wall Street Journal and The New York Times – and as you well know, they don't agree on anything – both have said this would be a better way.

So, the question is, can we move all of these recently stood-up programs to kind of a new glide path? This could attach to PPP. It would also deal with the middle-market firms that have gotten no support so far. So I think it's – I think it'll be thoroughly discussed. And I do think most folks would agree that if we had, you know, the benefit of hindsight, this would have been a better approach to start with.

MR. RUBENSTEIN: So the president has said he would support a fourth bill only, I think I'm quoting him directly, if there is a payroll tax as part of that. Is there enough support in the Senate for a payroll tax? And why is there, or why is there not?

SEN. WARNER: Well, I think there's – the payroll tax is not sufficient – you know, payroll tax might have been a good idea at the beginning, again, but the payroll tax right now presumes you got people on payroll. And that payroll tax, you know, is a minimum amount of assistance when we're talking about people going from – you know, with the revenues down 70, 80, 90 percent. People have already been furloughed or put on unemployment. Cutting a payroll tax does not really provide much help. And obviously the payroll taxes, to a degree, help pay for the long-term issues around Social Security, FICA, and those issues. So I don't – I don't think the payroll tax – it's fairly broadly dismissed, even by a lot of my Republicans colleagues as too little too late.

MR. RUBENSTEIN: So if there is a fourth bill, with your bill as part of it or some other features, do you think that'll happen within the next month or two? Or how long do you think before there's a fourth bill?

SEN. WARNER: I think that – you know, let's hope the economy's reopening. The president put me on his reopening taskforce. I want the economy to reopen, although we desperately need more testing – testing, testing, testing is critical. And I've been bitterly disappointed by the administration's failure to organize PPE. And that has been enough of a disaster. If we don't organize testing and have the same kind of competition, state against state, hospital against hospital, that will both have huge economic as well as medical issues. I do think the next bill will not happen in the next week. I think it could happen – you know, I definitely think if it happens it'll happen before the end of May.

And in addition to either my approach or replenishing some of the existing programs, I do think, even if we were to replenish, we realize you can't have an eight-week cliff on PPP. I do

think there'll be other areas, like broadband which we under-invested in. And I've got some major ideas there. I'd like to experiment with some portable benefit programs. One of the things I hope we've learned is that the wide swath of our society that weren't covered by unemployment or have no benefits right now, I'd love to make sure that no matter what kind of work you do in America, you earn some benefits along the way. And who manages those? You know, it doesn't have to be government. It could be private sector. It could be a jump ball. But we shouldn't have, again, the circumstance where we've got 50 percent of our society losing a job and have nothing to fall back upon.

MR. RUBENSTEIN: So everybody seems to be in favor of infrastructure. Nobody's against more infrastructure. But why has Congress not passed an infrastructure bill?

SEN. WARNER: Well, previously there was lots of interest in infrastructure, but the president was never willing to put toward or pay for. Now we're in this moment in time where, again, directly appropriated \$2.7 trillion, \$4 trillion more in Federal Reserve lending. There may be a moment that says, OK, you need to do that trillion or \$2 trillion infrastructure program. And we can then – we might be able to do dollar-for-dollar pay-for. I think, you know, the truth is, both political parties have lost all credibility on debt and deficits. So maybe if we're going to do some overspending, infrastructure clearly – and I would put broadband as a critical component of that.

MR. RUBENSTEIN: Now, you mentioned before a word not often used in the Congress these days, bipartisan. So do you think the Senate is more bipartisan than it was before the COVID-19? Or do you think it's basically the same?

SEN. WARNER: Well, I think the optics to the public is, you know, people snapping at each other. And, you know, McConnell² puts out a position, Schumer³ puts out something, and, you know, the kind of back and forth I know makes my head hurt, and probably most of your viewers' heads hurt. I find, you know, at one step below is we're actually talking about and working through these ideas, whether it's my Paycheck Security Act, whether it's broadband, whether it's affordable benefits legislation. Every one of these ideas, I'm working with Republican colleagues.

And I do think there was this moment, and it was fascinating to see that we passed the major legislation where from the weekend, when people knew things were a little bit weird, to the middle of the week when I think the seriousness of the virus hitting our country was driven home, you know, that the Senate actually did work. There were 96 senators there. They all voted for the bill. A week later we all passed the bill by unanimous consent. Whereas dysfunctional as the place that I work in is, it was a pretty good sign. I think it was a moment of common sense over partisanship.

MR. RUBENSTEIN: Now, what about the debt? We're adding lots of debt. Maybe \$3, \$4 or \$5 trillion of additional debt to an already \$21 or \$22 trillion debt that we have. Are you not worried about the inflationary impact of that, or how we're going to pay this off at some point?

² Mitch McConnell, R, is a U.S. senator from Kentucky and serves as Senate Majority Leader.

³ Chuck Schumer, D, is a U.S. senator from New York and serves as Senate Minority Leader.

SEN. WARNER: Well, David, as you recall, back in the mid-2000s I was probably known as the leading Senate debt Cassandra.⁴ You know, I put together so-called Gang of Six.⁵ We worked on the plan called Simpson-Bowles. We came close a couple of times on leveling off some entitlement spending and raising additional revenue. Frankly, all of that argument went away when we never saw interest rate hikes and when my Republican colleagues went ahead and did a \$2 trillion tax cut, totally unpaid for.

So, yes, I do believe the debt that now is close to more like \$26 or \$27 trillion in total, just the interest rates on that could be crushing. But the fact that we have seen this kind of new normal without rates rising, and then, I think Steve Pearlstein, who writes for the [Washington] Post, is a very smart economics writer. He has – he wrote a great piece about six or eight weeks ago that at least gave me some caution that in this moment of crisis if we don't spend at extraordinary rates, our actual debt could be worse. But I do think longer-term we're leaving our kids with a balance sheet that's pretty far out of whack.

MR. RUBENSTEIN: So when do you think the Commonwealth of Virginia will be able to open up? You obviously are close to the governor. You talk to him. What do you think he's thinking? And when do you think it's safe to open up?

SEN. WARNER: Well, he's – you know, as the only doctor as a governor, I think he's going to, unlike many, follow the health care recommendations of the professionals. He's talked about kind of entering into the first stage, I believe, on the 8th. And that's coming up Monday, I believe, or it may even be today. And I think he's going to do a first phase. I've urged him – he's been trying to think about reopening Virginia at once. I actually think he needs to do it on a more regional basis. Clearly in Northern Virginia, I think it would be the smartest to do that reopening in concert with D.C. and Maryland, because our DMV region may have a different opening routine than southwest Virginia.

I think one of the things we're all watching, though, at least I am, and I think many folks are, and I hope it does not go poorly, for example, the folks in Georgia where the Georgia governor was so aggressive about reopening even to the opposition of Trump. So, they're kind of the canary in the coal mine of, you know, reopening and seeing what happens with their – in that state. Because my fear, I say this as a former governor, I'd like to get the economy reopened. But, boy, if you get people back out, and you see a spike, and you lose folks' confidence, you know, that second reopening is going to be exponentially harder.

MR. RUBENSTEIN: Now, Mark, you are the vice chairman of the Senate Intelligence Committee. Are you worried that there's going to be foreign interference in the 2020 elections?

⁴ From a figure in Greek mythology, a Cassandra is someone who warns of impending disaster or doom.

⁵ The Gang of Six refers to one of three bipartisan groups of six senators consisting of three Democrats and three Republicans. One group focused on health care reform (2009), another focused on immigration (2018), and Sen. Warner's group focused on national debt (2011).

SEN. WARNER: Well, David, let me answer that in two ways. First of all, I've been extraordinarily concerned that this president, who has completely disrespected the intelligence community from day one, is increasingly politicizing the intelligence community leadership.

The person he's got now as an acting director, Ambassador Grenell, has no experience. He is simply a partisan hack. The individual that is up, Congressman Ratcliffe, again, does not have much experience. And I'm fearful that our intelligence professionals, which their job is to speak truth to power. You know, literally every person that this president appointed inside the director – Office of the Director of National Intelligence he has fired because they've done their job, because they've told him things he didn't want to hear. So, I'm afraid, yes, that the Russians will try to interfere.

And two, I'm afraid that if our intelligence community doesn't feel like they can still be independent, they may not sound the early enough warning because of fear of losing their own jobs. So that in a time when our eyes are distracted by the national emergency around COVID could allow a Russia, a China, or others to play a lot of mischief in an election season.

MR. RUBENSTEIN: Now, speaking of China, is there anything you can tell us about what the Intelligence Committee may know about whether it was a wet market or a lab that released intentionally or not the COVID-19 virus?

SEN. WARNER: Well, let me – again, this is an area that I've spent a lot of time on over the last two and a half years. And I have, just as the president does, extraordinary concerns about the Communist Party in China, and about President Xi Jinping and his aspirations. I think it's important to note, though, that my beef is with, you know, the Communist Party of China, not with China as a nation, not with the Chinese people, certainly not with Chinese Americans. And I sometimes fear the president's kind of broad-brush racist, almost xenophobic attacks, you know, doesn't make that distinction.

You know, it was very believable to me when there were first some of these stories, since the Chinese government were so opaque about letting outside experts in, that this virus could have been sourced somewhere other than the so-called wet market. But all of the intelligence that we've had to review has indicated – had no basis for that. The intelligence has been very similar to what has been in the public domain, that this originated, was not man-made. That it appeared to originate in the market.

If the president or the secretary of state has any real intelligence that shows otherwise, I think he is under an obligation to show that to the so-called Gang of Eight,⁶ the chair and ranking members of the Intelligence Committees, as well as the leadership. And Richard Burr, my chairman and I, feel exactly the same way. And we have – we have basically said: If you've got information, you got to show it to us. That is absolutely his requirement. You can't go around making these bold statements that he has intel and not at least share it with the oversight committees.

⁶ The Gang of Eight comprises the eight leaders within the U.S. Congress who are briefed on classified intelligence matters by the executive branch. This group includes the leaders of each of the Democratic and Republican parties from both the Senate and House of Representatives, and the chairs and ranking minority members of both the Senate and House Intelligence Committees.

MR. RUBENSTEIN: So the Democratic National Convention is supposed to be held this summer. Do you think it'll be completely virtual, or will actually people show up?

SEN. WARNER: David, I don't have the foggiest notion. I mean, again, my hope is that end of this month we'll be making enough progress that we can see reopening. I would urge people not to make rash decisions about cancellations too early. I say that with a daughter that I hope is going to go to business school in the fall. But as somebody pointed out, you know, I'm not sure political conventions still give the same boost – I mean, they're a good party, generally. But I'm not sure they give the candidates necessarily the boost that they used to give.

MR. RUBENSTEIN: And how are senators staying healthy? Senators on average are probably older than the average American. And so they are probably a little more subject to getting this disease or virus. Are they shaking hands anymore? Are they wearing masks? What are they doing?

SEN. WARNER: Well, David, you know, at 65 I work in the only place in American where I'm still one of the young guys. So it is a little bit weird to see the Senate react. I think for the most part, with the exception of somebody like Rand Paul⁷ who's kind of off on his own without wearing a mask – this is the same guy who didn't tell his colleagues that he had the virus or had been tested for the virus – virtually everybody else is pretty good about wearing masks. I know no hand shaking. Burr and I were greeting the nominee for director of national intelligence with elbow bumps the other day. Made the front page of the [Washington] Post.

And for the most part, one of the things that is pretty remarkable about the senators, even though they are, a number of them, in their 80s, just the nature of this job means when you're up on the Hill you're walking a couple miles a day, even with the subway cars, as you move from meetings to meetings, and from the Senate floor back to your office. So, I've been pretty impressed that for the most part senators are in pretty good shape.

MR. RUBENSTEIN: OK. So what are you doing with your family? You have three daughters. Are you daughters and your wife with you? And are you self-isolating mostly together? Or do they get tired of being with their parents?

SEN. WARNER: Well, they definitely get tired of being with their parents. My 25-year-old youngest daughter says it feels like high school all over again in terms of eating meals together. But I've got two of them here that are safe. My third is with her boyfriend. They were in New York and they went down to our farm. So they got out and have had a nice seven weeks out of the city. So, you know, listen, I'm very fortunate. I've got the resources and my family is all safe. It's one of the reasons why, again, I hope that everybody who's viewing this can say the same. I know, as I'm sure you do, I've had friends who've had the virus very bad, and it's a pretty awful circumstance to go through.

MR. RUBENSTEIN: So the final question, Mark. Would you expect to be the chairman of the Senate Intelligence Committee after the next election?

⁷ Rand Paul, R, is a U.S. senator from Kentucky.

SEN. WARNER: I hope I am the chairman of the Senate Intelligence Committee. And if I'm the chairman, what I'll continue to do is the same thing I've done as vice chairman, which is I'm really proud of that committee. It is the – I would argue, the last fully bipartisan functioning committee. Matter of fact, it's not in the attention of everybody right now, but we came out with our fourth volume on our Russia investigation report. Still 100 percent bipartisan. You know, the questions around China we do in a bipartisan way. I really, truly believe our intelligence professionals need the support of Congress. But they don't go in as Democrats or Republicans, and neither should we.

MR. RUBENSTEIN: Mark, I'm going to let you go back to your tuna melt. And thank you very much for your time and your service. Thank you.

SEN. WARNER: Well, David, thank you. And, again, I just want to give a shoutout as well. I know José's going to be on. He's doing some remarkable work. I know there's a group of our technology leaders around Washington that are doing a No Kid Hungry – raising a million dollars for that charity. I do hope those of us who have the ability, particularly with so many people going through some of the toughest times, and we have so much food anxiety at this point, that if we can support that No Kid Hungry or support José's efforts, I think those would be good things to do.

And, again, thank you so much, David.

MR. RUBENSTEIN: Thanks a lot, Mark. Thank you.

OK. Now we're going to talk to José Andrés. José is touring around Virginia somewhere now. I think he was in his car when I saw him earlier.

José, can you hear me?

JOSÉ ANDRÉS: Hello?

MR. RUBENSTEIN: Hi. All right. So where are you physically right now?

MR. ANDRÉS: [Laughs.] I am in Virginia Beach. I wake up early, I made bread, and then I began driving to Virginia Beach from Bethesda, Maryland. And I'm right now in the back of this beautiful church, the New Jerusalem Church, which they are doing amazing work here with all types of families, Puerto Ricans, Latinos, South Americans. This is one of the main centers we have in Virginia for food distribution.

MR. RUBENSTEIN: So for people that don't know you – there are people that may not know you as well as I do, how did you decide to get out of the world of just being a chef, which is a very honorable thing to do, and get in the world of feeding people who are hungry? What motivated you to do that?

MR. ANDRÉS: I always said that I feed a few, but we cannot have a restaurant without making sure that nobody else is hungry. It feels very awkward to me that I'm feeding caviar and foie gras, and three streets down from where I have my restaurant is guys that don't – people, families – that they don't know what they're going to put on the table. So I always said that if Clara Barton during the Civil War in that little building across from my restaurant was able to create the most amazing system to provide relief to the wounded soldiers during the Civil War, if a nurse was able to do that over a century ago, a cook like me should be able to achieve the same success on feeding the hungry in emergencies. So that's why. I feed the few and try to help feed the many.

MR. RUBENSTEIN: So now you have a number of restaurants around the United States and elsewhere. They are all closed now, or not?

MR. ANDRÉS: OK, I am one of the first ones that said I am closing my restaurant, especially in this city. But I am the first one that said I'm closing the restaurant, but I'm opening community kitchens. So they are technically closed, but the community kitchen means we are doing takeout. We are doing delivery. We are using the restaurants to feed homeless. We are partnering obviously with World Central Kitchen to make sure that in D.C., in L.A., in Las Vegas, my restaurants are in the service of providing food relief.

MR. RUBENSTEIN: Now, people in the United States are familiar with, I guess, food banks, and where people go and they get cans of food, or so forth. But you are actually cooking meals for people, is that right?

MR. ANDRÉS: We are doing a couple – two or three things. One is, usually in an emergency World Central Kitchen comes and begins cooking in a kitchen we're able to rent or get. Or we do a field kitchen if there's total destruction. But right now, we have 800,000 restaurants and millions of people in the food business that they are out of jobs. So if we need to cover the humanitarian problem, why we don't put those restaurants to take care of the needs of the hungry? That's what we've been doing, and that makes a lot of sense.

MR. RUBENSTEIN: So, one of your programs has been to get chefs and cooks who are not working now to be part of World Central Kitchen. Is that right?

MR. ANDRÉS: Yeah. We have right now – we have right now more than 1,000 restaurants across America that they do anywhere between 100 and 1,000 meals each. And we are using those restaurants, in partnership with local community leaders, churches, mayors, to cover the needs one city at a time, one restaurant at a time.

MR. RUBENSTEIN: I see. Now, where are you getting the money to finance all this? Or people want to give you money, where do they give it to you? Is that what you're seeking mostly, money? And is it government money or private sector money?

MR. ANDRÉS: No government money, becomes complicated and becomes very slow. And we are a quick organization. [Laughs.] So, yeah, we honored to many individuals that they give us

from a dollar to, like Mayor Bloomberg,⁸ that gave us \$6 million, and other generous individuals. Obviously, I believe these should be taken care of by the federal government. Why? Because this is a national humanitarian food emergency. So that's why I've been pushing Congress very heavily to say: Guys, this is a problem that shouldn't be a problem. And you have the tools to make sure that you support our ideas, the ideas the World Central Kitchen is putting forward, to make sure that no American will be hungry through this pandemic.

MR. RUBENSTEIN: So where is the greatest problem in the United States right now? Or is it everywhere in the United States? There's no one place that's worse than the other?

MR. ANDRÉS: Well, we need to remember that the problem was already before the pandemic. We have 40 million Americans that they are food insecure. And they are food insecure in a moment like this, even becomes a worse scenario because right now we have millions of people joining the unemployment ranks. And on top of that, we have many undocumented that as they lose their jobs, because they are undocumented, they are not able to be receiving any assistance from their cities or their states in some places. So the problem has multiplied. And that's why the problem is all around. We are in more than 150 cities right now, from Oakland, to Virginia Beach, to Harlem and Bronx, Newark, Elizabeth, L.A., Little Rock, Arkansas. Everywhere they have the problems, and we are here trying to cover the blind spots of the system.

MR. RUBENSTEIN: So are you – you're the CEO of World Central Kitchen. You're the chief chef. You're the chief everything. What is your main role? You run everything, or you're?

MR. ANDRÉS: Not anymore. I'm the founder and I'm one more – one more soldier with boots on the ground. The CEO is great, Nate Mook. He's a long-time friend of mine. He was the guy that came with me to Puerto Rico in [Hurricane] Maria. We created the system there to do more than 4 million meals in Puerto Rico. I am the founder. I am in the board. But I'm even trying to move myself away from the board. So that's what I do. And I make sure – I make sure that I am – like, I'm here. I try to go places. I try to see the problem on my own, so when I speak to senators, or congressmen, or to people like you I can speak with knowledge of the situation. If not, everything else is theory. Me, I can tell you what's going on in America.

MR. RUBENSTEIN: When do you expect you'll be able to open some of your restaurants? And how will you open them differently? Will everybody have to have a mask? And how will it be different than before when you reopen?

MR. ANDRÉS: Listen, I am sitting on the advisory board of Mayor Bowser.⁹ I think I have a very unique experience on this, because I have the experience of feeding people under cholera situations in Haiti and Mozambique. And World Central Kitchen, we've been feeding people on corona since Yokohama when the Princess cruise ship was there with 6,000 people. And we began the feeding system to make sure that our teams will be healthy, and everybody will be healthy. So I want to protect my teams. That's why I closed so early. I think I'm not going to

⁸ Michael Bloomberg was the mayor of New York City from 2002 to 2013.

⁹ Washington, D.C. Mayor Muriel Bowser's ReOpen DC Advisory Group will develop recommendations on reopening the District.

be – even if they gave me permission to reopen by the city or by the president, I will at the end make my own call when I feel it's safe.

When it's safe, well, what happened with what Mayor Bloomberg [sic: read Mayor Bill de Blasio] is doing in New York with contact tracing? Why we don't have? The most powerful country in the history of mankind, with the biggest technology at our disposal in the history of mankind, why we don't have already a very simple system where we know who is sick, we know through our phones who has been in contact with, and we are able to quarantine ourselves, making sure that we minimize the pandemic spread?

Why we don't use technology to make sure that we can all feel safe as we keep the economy going? Because we have a true lack of leadership. And I don't mean only government. I see – I sense a lack of leadership everywhere, from U.N., all the way to governments. If we will have contact tracing I could be open, because I knew that anybody coming in my restaurant will have a big chance of knowing if he was infected or not. Because we don't have anything like that, I'm going to be super, super careful. And I'm going to open when I feel like my city and anywhere else, that we are not going to be part of the problem by spreading the virus. So I don't know when to open, yeah.

MR. RUBENSTEIN: How do restaurants like yours, and restaurant owners like yours, survive? Because you're not getting any revenue now. You have some fixed costs, I assume. I assume it's a terrible financial burden. Are you trying to get Congress to pass legislation that would get insurers to reimburse restaurants?

MR. ANDRÉS: I've been myself in many wars already. There's one very interesting thing going, that is the Independent Restaurant Coalition, which we feel independent restaurants, as small businesses across America, we are close to 400-500,000 independent restaurants, that we feel like PPP, while I believe it was a nice idea by Congress, by the White House at the beginning, and I'm happy it was kind of bipartisan. To a degree, they put so many structures that it's actually not serving – helping the restaurant. If at the end of the day we don't have business, why any small business is going to have any employees? That's why we pay taxes and that's why we have unemployment.

The businesses should have money to make sure that you are able to maintain the minimum thing to operate and get ready for reopening. I think the government should be taking care, like has happened in Europe, of every single employee with a good paycheck so they don't have a problem of losing their homes or being thrown out of their home because they don't pay rent or have money to buy food, et cetera. And then support the businesses to reopen when it is the right time. I hope PPP is some people now negotiating – there are many negotiation in White House, in Congress, to make sure it will help the small business community by not being so restrictive in the regulations and rules they impose on those grants/loans.

MR. RUBENSTEIN: So if somebody wants to help World Central Kitchen, what can they do?

MR. ANDRÉS: Well, number one, I'm going to be telling them, what do you want your money in the bank for? You just put the money up to help the people. Bring America back to work. So

our organization, like World Central Kitchen, we are doing – again, we are beyond 5 million. We are about to reach 6 million. We are doing almost quarter million meals a day. Before you send us one dollar, we are already spending it. And we are helping everybody in the process – hiring cooks, reopening restaurants, paying the farmers. Everybody benefits. So go to www.WCK.org. WCK.org. And donate. Every dollar counts.

MR. RUBENSTEIN: How much are you trying to raise?

MR. ANDRÉS: [Laughs.] We are – we are spending around – between half a million and a million a day almost, as an average. So do your numbers. That's why we have this bill that is bipartisan, where it was done by Congressman Thompson of California, McGovern of Massachusetts, and supported by Congressman Davis of Illinois, a Republican. Bipartisan in the House. And I was able to get Kamala Harris supporter on the Senate. And then it was great because we brought in Senator Scott of South Carolina, Republican too. Democrats and Republicans breaking bread on a bill that is going to put restaurants to work as the restaurants, in partnership with NGOs like us, through the governors and mayors, they can take care of the local needs. That's a brilliant, simple idea that I hope will pass, and I hope Congress, FEMA, and the governors and mayors will use to tackle the problems that they may have in their communities.

MR. RUBENSTEIN: OK. José how are you staying healthy, because you're traveling around now. You've got to meet lots of people. How are you staying healthy?

MR. ANDRÉS: Well, I wear my mask every day. I wear my gloves. I wash myself before I come into my house twice a day with a hose, with liquid, with sanitizer. All our teams – remember that we were the first people, World Central Kitchen, that I did – [inaudible] – the health code of how to behave in restaurants. For me, it's very important that my teams are healthy through this pandemic. And I cross fingers, we've been blessed.

But let me tell you one thing that is wrong. I heard Senator Warner, we see everybody doing it, Vice President Pence. They are telling us that if we cough we should cough on our elbow, like this. But then you see everybody bumping elbows. Are we – are we – are nuts? We should not be touching each other. We should at the most do this, on the heart. That should be the new sign. People are putting their viruses in their elbow, and then they are hitting elbows. This doesn't make any sense.

So it's little things like this that if we realize that we are fighting a smart virus that can make everybody of us sick, I think we will be slightly less effusive. We don't need to touch each other. Only touch your family members that live with you in your household. Everybody else who loves each other, is staying away from each other.

MR. RUBENSTEIN: And what about your family, your children? Are they all staying in your home in Bethesda? Are you sort of self-isolating there?

MR. ANDRÉS: Everybody's there. We're very blessed. We have a nice, nice house, quite frankly. I fear – you know, I'm more – my thoughts are always with the people that I know they live 10 people in one studio apartment in Harlem, and so many other places, in public housing.

So I'm blessed in that sense. My daughters help me sometimes to deliver food to some hospitals, but I make sure they have minimum contact.

My daughters go usually to pick up food downtown to the Nationals stadium, where we have a big operation there in Washington, D.C. I always love to activate the stadiums in big emergencies. And from there, my daughters are delivering, for example, every day to the Children's Hospital inside the NIH, where there's, like, 30-40 children there going through treatment. And they're staying there in this kind of hotel, which is beautiful. So my daughters, for example, are volunteering and doing that.

MR. RUBENSTEIN: Now, with your daughters, there's a video that's on the internet that basically has you cooking some eggs and putting ice cream on top of it. Is that a healthy thing to eat?

MR. ANDRÉS: It's totally healthy. There's nothing healthier than eggs. Look at me, I'm the perfect example of healthiness. Overweight healthiness, but healthiness. So, yeah. And the best one is the one I did two days ago, which I make scrambled eggs using a blow torch. Yes, this pandemic is making our creative – our creativity grow. Remember that Newton became the most creative under a pandemic, when he was also in quarantine. So I think out of this pandemic, the good thing is that we're going to have brilliant minds coming with brilliant ideas. You just wait and see.

MR. RUBENSTEIN: All right. Well, José, I want to thank you for taking the time to be with us. Thank you for what you're doing for the country and the world. And stay healthy because we need you to stay healthy.

MR. ANDRÉS: I will be healthy. I'm very aware of the situation. I had some family members that died in Spain. My mother was a nurse. My father was a nurse. I have many friends in hospitals right now in America and in Spain fighting this pandemic. That's why it's so important that we all keep healthy, so we keep our nurses and doctors healthy, and so we can forget about this virus hopefully sooner rather than later.

MR. RUBENSTEIN: Thank you very much. Good to see you.

MR. ANDRÉS: Thank you. Bye.

MR. RUBENSTEIN: OK. Now we're going to have the CEO of N Street Village, Schroeder Stribling.

Schroeder, can you hear me?

SCHROEDER STRIBLING: David, I can hear you.

MR. RUBENSTEIN: OK. So, Schroeder, for those people that don't know what N Street Village is, can you tell us what it actually is? I should have introduced you more appropriately, saying that you've been the CEO, I think, since 2010. Is that right?

MS. STRIBLING: That's correct.

MR. RUBENSTEIN: And you are a graduate of Wellesley and Georgetown, is that right?

MS. STRIBLING: I went to the Georgetown Nonprofit Leadership Program, yes.

MR. RUBENSTEIN: And you also – you're a native of New York.

MS. STRIBLING: I sure am.

MR. RUBENSTEIN: OK. So tell us what N Street Village is, and then how you have decided to change it a bit to deal with COVID-19 challenges.

MS. STRIBLING: OK. Well, first of all, David, let me say thank you for the opportunity to be on with you this morning, and to talk about this, and the important things that are going on. And thank you especially to be in this nice company with Senator Warner and Chef Andrés. Although, I have to say, I feel slight pressure to come up with a unique recipe and put it out on social media. So I have to deal with that afterward.

MR. RUBENSTEIN: OK.

MS. STRIBLING: But I also appreciate the opportunity because we have a lot of frontline workers, of course, at N Street Village. And so this is a chance for me to say thank you very publicly to our frontline workers, who go to work every day in our shelter and our supportive housing programs, doing extraordinary work under unusual, unprecedented circumstances.

N Street Village is a nonprofit organization that is almost 50 years old. And we provide housing and supportive services for homeless and low-income women, and affordable housing for families. We have five locations in Washington, D.C. We provide all types of housing, from shelter all the way through permanent and supportive housing, which is when folks have special needs or disabilities in their housing. And we also provide wrap-around services for everyone, including health and vocational services. And we do advocacy. We facilitate lifting up the voices of the people that we serve. They are people that we need to be listening to. And we advocate around the issues of importance to those we serve. We serve about 2,000 women every year. And still to this day, at least one new woman comes to our doors for the very first time.

MR. RUBENSTEIN: So COVID-19 has changed things for you in which way? Because you have to do things much more carefully than before, presumably, is that right?

MS. STRIBLING: It's changed everything. We recognized early on that we were going to have to shift our operations very quickly so that we could manage the health of the people that we serve and our staff to the best of our ability. So we went to an essential employees protocol, where all of our – all the women that we were serving previously are still being served, but some of the other services are not available at this time. They'll come back online when we're able to. We're protecting people's health.

We're working with our government, our city partners, our peer provider partners. Everyone is collaborating rapidly to adapt to the health guidance and to keep folks safe. We've had a lot of people that have gone to the isolation and quarantine that's been provided. Our city's done a good job of finding isolation and quarantine locations to try to manage contagion in dense environments, like shelters.

MR. RUBENSTEIN: In Washington, D.C., how many homeless people are there, is it estimated?

MS. STRIBLING: We do a count every year, once a year. And it's called a point in time count. It's a snapshot piece of data. It's not annualized. In 2019, the night that we did it, and we always do it the same night, the longest night of the year in January, cold of night, there were about 6,500 people who were homeless in Washington, D.C. So that's one night. And most of the people who are homeless stay in the shelter. It's about maybe 10 percent or so that stay on the street.

MR. RUBENSTEIN: And when they are on the street, why are they on the street rather than go to a shelter? What's the advantage to them of doing that?

MS. STRIBLING: Well, sometimes it's by choice. People may have circumstances. They may have pets, or partners, and they may not be able to find a place that can accommodate them. They may be – there may be mental health issues. They may feel afraid of going into shelter, or they may have been traumatized, that's very common, and feel afraid of going into shelter. We work hard – and we also have laws in D.C. for right to shelter that are more aggressive than elsewhere. We work hard to make sure that people have – everyone who has shelter needs it.

MR. RUBENSTEIN: Is it estimated there are more women than men who are homeless, or more men than women?

MS. STRIBLING: More men. Yeah, more men. About a quarter, give or take – and this is true here and across the country – are women. Of the single adult homeless population. But, David, you asked me about what coronavirus was going to do to us. And I want to answer that question more fully, and say that in addition to managing the health directly of the people that we serve and of our staff, and supporting our staff through this crisis, what I really believe the most significant thing coronavirus is going to do for N Street Village and for the people we serve and the advocacy issues that we and our public partners – and many folks in this group and elsewhere care about – is that this virus will bring a three-alarm sound to the three-alarm blaze of economic inequality that many of us have been watching for a long time, and have been very worried about.

And I think when the tide rolls out, just as we heard José talking about, just as we heard Senator Warner talking about, the inequality was preexisting. It will be worse. And so, we're very concerned about the downstream effects. So not only the people that we're serving now, but what about, you know, the leading indicators that we see of tripling of food insecurity issues,

or the rent payment – the leading indicator of rent payments going down? We know that we're going to face a tide of new need.

MR. RUBENSTEIN: So, the homeless people that – the women that come into your shelters, for example, are they there for a month, longer, shorter? And do people gravitate away from homeless to go to more traditional kind of living arrangements, or not?

MS. STRIBLING: I have never met anyone who is homeless who didn't want to not be homeless. Sometimes people don't want to live with other people in a group setting, but they don't want to be homeless. And so I would say everyone is aiming for that. The biggest problem is that we live in a city where rents and wages still diverge so greatly and continue to. Homelessness, for the most part, is an economic problem. We live in a – and we live in one of the hotspots. We live in one of the cities where a lot of the people if you work full time you can't afford to live there, which I think many of us find has been a moral hazard issue for a long time. And I love to hear Senator Warner talk about how when we come back from this crisis, can we not only come back from this crisis OK, not just rebuild, but can we redesign? Are there better ways to do things?

MR. RUBENSTEIN: So if somebody wants to support N Street Village, what do they do?

MS. STRIBLING: Well, I would say that there are two things to do. There are two ways to get active. And the first way to get active is what you're already doing – and what I want to thank you for, and I want to thank everyone here for your interest in – is to be aware, to be ready, to be engaged, to be thinking about these things. Because I really believe that we need to build overwhelming public support for the notion that economic inequality and structural racism is unacceptable to us, and that we see it, and that we're going to have all vectors of our society become involved in it.

So to that extent big-A activism and advocacy, where in the circles that you are, and supporting things like what Senator Warner was talking about, which are perfect examples of how we can redesign and come back better. The other thing is, little-A active, come to N Street Village. You can't come in – come virtually right now and come in reality later. NStreetVillage.org. Lots of ways to get involved, get active, become a donor, we'd love to have you.

MR. RUBENSTEIN: So you do accept financial contributions?

MS. STRIBLING: Yes, indeed, we accept financial contributions. In fact, we are reliant on financial contributions. We would not be able to serve the 2,000 women every year we do. We have half of our income – half of our program operations are dependent on this.

MR. RUBENSTEIN: So you get donations a year. How much money do you get a year from donations?

MS. STRIBLING: About \$4.5 million.

MR. RUBENSTEIN: Four and a half million [dollars]. Now you were going to have a fundraising event with José Andrés, I guess. Is that right?

MS. STRIBLING: Yes, we were. We were. Hola, José, if you're still there. Hasta pronto, I hope. We hope to reschedule sometimes. José is friends and – we have mutual friends. And he has graciously agreed to support N Street Village. And we're looking forward to a time when we can do that. And I'm so grateful, because we share – here's your sign, José. For how we greet each other now. I'm very grateful.

MR. RUBENSTEIN: So the main message you would like to give to people about N Street Village, people that are not familiar with it, is basically what?

MS. STRIBLING: That homelessness is a crisis in our city. That it is solvable. That we need everyone to be involved in the solutions. And that we would love for you to come and get involved in the conversation at N Street Village.

MR. RUBENSTEIN: OK. Thank you very much for that message. Thank you for appearing with us. And best of luck on what you're doing. Thank you.

MS. STRIBLING: Thanks for having me.

MR. RUBENSTEIN: So I'd like to conclude our program today by just saying thank you to all of you who have participated, and all of you who are watching, or listening. And I want to thank our sponsors as well. And to remind everybody, there will be another program like this next Friday. And there'll be an executive conversation before that with Mark Penn, earlier next week.

Thank you all. Have a good day.



**The Honorable Mark R. Warner
Senator of the Commonwealth of Virginia**

Senator Warner was elected to the U.S. Senate in November 2008 and reelected to a second term in November 2014. He serves on the Senate Finance, Banking, Budget, and Rules Committees as well as the Select Committee on Intelligence, where he is the Vice Chairman. During his time in the Senate, Senator Warner has established himself as a bipartisan leader who has worked with Republicans and Democrats alike to cut red tape, increase government performance and accountability, and promote private sector innovation and job creation. Senator Warner has been recognized as a national leader in fighting for our military men and women and veterans, and in working to find bipartisan, balanced solutions to address our country's debt and deficit.

From 2002 to 2006, he served as Governor of Virginia. When he left office in 2006, Virginia was ranked as the best state for business, the best managed state, and the best state in which to receive a public education.

The first in his family to graduate from college, Mark Warner spent 20 years as a successful technology and business leader in Virginia before entering public office. An early investor in the cellular telephone business, he co-founded the company that became Nextel and invested in hundreds of start-up technology companies that created tens of thousands of jobs.

Senator Warner and his wife Lisa Collis live in Alexandria, Virginia. They have three daughters.



José Andrés
Founder, World Central Kitchen
Chef/Owner, ThinkFoodGroup

Named one of Time Magazine's "100 Most Influential People" in both 2012 and 2018, and awarded "Outstanding Chef" and "Humanitarian of the Year" by the James Beard Foundation, José Andrés is an internationally-recognized culinary innovator, New York Times bestselling author, educator, television personality, humanitarian, and chef/owner of ThinkFoodGroup.

A pioneer of Spanish tapas in the United States, he is also known for his groundbreaking avant-garde cuisine and his award-winning group of more than 30 restaurants located throughout the country and beyond, ranging in a variety of culinary experiences from a food truck to his multi-location vegetable-focused fast casual Beefsteak, to world-class tasting menus like minibar by José Andrés

and Somni, both of which have received two Michelin stars.

As a naturalized citizen originally from Spain, Andrés has been a tireless advocate for immigration reform. In 2010, Andrés formed World Central Kitchen, a non-profit that provides smart solutions to end hunger and poverty by using the power of food to empower communities and strengthen economies.

Notably, his team served over 3.6 million meals to the people of Puerto Rico following Hurricane Maria. Andrés' work has earned awards and distinctions including the 2017 Lifetime Achievement Award from the International Association of Culinary Professionals and the 2015 National Humanities Medal, one of twelve distinguished recipients of the award from the National Endowment for the Humanities. Andrés was also named EY Master Entrepreneur of the Year in Greater Washington for his leadership and impact on the global business community and was awarded the Congressional Hispanic Caucus Institute's Chair's Medallion Award.



Schroeder Stribling
Chief Executive Officer
N Street Village

Schroeder Stribling is an advocate for social justice and a senior nonprofit leader with over 20 years of experience in the leadership of social service organizations and advocacy initiatives. She speaks and writes frequently on topics related to poverty, homelessness and racial and economic equity.

Schroeder has particular skill and interest in the leadership of complex and growth-oriented organizations. She has expertise in forging partnerships, designing effective and data-driven social solutions, honing business strategy for nonprofit sustainability, fundraising innovation, financial leadership, long-term planning, and strong team development. She brings a special focus to the establishment and maintenance of healthy organizational culture and meaningful values systems, and she drives organizational strategy toward innovation and optimized impact.

Schroeder is an appreciative and confident collaborator who leads with integrity, openness, humor and energy. And she is an ever-passionate advocate and persuasive spokesperson for justice in our times.