

# Guthrie emphasizes confidence in vaccines, stimulus

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2nd District U.S. Rep. Brett Guthrie told members of the Owensboro Rotary Club on Wednesday a new stimulus package being crafted in Congress will have limited funding for state governments, and likely won't have a provision to protect businesses from being sued if workers or patrons contract COVID-19.

Guthrie, a Bowling Green Republican, spoke to the Rotary Club by Zoom on Wednesday afternoon. Guthrie also told the group he had confidence in the COVID-19 vaccines that have been or will soon be approved, and he doesn't see any additional avenues for President Donald Trump to pursue over the 2020 election.

Guthrie said House and Senate leadership were meeting Wednesday on the new stimulus package. The "big stumbling blocks" of funds for local governments and liability protection for businesses had been removed, he said.

"A deal appears to have been struck," Guthrie said, adding the bill would likely contain funding for unemployment insurance, additional small business dollars, money for governments for COVID-related expenses and stimulus checks of "about \$600." Not everyone will qualify for a stimulus check, based on income, Guthrie said.

"There were people who got the \$1,200 (check) before who didn't lose a penny in income," Guthrie said.



Brett Guthrie

The Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine is approved and is being distributed. Guthrie said a second vaccine by Moderna could be approved at any time.

How long a vaccinated person will retain protection from the coronavirus is undetermined, Guthrie said.

“There are tens of thousands of people who got the vaccine in June, and they are continuously being monitored” for immunity, he said. If that group shows a decline in immunity, researchers will know how often a person will need a booster.

Regarding the safety of the vaccines, Guthrie said, “I’m going to take it as soon as it is made available to (people) in my category,” and described them as being as safe as receiving a flu shot.

The Trump administration waived a rule that prevented vaccines from being manufactured before they receive FDA approval, which allowed for the Pfizer vaccine to be distributed immediately after it was approved, Guthrie said. By the end of the year, more than 35 million doses will be available, he said.

By February, the vaccines will be available to people considered most at risk, and “we’ll start seeing some semblance of order,” Guthrie said. By late May, vaccines will be prevalent enough that people will be able to get them relatively easily, similar to flu shots, he said.

Looking ahead to the next Congress, Guthrie said the narrow margin in the House could lead to more compromise legislation on issues such as immigration reform.

On the 2020 presidential election and Trump’s repeated claims that he won, Guthrie said, “If he has a pathway to win this, I wish he would say that publicly.”

Guthrie said he didn’t join other House Republicans who filed an amicus brief in Texas’ lawsuit against Pennsylvania, Georgia and other states with election results that Trump disputes.

“I just didn’t believe you could overturn an election because of (a state’s) administration of the election,” Guthrie said.

In Kentucky, election rules were also changed for the general election, just as in the states Texas had sued, he said. “I felt if I wasn’t going to try to throw (Kentucky’s) vote out, I shouldn’t throw someone else’s vote out.”

The election cannot be overturned by the House in January, partly because the House has a Democratic majority but also because the rules don’t allow for it, Guthrie said.

But, he said: “President Trump says he’s still combating it, and he has the right to, up to Jan. 20.”

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