

White House press briefing
01/14/22
11:58:10 a.m.
22 seconds

PETER DOOCY: So what's the point of now sending N95 or KN95 masks out to Americans if a lot of those masks are just single, daily use, like somebody wears it once, then what?

FEMA ADMINISTRATOR DEANNE CRISWELL: Masks save lives, I think, is the important thing here, and we want to make sure that everybody has the tools and resources that they need in order to protect themselves and their families.

(...)

11:59:28 a.m.
1 minute and 19 seconds

BRIAN BENNETT: When you came on in April, FEMA had mass vaccination sites and it's rolled out — I think that one of the questions is right now, the President just announced that they're going to, you now, triple the stockpile of PPE, get masks out to Americans, and also try to expand the testing capacity, and home test kits. Did FEMA weigh too much of its resources towards vaccinations or should it have been surging the capacity months ago in testing and PPE?

CRISWELL: FEMA's role has always been to support our hospitals, our schools, and our public service agencies. We have been supporting them through the delivery and reimbursement for PPE, for medical staff that we're sending out. That has not changed, and that support will continue. The additional support that's coming out for the general population is something that FEMA does not participate in and those are the issues — or the items that you're hearing are going to be announced and available to the general public later.

BENNETT: But when it comes to testing sites, FEMA's rolled out public testing sites, why not surge public testing sites three months ago in anticipation that there would be surges of variants?

CRISWELL: Again, we're working with our states routinely, and we're hearing what their needs are, and we're basing our support to them on what they need. And, so, as they request additional assistance, that's when we come together and give them the assistance that they need.

(...)

12:15:39 p.m.
27 seconds

GEORGE CONDON: Yeah, I want to go back to the first year anniversary and ask you if there's anything that surprised you in the first year and I'm thinking of a couple things that weren't being talked about. A year ago at inauguration, everybody was excited about vaccines. Now, you have

anti-vaxx groups. Trump was being impeached. Now, he controls the opposition and there was no talk of inflation at the time of the — of the inauguration.

(...)

12:20:39 p.m.

1 minute and 41 seconds

DOOCY: President Biden promised to bring decades of D.C. experience to the office, but Build Back Better has not passed, voting rights apparently not gonna pass, and vaccine requirements that he likes are, apparently, illegal. What happened?

PSAKI: Well, first, Peter, I would say that, if you look at last year and what we were able to accomplish, that included getting the American Rescue Plan, a package that has — has contributed to contributing childhood poverty by 40 percent, has helped ensure we are moving at a faster pace toward economic growth, toward a record low unemployment, helped ensure schools — more 95 percent — are open across the country. He also pressed, despite skeptics, to get a bipartisan infrastructure, one that we have — just — we are just announcing today the fact that 15,000 bridges are going to be repaired. That was despite many skeptics, and because of his efforts, 200 million Americans are now vaccinated. The work of an administration continues after one year, and it will keep continue to press forward and all of those priorities.

DOOCY: But, as about a year ago and working with Republicans, now he is talking about Republicans that don't agree with voting rights — he's describing them as George Wallace, Bull Connor and Jefferson Davis. What happened to the guy who, when he was elected said to make progress, we must stop treating our opponents as our enemy?

PSAKI: I think everybody listening to that speech who's speaking on the level, as my mother would say, would note that he was not comparing them as humans. He was comparing the choice to those figures in history and where they're going to position themselves if they — as they — as they determine whether they're going to support the fundamental right to vote or not.

(...)

12:24:28 p.m.

44 seconds

JEREMY DIAMOND: Did the President move the needle at all with Senators Manchin and Sinema as it relates to voting rights and the filibuster?

PSAKI: I will let them give an assessment of where they stand.

DIAMOND: And — and — you know, I understand you guys think this is a fight worth having, but are you clear eyed at least and are you willing to tell your supporters to be clear-eyed that these votes next week on voting rights and on changing filibuster rules are going to fail?

PSAKI: If we believed everything every pundit said out there and listened to that, the president would not have run for office. He would not be President. We would not have an infrastructure bill that is law.

DIAMOND: [INAUDIBLE]

PSAKI: We have heard — We have heard what members have said it is important about where they stand on the filibuster. The president is going to stay at it, as you heard him say yesterday, because he believes that voting rights is a fundamental right for people across the country.