

The Stimulus Reckoning Ahead

I am an ignorant man and I'm not ashamed to admit it.

Ask me about history, literature, or current events, and you'll find me more knowledgeable than some. Ask me about astronomy, auto repair, or computer maintenance, and I'll just shrug. Ask me to name one or more gender-friendly pronouns or explain the definition of intersectional, and you might as well be talking to a post.

But I did study enough math in high school and college to understand multiplication. For example, experts estimate that [roughly 152 million Americans](#) will receive at least some stimulus money after the bill's latest revision. While not every American will receive a full \$1,400 stimulus check, it's impossible to estimate the exact number of people who will receive smaller checks, so we'll use the \$1,400 metric for now. The total cost of sending 152 million Americans \$1,400 is \$212.8 billion.

A majority of Americans support this stimulus bill, [particularly the \\$1,400 checks](#). But for various reasons, I personally oppose giving so many Americans this handout. For one thing, I can make my way without that subsidy, and so can a lot of other people I know, even if they fit under the individual income threshold of \$80,000 that Congress has set for eligibility.

But let's assume our bureaucrats, lobbyists, and politicians in Washington D.C. truly believe we need to hand this money out to stimulate the economy. If this is the case, then why is the COVID-19 relief bill calling for \$1.9 trillion in expenditures, or nearly nine times the amount needed for the individual checks? Why does Congress want to spend that Himalaya of bucks?

The Wall Street Journal [offers](#) an even-handed explanation of

parts of the plan, which include even more school funding, larger tax credits for children, billions more dollars for vaccines, higher unemployment benefits, and aid to state and local governments. Reiterating the support for the stimulus check mentioned above, the *WSJ* reports, “the overall package...enjoys strong approval in polls.”

That last statement made me laugh. The bill including the COVID-19 relief and stimulus package [is nearly 5,600 pages long](#). Has anyone, anyone at all, read this monstrosity in its entirety? Doubtful. More likely, various committees and lobbyists cobbled it together. Our ignorance of the contents of the bill renders such polls meaningless.

In his article “COVID relief bill is reckless, disgusting—who will save our economy?” Justin Haskins gives some of the [details](#) found in this bill: millions of dollars for monitoring climate change in Tibet, \$10 million for gender programs in Pakistan, and \$231 million to help Sudan pay down its debt. Haskins places the blame for all this wasted money, including the stimulus checks, on both Republicans and Democrats, who seem in a race to outdo one another in blowing taxpayers’ money.

Moreover, the virus relief package apparently contains items that encourage racism and sexism. At the *New York Post*, Betsy McCaughey, former lieutenant governor of New York, [reports](#) that the bill offers aid to minorities and women, but that white males “go to the back of the line.” She notes, for instance, that Section 1005 of the bill offers help and debt relief to “socially disadvantaged” farmers, meaning white males seeking such aid can forget about it.

Regarding the contents of the bill, McCaughey writes:

Polls show most Americans support the federal COVID-19 relief bill. But if they knew what’s in it, they might feel differently. The bill is an affront to the American ideal of

equal treatment under law – and a slap in the face for people who want everyone helped fairly.

Many Americans overlook one other major consequence of bills like this one. Recently, I heard a young man in the coffee shop telling his friend how much he was looking forward to getting another government check. He has a job and clearly considers the check as fun money, but he lacks imagination. Not only is he unable to see this money as a debt that will return to plague him and his contemporaries, but he has apparently never heard the acronym popularized in Robert Heinlein's *The Moon Is A Harsh Mistress*: TANSTAAFL, or "There ain't no such thing as a free lunch." He and many others are selling themselves into bondage, exchanging their liberties for a few measly dollars.

These giveaways may bring relief to some Americans, but they are making slaves of us all.

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