

House Passed Paid Sick Leave Only for 20% of US Workers

By [Stephen Lendman](#)

Global Research, March 15, 2020

Region: [USA](#)

Theme: [History](#)

Monied interests and government officials serving them at the federal, state, and local levels comprise America's ruling class.

Time and again, their actions in cahoots with each other show indifference toward ordinary people — including at times of economic and other duress periods like now.

Even America's finest hour during a decade of Great Depression fell short by not doing enough to create jobs and stimulate economic recovery — why it took WW II and its preparatory buildup to restore economic health to the country.

The US Great Recession that began in late 2007 never ended for ordinary Americans to this day because Bush/Cheney, Obama/Biden, Trump/Pence, and the Wall Street owned and operated Fed acted only to aid business, the markets, investors, and other high-net-worth individuals, not the economy or all Americans equitably.

As a result, the late 2007 period to the present day constitutes America's 2nd Great Depression for ordinary Americans.

It's gone unreported with real unemployment exceeding 20%, most working Americans way underemployed, most households impoverished or bordering it, most jobs available part-time or temp low-pay ones with few or no benefits.

Things today are worsening as economic conditions weaken — the nation perhaps already in recession, its depth and duration only to be known after the fact, the human toll likely to be downplayed.

Reality is polar opposite Trump's January hyperbolic claim that the US economy is "the best it has ever been" — his regime and Congress fiddling while Rome burns.

According to economist Michael Feroli, Q II economic data will likely show economic decline exceeding its 2008 Lehman moment level.

Since the [dot.com](#) bubble burst at the end of the neoliberal 90s, force-fed austerity has been US policy when economic stimulus is needed — especially under Obama/Biden and Trump/Pence during a 2nd Great Depression for ordinary Americans.

On December 16, 1933 during the earlier Great Depression, economist [John Maynard Keynes](#) wrote an open letter to Franklin Roosevelt, calling for all-out stimulative policies to restore economic health.

He urged “spend, spend, spend.” Supply “cheap and abundant credit.” Stress “speed and quick” recovery.

Focus on “increas(ing) the national output.” Boost purchasing power by “put(ting) people back to work” on good high-paying jobs.

“(I)ncrease aggregate purchasing power.” Undertake “a large volume of loan expenditures under government auspices.”

Choose projects able “to mature quickly on a large scale.”

Roosevelt only partially followed Keynes’ advice, why a decade of Great Depression persisted that could have ended much sooner with all-out fiscal stimulus only occurring in the run-up to and during WW II.

Policies under the Clintons, GW Bush, Obama and Trump were and remain world’s apart from how FDR addressed economic crisis conditions even though he didn’t go far enough.

US ruling regimes since the 1990s focused on and continue focusing only on lifting all yachts, the vast majority of Americans left adrift on their own, sink or swim — along with waging endless wars of aggression against invented enemies to feed the nation’s military, industrial, security, media complex.

On Friday, House members passed HR 6201: Families First Coronavirus Response Act by a 363 – 40 majority vote hours after Trump declared a COVID-19 national emergency.

He should have declared an economic national emergency, not a health-related one, along with announcing all-out stimulative policies to reverse economic decline, an initiative to aid all Americans, not just its privileged class as he’s operated so far.

The House measure moves to the Senate for consideration, possible changes, followed by resolution between both Houses, Trump highly likely to sign it into law.

Although something to help ordinary Americans through likely worsening economic conditions ahead is better than nothing, House legislation falls woefully short.

It’s a tepid measure when large-scale economic stimulus is needed, including significant protection for laid off workers.

Broken clocks are right twice daily. Even establishment NYT editors highlighted “a giant hole” in the House measure, explaining the following:

“(T)he bill guarantees sick leave only to about 20 percent of workers. Big employers like McDonald’s and Amazon are not required to provide any paid sick leave, while companies with fewer than 50 employees can seek hardship exemptions from the Trump” regime.

Mike Pence told US workers to stay home if sick, falsely saying: “You’re not going to miss a pay check” — a bald-faced Big Lie for around 80% of US workers.

If ill for a protracted period for any reason, they’ll be uncompensated by their companies because of House indifference toward them — wanting their employers and their profits protected, not them.

Nothing short of protection for all workers is acceptable. A guaranteed living wage should be mandated public policy, prioritizing the welfare of all Americans.

The woefully weak House measure requires some companies to provide paid sick leave for full-time workers only up to 10 days.

Temp and part-time workers are left on their own, full-time workers as well after 10 days if still too ill to work for any reasons.

The Times: House legislation “does not apply to the nation’s largest employers — companies with 500 or more workers, who together employ roughly 54 percent of all workers.”

The measure “provides some compensation for workers who need to take longer leaves under the Family and Medical Leave Act — but this too excludes workers at big companies.”

The bill grants hardship exemptions to companies with less than 50 employees, comprising over another fourth of the nation’s workforce.

In total, House legislation leaves around 80% of US workers unprotected if ill for a protracted period.

The measure only focuses on paid sick leave related to COVID-19 illnesses — a relatively minor situation that hasn’t remotely reached epidemic levels and may not ahead.

Major protracted epidemics of cancer, heart disease, stroke, disabling injuries, and other serious illnesses requiring time off from work are unaddressed in the House measure and what’s likely to become law in the days ahead.

The Times got it right, saying: “The House’s failure to require universal paid sick leave is an embarrassment that endangers the health of workers, consumers and the broader American public.”

Governments are responsible for serving all their people. From inception, US ruling authorities served privileged interests exclusively at the expense of the public welfare.

New Deal, Fair Deal, and Great Society programs were exceptions to the rule.

Since the neoliberal 90s, especially post-9/11, they’ve been fast eroding en route toward disappearing altogether — with bipartisan support.

*

Note to readers: please click the share buttons below. Forward this article to your email lists. Crosspost on your blog site, internet forums. etc.

Award-winning author Stephen Lendman lives in Chicago. He can be reached at lendmanstephen@sbcglobal.net. He is a Research Associate of the Centre for Research on Globalization (CRG)

His new book as editor and contributor is titled “Flashpoint in Ukraine: US Drive for Hegemony Risks WW III.”

<http://www.claritypress.com/LendmanIII.html>

Visit his blog site at sjlendman.blogspot.com.

The original source of this article is Global Research
Copyright © [Stephen Lendman](#), Global Research, 2020

[Comment on Global Research Articles on our Facebook page](#)

[Become a Member of Global Research](#)

Articles by: [Stephen Lendman](#)

About the author:

Stephen Lendman lives in Chicago. He can be reached at lendmanstephen@sbcglobal.net. His new book as editor and contributor is titled "Flashpoint in Ukraine: US Drive for Hegemony Risks WW III."

<http://www.claritypress.com/LendmanIII.html> Visit his blog site at sjlendman.blogspot.com. Listen to cutting-edge discussions with distinguished guests on the Progressive Radio News Hour on the Progressive Radio Network. It airs three times weekly: live on Sundays at 1PM Central time plus two prerecorded archived programs.

Disclaimer: The contents of this article are of sole responsibility of the author(s). The Centre for Research on Globalization will not be responsible for any inaccurate or incorrect statement in this article. The Centre of Research on Globalization grants permission to cross-post Global Research articles on community internet sites as long the source and copyright are acknowledged together with a hyperlink to the original Global Research article. For publication of Global Research articles in print or other forms including commercial internet sites, contact: publications@globalresearch.ca

www.globalresearch.ca contains copyrighted material the use of which has not always been specifically authorized by the copyright owner. We are making such material available to our readers under the provisions of "fair use" in an effort to advance a better understanding of political, economic and social issues. The material on this site is distributed without profit to those who have expressed a prior interest in receiving it for research and educational purposes. If you wish to use copyrighted material for purposes other than "fair use" you must request permission from the copyright owner.

For media inquiries: publications@globalresearch.ca