

US Pork-Laden Stimulus Bill

By [Stephen Lendman](#)

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From 1975 – 1988, Senator William Proxmire (1915 – 2005) waged war on wasteful government spending — aka pork.

Along with other vital issues he championed, he was well-known for scores of Golden Fleece Awards (GFA) that exposed wasteful congressional pork included in federal legislation.

He wrote books on government waste and corruption.

Among many other recipients, GFAs went to US departments of war, treasury, labor, agriculture, commerce, interior, HHS and DOJ, the White House, Congress, NASA, the FAA, VA, US Postal Service, and EPA.

The so-called Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021 (that includes economic stimulus — HR 133) is heavily laden with pork.

If Proxmire was active in the Senate today, it would likely be top-featured for a GFA.

Over 5,500 pages in length, it's likely certain that virtually all House all Senate members at most only glanced through it.

Nearly all congressional legislation includes wasteful and/or unrelated pork.

HR 133 overflows with what's unrelated to stimulus aid for millions of US households that are enduring the Greatest Depression that's likely to be protracted.

Crumbs are included for them, including:

A one-time payment of \$600 for qualified adults, another \$600 per child under age-16.

It's for individuals with annual income of \$75,000 or less — \$150,000 or less for couples — the amount decreasing for higher-income households.

An additional \$300 in weekly unemployment benefits runs through March — a woefully inadequate amount for hard-pressed households.

\$284 billion goes for Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) loans.

Most of what's allegedly for troubled small businesses most likely will go to large ones.

According to the Economic Policy Institute (EPI), HR 133 "is a fraction of what is required to address" dire economic conditions for most US households.

Missing is aid for state and local governments.

EPI explained that without it, they're forced to cut essential services at the cost of millions of lost public and private sector jobs.

Unemployment insurance (UI) in the measure is "woefully underpowered," said EPI.

Most US households receiving UI benefits will exhaust them in mid-March.

EPI said it's "imperative (for) the incoming Congress pass another substantial stimulus package early in the new year to ensure working people and states and localities receive the economic relief needed..."

It called for vitally needed \$3 trillion in stimulus — pork-free.

Pork in HR 133 includes billions of dollars for weapons procurement, billions more for a space force.

According to former Treasury tax official Adam Looney:

HR 133's Payroll Protection Program not only gives corporate America tax-free federal money, they get to deduct the amount received from the tax obligation.

Looney estimates that there's about \$120 billion windfall for big business from the stimulus bill provision.

Billions also go to US allies, including \$3.3 billion in grants to Israel, \$1.3 billion to Egypt, \$461.3 million for Colombia, \$453 to Ukraine, \$700 million to Sudan, \$241.4 million for Tunisia, \$135 to Myanmar, \$130 million to Nepal, \$85.5 million to Cambodia, \$25 million to Pakistan, and \$1.4 billion for a so-called Asia Reassurance Initiative Act that aims to counter China.

Another \$500 million goes for so-called Israeli cooperative programs that include purchases of US weapons.

Nothing goes for Occupied Palestinians. \$40 million is for further destabilizing Syria.

\$710 million goes for countering ISIS and likeminded jihadist groups that's all about supporting them.

\$3 billion is for continuing permanent occupation of Afghanistan.

\$400 million goes to Jordan, Lebanon, Egypt, Tunisia, and Oman.

A Caribbean Basin Security Initiative gets \$74.8 million.

\$290 million goes for countering Russia, \$132 million to neighboring Georgia.

All of the above is related to advancing US imperial interests — at the expense of widespread unemployment, food insecurity, hunger, homelessness, and overall deprivation in the US.

\$208 billion for the Census Bureau is for upgrading its computer systems.

The Kennedy Center gets \$40 million. There's \$193 million for federal HIV/AIDS workers — not for their daily activities, to buy cars and insurance overseas.

A feminist museum got funding. More goes for addressing “youth risk behaviors” and establishing a commission to educate consumers about dangers related to “storing portable fuel containers for flammable liquids near an open flame.”

There's \$70 million for “internet freedom” that's all about controlling the message by stifling dissent.

All of the above is in heavily pork-laden HR 133, likely a whole lot more of the same crammed into its 5,500+ plus pages.

It's the most lengthy congressional bill in US history that passed both houses by large majorities.

So-called “democracy programs (aka advancing US imperial interests at the expense of peace, equity and justice)” got over \$2.4 billion.

Nearly \$6.2 billion more goes for foreign military financing programs.

\$300 million is for countering China's “malign influence,” \$33 million for “democracy programs” in Venezuela that aim to eliminate Bolivarian social justice.

Of their combined 535 congressional members, only 53 House and 6 Senate members opposed the measure.

Trump may veto HR 133 in its present form.

He called on Congress to “increase the ridiculously low” relief for US households.

He wants it raised to \$2,000 per adult, \$4,000 for couples, along with “get(ging) rid of wasteful and unnecessary items” in the measure.

Dems, including Pelosi, said they'll push for “unanimous (congressional) consent” pre-Christmas.

Only 59 of 535 congressional members opposed the bill. A veto-proof majority supports it.

It's highly likely heading for enactment into law — warts and all.

A Final Comment

Ignored by the White House, Congress and establishment media is what's most needed at a time of the greatest economic Depression in US history — large-scale jobs creation programs.

Real unemployment exceeds 26%. Most working-age Americans with jobs are way-underemployed.

During the 1930s Great Depression, FDR and Congress initiated an alphabet soup of jobs creation programs that put millions of unemployed Americans back to work.

No jobs creation programs were initiated today by the White House or Congress.

They're vitally needed to put unemployed Americans back to work with full-time employment earning a living wage and receiving essential benefits that includes healthcare coverage.

When people have a steady source of income to rely on, they spend it.

It stimulates economic growth. Stopgap stimulus measures provide short-term relief and woefully not enough.

Instead of re-industrializing and otherwise rebuilding America, the nation is in decline, notably at the expense of its ordinary people.

Instead of a long-ago land of opportunity, today's America is thirdworldized for most of its people.

It's an increasingly totalitarian, plutocratic, kleptocratic police state, democracy for its privileged few alone.

Wealth, power and privileged interests never had things better.

Ordinary people are one or two missed paychecks away from impoverishment, food insecurity, overall deprivation and despair during what's likely to be protracted Depression conditions.

When large-scale federal programs are vitally needed to change things, they're nowhere in sight.

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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.

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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.

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