

The American people are hurting and our economy is in a recession. Congress is right to take action to stimulate the economy, but the American people deserve better than a pork-laden spending frenzy with very little money going to the people who need it most. Any such economic stimulus package must be timely, temporary and targeted.

Unfortunately, congressional Democratic leaders in the U.S. House put forth an economic plan based on increased deficit spending for agenda-driven earmarks. The bill will not stimulate the economy in the near term and may hurt the economy in the long run, because the deficit for the next two years is already projected to exceed \$2 trillion. If deficit spending was an effective stimulus, the economy would already be on the verge of a rebound.

We simply can't prop up the economy through spending money we don't have and can't repay in any reasonable time frame. The so-called stimulus bill will cost taxpayers \$819 billion and attempts to create "over 3 million jobs." If those projections were true, this bill would require \$275,000 of taxpayer money for every job created. Surely we can do better than that. The bill includes \$524 billion in spending and \$291.7 billion in tax provisions.

Little of the funding will be spent quickly. Based on a Congressional Budget Office analysis, just \$26 billion (7 percent) will be spent in the current fiscal year, and less than half — 38 percent — will be spent in the first two years. Even assuming such fiscal measures could be effective, the vast majority of funds in this bill would be spent too late to stimulate the economy anyway.

Democratic leadership promised large amounts for improving roads and bridges, but only \$44 billion (about 5 percent) is for transportation infrastructure. Of that, only \$30 billion is for highways. There are tens of billions spent mainly to protect or create government jobs. In addition, the National Endowment for the Arts will get \$50 million, Americorps \$200 million, Amtrak \$800 million, grass replacement on the National Mall \$200 million, repairs at the Smithsonian \$150 million, NASA climate change research \$400 million, and ACORN \$10 million.

There is also, ironically, \$1 billion to subsidize fuel oil at the same time that Democrat leadership wants to artificially inflate oil prices through drilling bans and blocking technology development. Again, however worthy such projects might be, it is unclear how they will provide an immediate boost to the economy.

The measure creates numerous funding situations in which programs will receive large sums of "temporary" additional cash that will quickly run out, creating pressure to maintain these inflated levels. For instance, the bill spends \$15.6 billion to increase each student's Pell Grant by \$500. After two years, this extra funding vanishes, so a student attending school with the help of a Pell Grant will face a sudden decline in financial support. This means, of course, that Congress will almost certainly turn this temporary deficit spending into a permanent budget catastrophe by extending all increases.

Economic recovery is invariably achieved by the economy itself, but Washington can accelerate that process. The best way to do that is to improve the incentives that drive economic activity. Lower marginal tax rates will stimulate the economy because they create incentives for individuals and businesses to work, invest, take risks and seize opportunities.

The American people deserve a better proposal than the wasteful spending approach envisioned under this bill.

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