



## Defund the Pork, Pay for Healthcare?

Here's how to get the money for healthcare reform, and it can be done without Congress passing another trillion in spending, without putting more job-killing mandates and taxes on business, without killing off whatever incentives still remain for our best students to become physicians, and without turning millions of patients into wards of the state.

To get the cash, all Congress needs to do is repeal the authorization on spending for the remaining sums in President Barack Obama's record-breaking and non-stimulating \$787 billion stimulus bill.



A half year has passed since the rushed signing of the stimulus bill to solve the jobs "crisis," and less than 10 percent of the money has been spent.

Politicians were super-quick to line up and get their hands on money for their pet projects — but not so good or fast at designing the type of pro-growth, pro-business legislation that would have actually stimulated the creation of real jobs in the private sector.

Instead, what we got for our money are things like a \$4 million paving job on a parking lot for private jets in Aspen, Colo., and \$550,000 in government spending for a new skateboard park and tennis court repairs in Pawtucket, R.I.

The skateboard park provides a nice ribbon-cutting opportunity for the local mayor, but it's not exactly the type of spending that accelerates our economic recovery, produces long-term employment, promotes responsible fiscal policy or makes the U.S. more internationally competitive.

The message from Obama at the Feb. 17 signing of the stimulus bill was that the pork-bloated legislation would "create or save" 3.5 million jobs within two years by way of a whole slew of "shovel-ready" projects.

Instead, the shovels are still hanging in the garage, some \$708 billion is stuck in the political pipeline, and more than two million more jobs have been lost in the U.S. economy since the bill's passage. No one in Congress or the White House gave any thought to the truism that government can not create jobs by stealing wealth from the private sector and redistributing it under the guise of a "stimulus" plan. It is a logical impossibility.

As with his push for a quick healthcare bill that no one has the time to read, the February stimulus bill was another one of Obama's rush jobs. Both the Senate and House voted on the 1,071-page bill less than 24 hours after it had been posted for the first time on the House Appropriations website.

This time around, a hurried 1,000-plus-page healthcare bill is designed to solve the "crisis of 47 million Americans" without health insurance by way of an ObamaCare plan that promises to deliver universal coverage and higher quality at a cheaper price.

Less into peddling nirvana, the Congressional Budget Office estimated that the congressional



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Democrats' health plans would increase costs in the range of \$1 trillion-plus over the next decade, and that's on top of the CBO's projection that the federal budget's red ink this year will reach a flood level of \$1.8 trillion.

With the oft-repeated claim that 47 million Americans lack health insurance, an estimated 11 million of that number are illegal aliens. Another 17 million, according to the Census Bureau, are people who earn more than \$50,000 a year and have decided not to carry health insurance. Millions more in the 47 million number are already eligible for care under Medicaid and other government programs. Millions more are temporarily between jobs.

"With reasonable adjustments," i.e., the above deductions from the 47 million figure, "there are in fact less than 10 million individuals who are so-called 'chronically uninsured,'" writes Dominick T. Armentano, professor emeritus of economics at the University of Hartford and a research fellow at The Independent Institute in California. "The Kaiser Family Foundation says the number could be as low as 8 million."

At a healthcare policy cost of \$10,000 a year per family, the price to taxpayers of covering those 10 million people with five million policies (figuring an average of two people per household) is \$50 billion per year, a pittance compared to the \$708 billion that's stuck in the pipeline from Obama's ill-designed and non-stimulating stimulus package.

Simply stated, repeal the \$708 billion authorization in unspent funds for the upcoming skateboard parks and zoo enhancements and there's plenty of enough money to provide healthcare coverage for 10 million people for the next decade and a half, all without a dime of new deficit spending and no job-killing tax hikes on the private sector.

Of course, the best bet of all, would be to get government out of the health care business entirely, since it has no constitutional business being involved at all. That would be real reform. Instead, Obama's idea of reform is to demonize doctors, cut business profits and produce another trillion in red ink.

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