



Written by [Steve Byas](#) on March 27, 2020

Massie Fails to Force Roll Call Vote on Stimulus Package

Representative Thomas Massie (R-Ky.), shown, ultimately failed to block passage of the staggering \$2.2 trillion coronavirus relief package by requesting a roll call vote, drawing bipartisan condemnations from the leadership of both political parties and from President Donald Trump, who even suggested Massie should be kicked out of the Republican Party.



House leadership — from both parties — frustrated Massie's principled stand for a recorded vote, and he was unable to muster enough support for his effort from other members. The bill sailed through on a voice vote, following a three-hour debate on the house floor. Many who voted for the bill did express they shared Massie's misgivings.

Because so many members of Congress have left Washington, D.C., due to the COVID-19 threat, there were not enough members left in the nation's capital to constitute a quorum. Article I, Section 5 of the U.S. Constitution requires that both the House and the Senate need a majority of its membership to "constitute a quorum to do business."

Massie utilized this provision of the Constitution in an effort to block passage of the massive spending bill — and if he could not get that, at least put the members on record for voting in favor of it. Normally a quorum of 435 total members is 218, but due to some vacancies, it is presently 216. It is estimated that only a little over a hundred members are left in D.C. to vote for the spending bill in the House. (The Senate had already voted for the bill, 96-0). If members had been forced to have a roll call, in which a quorum would be needed, instead of a voice vote in which no quorum call is made, members now outside the Beltway would have had to return.

Incredible as it may sound, despite proposed spending of over two trillion dollars, some House members instead criticized Massie for any costs involved in bringing enough members back to Washington to establish the constitutionally required quorum. Representative Dean Phillips (D-Minn.) even had the gall to tweet to Massie, "If you intend to delay passage of the coronavirus relief bill tomorrow morning, please advise your 428 colleagues RIGHT NOW so we can book flights and expend \$200,000 in taxpayer money to counter your principled but terribly misguided stunt."

Dear [@RepThomasMassie](#): If you intend to delay passage of the [#coronavirus](#) relief bill tomorrow morning, please advise your 428 colleagues RIGHT NOW so we can book flights and expend ~\$200,000 in taxpayer money to counter your principled but terribly misguided stunt. [#thankyou](#)

— Rep. Dean Phillips (@RepDeanPhillips) [March 26, 2020](#)



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It is hard to imagine that Phillips is all that concerned about \$200,000, considering that his Freedom Index score is a paltry 12 percent. (The Freedom Index, published by *The New American* magazine rates members of both houses of Congress for their votes, using fidelity to the Constitution as the criteria.) In fact, the bill that Phillips wants rammed through Congress — without so much as a recorded vote — provides an additional \$25 million for the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington, D.C. It is hard to imagine how that helps to fight any disease, much less a global pandemic.

Massie, whose own Freedom Index score is 99 percent, explained why he opposed the bill. “This stimulus should go straight to the people rather than being funneled through banks and corporations like this bill is doing.”

Massie added that the bill is “not a good deal,” noting that the spending will be in addition to the present \$4 trillion in additional federal lending capacity, which would equate to giving each U.S. citizen \$17,000. President Trump took to Twitter to bash Massie for his opposition to the proposal, calling him “a third-rate grandstander.” Massie, however, has long insisted on taking roll calls for big spending packages. He is not alone in this practice. Another House member who has joined Massie in the past in standing up to such reckless spending practices is Representative Chip Roy (R-Texas).

Roy, who has a 100-percent score on the Freedom Index answered Trump’s tweet with one of his own: “Rep Thomas Massie is one of the most principled men in Congress & loves his country. He is defending the Constitution today by requiring a quorum. There’s nothing 3rd rate about that.”

Others expressed even more agitation at Massie than Phillips or Trump. One House Democratic aide shouted, “He’s going to make everyone in the building get [COVID-19].”

“A lot of members are p****d off,” said another unnamed source to Fox News.

Instead of being angry at Massie, the American people should be angry with a Congress that ignores the Constitution on a regular basis. Disregarding it during such emergencies is a dangerous precedent. The Constitution is already considered a relic of the 18th century by many, such as House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, who once answered a question about whether a bill was constitutional, “Is that a serious question?”

But Pelosi is far from alone in such disrespect for following the Constitution. Everything seems to be an excuse to spend more money — concern over a virus is just the latest excuse.

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