



Written by [R. Cort Kirkwood](#) on April 24, 2020

McConnell Roasted Over State Bankruptcy Remarks

Senator Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.), shown, suggested yesterday that states might declare bankruptcy instead of asking for federal aid to help them weather the Chinese virus pandemic.



For some inexplicable reason, no one likes it, the [Washington Post reported](#) today.

New York Governor Andrew Cuomo, a Democrat, called it “dumb.” Maryland Governor Larry Hogan, Republican, was a crab about it, too. Others agreed.

Upshot: Like a man trying to eat Egg Drop soup with chopsticks, the Senate majority leader’s idea will fail.

Radio Comments

The Kentucky Republican was yakking with radio talker Hugh Hewitt on Thursday when he blurted out the idea.

[McConnell said](#) the states are in trouble because of out-of-control pensions, and that cities have filed for bankruptcy to fix their money problems:

We all have governors regardless of party who would love to have free money. And that’s why I said yesterday we’re going to push the pause button here, because I think this whole business of additional assistance for state and local governments need to be thoroughly evaluated.... There’s not going to be any desire on the Republican side to bail out state pensions by borrowing money from future generations. So this is a much bigger conversation than we’ve had providing assistance for small business because the government shut them out, put them down, put them out of business, or assistance to hospitals which were overwhelmed by the covid-19 disease.

But then got himself in trouble.

“I would certainly be in favor of allowing states to use the bankruptcy route,” [McConnell continued](#). “It saves some cities. And there’s no good reason for it not to be available. My guess is their first choice would be for the federal government to borrow money from future generations to send it down to them now so they don’t have to do that. That’s not something I’m going to be in favor of.”

On Wednesday, the [Senate passed](#) yet another virus aid bill, this fourth a \$484 billion monster that includes \$321 billion for the small business Paycheck Protection Fund, another \$60 billion for small-business disaster loans, \$75 billion for hospitals, and \$25 billion to accelerate testing for the Asian pathogen.

Nonetheless, the very thought of not asking for more taxpayer money riled more than few people. “This is really one of the dumb ideas of all time,” [huffed Cuomo](#), who said if too many states declare bankruptcy, the national economy would “collapse.”

Cuomo called McConnell’s idea “irresponsible and reckless,” the [Post reported](#). “This is not the time or the place or the situation to start your divisive politics. It’s not red and blue. It’s red, white and blue.”



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Hogan agreed. He's the chieftain of the National Governors Association, which wants \$500 billion sent to the states, the *Post* noted.

"Mitch McConnell probably regrets saying that," [Hogan said](#). "If he doesn't regret it yet, I think he will regret it.... The last thing we need in the middle of an economic crisis is to have states all filing bankruptcy all across America and not able to provide services to people who desperately need them."

Democrat New Jersey Governor Phil Murphy said "encouraging, explicitly almost hoping for bankruptcies of American states in the midst of the biggest health-care crisis this country has ever faced, is completely and utterly irresponsible."

Neither were two legislators from New York happy about McConnell's idea, the [Post reported](#).

McConnell = Marie Antoinette

[Tweeted Senator Minority Leader Chuck Schumer](#), a Democrat, "Republican Senators: Raise your hand if you think your state should go bankrupt."

GOP Representative Peter King wasn't happy about McConnell's characterization of the money as "free."

"To say that it is 'free money' to provide funds for cops, firefighters and healthcare workers makes McConnell the Marie Antoinette of the Senate," [he tweeted](#).

At least Republican Senator Patrick Toomey of Pennsylvania offered a reasonable response, the [Post reported](#). On a conference call with reporters, Toomey said he's willing to consider the bankruptcy idea because he has "very serious doubts" about spending that kind of money. "That's not anything we would do lightly."

If spending isn't something Toomey and his colleagues don't do lightly, he might explain why the [national debt is \\$24.5 trillion and climbing](#).

Anyway, McConnell might take some advice from Confucious: "Silence is a true friend who never betrays."



Image: [Gage Skidmore/Wikimedia Commons](#)

R. Cort Kirkwood is a long-time contributor to The New American and a former newspaper editor.



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