



Trump Signs Massive Spending Bill — Those Voting No Are Heroes

Six Republican members of the Senate courageously voted no to the massive spending bill, and their comments are a good summary of the broken system in Congress that allows either wasteful spending to balloon out of control or unconstitutional spending — or both.

The six senators were Marsha Blackburn (Tenn.), Ted Cruz (Texas), Ron Johnson (Wis.), Mike Lee (Utah), Rand Paul (Ky.), and Rick Scott (Fla.). Paul angrily dubbed the bill a “spending monstrosity,” adding that the “so-called conservatives” who voted for the bill were no better than the socialist Democrats. In the name of coronavirus relief, Congress had chosen to mortgage the future of the country.



President Trump (AP Images)

The vote for the bill was 359-53 in the House of Representatives, and 92-6 in the Senate.

After giving signals that he might veto it, President Donald Trump signed the \$2.3 trillion “Covid-19 relief” bill over the week-end, filled with massive spending for other things. The bill is the fifth longest bill ever passed by Congress, and less than a week ago Trump said the bill was a “disgrace.”

While the bill did address the coronavirus’ economic impact, it also included spending on items — including foreign aid — that had nothing to do with that. Such bills are often referred to as “Christmas tree bills.” Because the supposed point of the bill — stimulus and relief from the negative economic consequences caused by governments’ response to the Wuhan virus — is popular, members of Congress proceed to add other spending, usually wholly unrelated, at the same time. Like a Christmas tree, then, additional items are added and the bill becomes increasingly bloated with spending. While this makes a Christmas tree more attractive, when applied to a congressional spending bill, it is an ugly process that threatens the fiscal future of all Americans.

Not surprisingly, the mainstream media offered no criticism of such additional spending, choosing to focus on Trump’s reluctance to sign the bill, repeating the line that Trump was threatening to kill virus “relief” for millions of Americans.

Trump explained his reluctance to sign the bill. “As president, I have told Congress that I want far less wasteful spending and more money going to the American people in the form of \$2,000 checks per adult and \$600 per child. Much more money is coming.”

Trump added that the bill has “almost nothing to do with COVID,” and that “Congress found plenty of money for foreign countries, lobbyists and special interests while sending the bare minimum to the American people who need it.” Trump sent a “redlined version” of the bill back to Congress, which



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includes an itemization of “wasteful” items he would like to see removed from the bill.

However, Trump’s formal request for recissions was bluntly rejected by Representative Nita Lowey, the New York Democrat who chairs the House Appropriations Committee. “The House Appropriations Committee has jurisdiction over recissions, and our Democratic majority will reject any recissions submitted by President Trump.”

So much for “reaching across the aisle.”

It seems that “reaching across the aisle” is always in one direction — toward the Democrats, bigger government, more spending, and fiscal irresponsibility. Senator Paul said, “When you vote to pass out free money, you lose your soul and you abandon forever any semblance of moral or fiscal integrity.”

He expressed concern for the huge debt being accumulated to burden future generations.

Senator Johnson echoed Paul’s remarks. “We must spend federal dollars — money we are borrowing from future generations — more carefully and place limits on how much we are mortgaging our children’s future.” Senator Scott said, “Washington doesn’t seem to understand that new spending today will be paid for by increased federal debt and result in a tax increase on families down the road.” Scott added that voting for the bill was the “easy route,” but, “I will not be part of it.”

Senators Cruz and Lee agreed with the concerns over the spending, but added that senators were given just a few hours to read the bill, which was thousands of pages long. Cruz said, “It’s ABSURD to have a \$2.5 trillion spending bill negotiated in secret and then — hours later — demand an up-or-down vote on a bill nobody has had time to read.”

Senator Lee made a video to illustrate the length of the bill, and the short time he and his colleagues had to read it, noting that “98 percent of members of Congress of both political parties in both houses” were excluded from the process. “This process, by which members of Congress are asked to defer blindly to legislation negotiated entirely in secret by four of their colleagues, must come to an end.”

Cruz argued the bill “advances the interests of the radical Left, special interests, and swamp lobbyists, with funding going towards expanding authority for more H-2B visas for foreign workers while a near record number of Americans remain unemployed.” He added that it helped other Democrat causes such as the so-called Green New Deal.

Blackburn expressed similar concerns. “I have serious concerns with provisions buried in the 5,593 page bill, such as expanded visas, Pell grants for prisoners, and households with illegal aliens receiving economic impact payments.”

All of the concerns expressed by the six senators are valid. In addition, the idea that government spending can improve the economy — based on the ideas of the late British socialist economist John Maynard Keynes — is not backed up in practice. Keynesian economics has been debunked in practice repeatedly — most notably the “stagflation” (combined high unemployment rates and increasingly higher prices) of the 1970s. While such spending can cause a short-term burst in economic activity, it usually leads to retarded economic activity (and even recessions or depressions) in the long-run. And, as some of the senators above noted, an increased debt for future generations to pay off.

The heroes in this story are not the members of Congress who voted for this massive spending bill but rather the 53 House members and the six senators who courageously voted no.

Steve Byas is a university professor of history and government, and the author of History’s Greatest Libels, a challenge to the falsehoods perpetuated about some heroes of history such as Christopher



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Columbus and Joe McCarthy. The book is available from Author House, and Steve may be contacted at byassteve@yahoo.com.



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