Biden and Democrats Seek COVID Spending Spree


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Joe Biden and members of Congress are working to pass another massive and unconstitutional coronavirus spending bill filled with wasteful expenditures and left-wing priorities.

Background

In 2020, Congress passed five coronavirus spending bills totaling nearly $4 trillion, on top of existing federal spending: the Coronavirus Preparedness and Response Supplemental Appropriations Act, 2020 (H.R. 6074), the Families First Coronavirus Response Act (H.R. 6201), the CARES Act (H.R. 748), the Paycheck Protection Program and Health Care Enhancement Act (H.R. 266), and the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021 (H.R. 133).

Among the provisions of these bills, they appropriated trillions of dollars to unconstitutional causes, including federal unemployment benefits, business loans and subsidies, and education and agriculture funds, all of which violate the 10th Amendment. The federal government spent a record $6.6 trillion in Fiscal Year 2020, and the deficit continued exploding in FY 2021.

Despite the passage of these massive and fiscally damaging bills, newly inaugurated president Joe Biden and congressional Democrats want even more spending. Biden even called for another bill even before H.R. 133, which Congress had just passed, was enacted.

Biden's Plan

On January 14, 2021, six days before his inauguration, Biden unveiled his "America Rescue Plan," a $1.9 trillion spending proposal. A look at his plan shows that much of it is unconstitutional and unrelated to actually responding to the coronavirus.

Among its other provisions, Biden's proposal would involve sending $1,400 direct checks to individuals. Combined with the $600 checks included in the December 2020 bill, most individuals would receive $2,000 altogether, though Biden's proposal would include several groups left out of the earlier direct payments. These payments are estimated to cost $465 billion.

Additionally, the proposal would expand the federal unemployment benefits included in the December 2020 bill from $300 to $400 and extend the program from March through September 2021 — costing an additional $350 billion. Furthermore, Biden's proposal would allocate $170 billion to K-12 schools and universities and would create a $15 billion grant program for businesses.

Biden's plan also proposes raising the federal minimum wage from $7.25 an hour to $15, something completely unrelated to the coronavirus and that would damage the economy.

Furthermore, in addition to providing $350 billion to bail out blue states and local governments, the

Biden plan would extend a moratorium on evictions and foreclosures through the end of September 2021, and it would provide 14 weeks of federal government-reimbursed paid leave for public and private employees.

Biden's plan certainly is expensive. When asked about how the plan would be paid for, Biden's then-incoming CEA advisor Heather Boushey stated that figuring out how to afford it was "not tonight's problem." Furthermore, Biden plans to unveil a second, even larger, plan later in February that will seek to advance left-wing priorities in other areas. His plan is not without opposition: 10 Senate Republicans have proposed a $600 billion counterplan, something the Biden White House is entertaining. However, if Biden and congressional Republicans do not reach an agreement, Democrats will seek to pass the bill through reconciliation — without any compromises with Republicans — something Biden has endorsed.

Back to the Constitution

Regardless of whether Biden's plan or a competing plan is passed, such plans are unconstitutional. Nowhere does the Constitution give the federal government authority to subsidize or regulate large portions of the economy or engage in welfare spending. In fact, if American leaders consistently adhered to the Constitution, 80 percent of the current government bureaucracy would not exist. These and other powers are reserved for the states and the people in accordance with the 10th Amendment.

The Constitution also remains in force under any and all circumstances. Because the rights it protects are inalienable and God-given, they cannot be suspended or ignored for any reason. Thus, a pandemic or government-induced recession cannot override the words of the Constitution.

If Congress takes its constitutional role seriously, it will oppose an unconstitutional COVID spending spree. In addition to authorizing spending that directly violates the 10th Amendment, among other constitutional provisions, a massive spending bill would add another significant sum to the already-unsustainable national debt.

Former Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel famously said in 2008 that "you never want a serious crisis to go to waste … it's an opportunity to do things that you think you could not before." It is imperative that patriots hold Congress accountable and avert a federal overreach.

To urge your U.S. representative and senators to reject an unconstitutional COVID spending spree, visit The John Birch Society's legislative alert here.