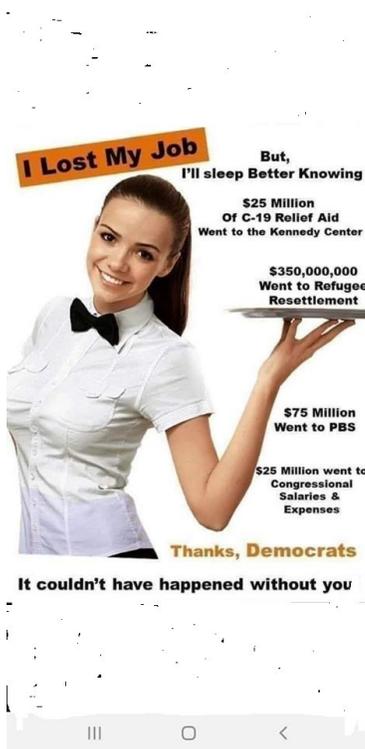


## NEBRASKA TAXPAYERS FOR FREEDOM ISSUE PAPER: CONGRESSIONAL CARE BILLS LOADED WITH PORK.

**BACKGROUND.** The COVID-19 virus outbreak pressed Congress to pass 3 economic relief packages to help stem the downturn in our economy. The third package merged **HR 748** from the House with **S. 3548** from the Senate. These bills contained much to praise, funding for individuals laid off or furloughed from their employment, assistance for small businesses, and help for the truly needy and destitute. Unfortunately, liberal congressmen who never let a crisis go to waste pumped egregious and wasteful spending into the bills, items that otherwise they could not pass into law. During the last 3 years, Republicans and Democrats have drained the U.S. Treasury from the left and right. Our national debt increased from \$10 trillion (2008), to \$19.6 trillion (2016), to \$23.6 trillion (2020). This bill will drive the national debt much higher.

**TRICKERY.** The Senate acted first on the stimulus package, notwithstanding the constitutional mandate and House precedents that require revenue and appropriations bills to originate in the House. That requirement circumvented by gutting **HR 748** and substituting the language in its entirety with the 800-plus-page emergency spending measure. Socialist Democrats in the House agreed to gut the original content in **HR 748**, a 2019 bill meant to eliminate a socialist provision of Obama Care, and fill it with legislation to fight the virus onslaught. However, constitutionally, no bills held over from year to year but must face reintroduction through usual parliamentary process.

**PURE PORK.** Both bills contain many provisions unrelated to the virus pandemic. Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer (N.Y.) took advantage of our economic malaise to push through \$25 million for the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in D.C. for operating and administrative expenses and \$75 million in grants for the liberal Corporation for Public Broadcasting (NPR & PBS). Apparently, Big Bird requires a subsidy. Also, \$75 million for the superfluous National Endowment for the Arts and \$75 million for the likewise National Endowment for the Humanities. Schumer also shoved through an expansion of unemployment insurance that conservatives called unemployment insurance on steroids, guaranteed to slow our economic recovery. This infusion will pay many workers much more money to remain home than if working. Such largesse encourages individuals to shirk their employers and not return to the workforce. Workers remaining employed would keep their health insurance, lessening the government burden. House Speaker Pelosi instructed Schumer not to support the bill, unless it included cancellation of college student debt, union protections, tax subsidies for windmills/solar, and new airline emission standards.



**CONSERVATIVE CHAMPIONS.** Throughout the negotiation process, several Senate conservatives attempted to champion free market principles. NE Sen. Ben Sasse, with Sens. Lindsey Graham (S.C.), Tim Scott (S.C.), Ted Cruz (Tx.), and Rick Scott (Fla.) sponsored an amendment to eliminate the Schumer unemployment largesse, an additional \$600 weekly benefit, but liberals defeated it. During floor debate, Sasse offered his amendment to cap unemployment benefits at previous average pay. It would have limited unemployed worker benefits to 100% of previous earnings. The Senate voted 48-48, short of the 60-vote threshold needed to pass an amendment. This generous unemployment benefit will dissuade furloughed people from returning to work.

**FEDERAL CHECKS.** Many Nebraskans soon will receive federal checks to counter the recession. However, these recovery checks will not base on current means, because incomes from 2018 and 2019 do not reflect lower 2020 incomes, meaning less money for some.

**POSTAL SERVICE.** Erased is the USPS debt to the Treasury, mostly related to a requirement that USPS pre-fund generous health insurance for its retirees. Oversight Committee Chairman Rep. Carolyn Maloney (D-N.Y.) whined that the Postal Service has seen a drastic reduction in mail volume and could shut down by summer without intervention. Maloney noted that the \$2.5 trillion coronavirus relief package would send \$25 billion to the Postal Service in emergency funding and eliminate its \$11 billion debt. The measure would reset the USPS borrowing limit to \$15 billion and eliminate an annual \$3 billion borrowing cap.

**MORE PORK.** The Sexual Risk Avoidance Education program which gives funding to states and black colleges and universities can defer payments on current loans during an undetermined period. \$1.018 billion to Amtrak to cover revenue losses from the virus outbreak because of fewer passengers. This subsidized transportation system annually consumes millions in tax subsidies and performs erratically. Provisions to guarantee several financial benefits for federal employees while torpedoing Trump Administration initiatives restricting federal employee unions. The bill would prevent enforcement of the 3 2018 Trump executive orders limiting union privileges and employee appeal rights and a recent memo granting the Defense Dept. broad powers to avoid dealing with unions by invoking national security. Democrats sought but failed to include Planned Parenthood abortion centers as small businesses to qualify for loans among dozens of other socialist planning measures intended to destroy capitalism and convert the U.S. into a Marxist nation.



**WELFARE LARGESSE.** A \$15.51 billion infusion to the food stamp program to cover waivers. \$4 billion in Emergency Solutions Grants to states and cities to provide rehousing, eviction prevention, and homelessness housing assistance to mitigate the effects of the coronavirus on housing security. \$1.25 billion in Section 8 subsidized voucher rental aid for the poor. Also, \$3 billion available in rental assistance for low-income taxpayers and almost \$2 billion to assist public housing agencies with keeping people in their homes. \$900 million to help poor households heat and cool their homes. Increased federal Medicaid funding to states. Up to \$2,000 a month to employees required to work and incur expenses related to the care of a child or relative who has COVID-19. Also, a presumption that an employee carrying out duties that require substantial contact with the public and who contracts the virus would become eligible for welfare benefits. \$8.8 billion to give schools more flexibility to provide free meals to students, though most public schools never check students for eligibility. \$50 million given to the radical Legal Services Corporation to provide civil legal aid needs for poor Americans. The bill includes \$750 million for Head Start to meet emergency staffing needs, despite studies showing that this program produces no lasting academic achievement.

**CAPITOL HILL PERKS.** The merged bills offer \$10 million to help pay for a Senate employee child care center and \$25 million for a similar House child care center. \$700,000 for reimbursement costs for the Library of Congress child care center.

**HELP FOR FOREIGNERS.** Despite the specter of poverty facing otherwise prosperous Americans, bill proponents included \$353 million for the U.S. Aid for International Development (USAID) to fund with \$258 million health needs overseas and \$95 million to meet operating expenses there. \$350 million for migration and refugee assistance for refugees living in cramped camps overseas like in Syria and Africa.

**PELOSI FAVORITES.** Socialist Dem House Speaker Pelosi wangled \$1.2 billion to require airlines to purchase expensive “renewable” jet fuel. \$200 million per year in grants (2021-2026) to “develop, transport, and store sustainable aviation fuels that would reduce U.S. greenhouse gas emissions.” The Senate bill fortunately eliminated this provision. \$1.1 billion in the Pelosi bill would have more than doubled the budgets of The Institute of Museum and Library Services.

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This agency is so small that it does not employ an inspector general. The Senate bill provided \$50 million. \$602 million to the IRS, a subsidy to cover enforcement and operations support. \$30.8 billion to the Department of Education for a “state Fiscal Stabilization Fund” that provides grants to support elementary and secondary education, college education, and state flexibility grants (\$3 billion). \$750 million to food banks, to Puerto Rico and U.S. territories for food assistance, and to programs for food distribution on Indian reservations. Pelosi also tried but failed to ram more into the bill, such as more bargaining rights for unions, a \$15 per hour minimum wage, a massive slate of election “reforms,” and ridiculous carbon emissions standards for airlines, including the requirement that every airline report the carbon emissions for every flight, advertised with

ticket sales online. The Senate stripped more Pelosi Pork from the bills: a \$25 billion bailout of the USPS, requiring federal agencies to use minority banks, and expanded union organizing privileges for federal employees. House Minority Leader Kevin McCarthy condemned the Speaker for her attempt to jam her liberal agenda down American throats in the midst of a crisis, saying “Democrats wanted to use the coronavirus response package to change election law & implement

parts of their Green New Deal. The Senate just passed strong bipartisan legislation that scraps those items, & it's clear. Their delay achieved nothing but more pain for Americans."

**YOU BET!** Casinos can tap government loans for corona virus disaster assistance. Casinos, specifically MGM Resorts International, Wynn Resorts, and Las Vegas Sands pushed for provisions to make sure they would gain federal aid. They can apply for part of the \$350 billion in Small Business Administration loans, if they classify as a small business and require less than \$10 million. Larger casinos can apply for \$454 billion in loans backed by the Treasury Dept.

**PREFERENTIAL TREATMENT.** \$65 million for Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS in order to maintain rental assistance and expand operational and administrative flexibilities for housing and supportive service providers to assist almost 61,000 households. Given that this population is particularly vulnerable, the bill pays for temporary relocation services to contain and prevent the spread of COVID-19 for these at-risk households.

**CRIME PAYS.** Liberals complained that prison inmates suffer from high phone charges. Liberal Sen. Cory Booker (D-N.J.) pressed the Bureau of Prisons to allow free inmate phone calls and videoconferencing during the pandemic, services subsidized by the bills.



**TAKE ACTION NOW.** Nebraskans should not soon forget that while conservative congressmen rushed to pass needed help, Schumer and Pelosi blocked the legislation, wasted precious time, and tried to ram their liberal wish list items down the throats of Nebraskans in the middle of a crisis. The bills meant to bring relief to the American people and businesses, not for special interest groups and lobbyists of the reptiles of the swamp! Contact your representative and 2 senators and urge them to screen out and vote out wasteful spending items in future economic stimulus legislation. Email [netaxpayers@gmail.com](mailto:netaxpayers@gmail.com) for Capitol Hill contact information.

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